

PRABUDDHA BHARATA *or AWAKENED INDIA*

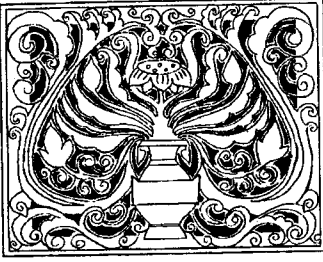


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Cover: Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother's temple at Jayrambati seen today and a period photograph in the foreground. Mother was born in this sanctified village for the good of all Her children in 1853.

उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत ।

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Vol. 109

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No. 7

↔ Traditional Wisdom ↔

HOLY COMPANY

जाड्यं धियो हरति सिञ्चति वाचि सत्यं मानोन्नतिं दिशति पापमकरोति ।
चेतः प्रसादयति दिक्षु तनोति कीर्ति सत्सङ्गति कथय किं न करोति पुंसाम् ॥

Holy company dispels our mental inertia, fills our speech with truth, enhances our esteem, prevents us from committing sin, makes our mind serene and happy, and spreads our fame everywhere—say, what does holy company not do? (Bhartrihari, *Nitiśataka*, 23)

वरं पर्वतदुर्गेषु भ्रान्तं वनचरैः सह । न मूर्खजनसम्पर्कः सुरेन्द्रभवनेष्वपि ॥

It is far better to roam in the forest with hill tribes than to live with fools even in heaven. (*Nitiśataka*, 14))

[Holy company] begets yearning for God. It begets love of God. Nothing whatsoever is achieved in spiritual life without yearning. By constantly living in the company of holy men, the soul becomes restless for God. ... There is another benefit from holy company. It helps one cultivate discrimination between the Real and the unreal. God alone is the Real, that is to say, the Eternal Substance, and the world is unreal, that is to say, transitory. (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, 96-7)

By keeping the company of good men, you will get your mind set properly. If you try to mould your life according to the instructions of holy men, you will easily avoid the pitfalls and temptations of life. Following in their footsteps you will reach the goal attained by them and fulfil your life's purpose. (Swami Brahmananda)

You will always have the benefit of holy company. Try to have the company of *sat*, or eternal Existence (Brahman), who is within you. And one needs the association of holy people in external life—God will provide you with that. One should pray deeply and sincerely from one's inmost heart. Always be prayerful. (Swami Turiyananda)

☪ This Month ☪

Ārjava, an important sign of knowledge mentioned in the thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavadgīta*, means uprightness, simplicity, straightforwardness and more. **Uprightness**, this month's editorial, discusses the consequences of crookedness on human personality, the significance of uprightness and some aids to its cultivation.

Prabuddha Bharata—100 Years Ago features excerpts from an article, 'Concerning Ideals', by Advaitin.

Reflections on the *Bhagavadgīta* is Swami Atulanandaji's commentary on verses 27 to 29 of the ninth chapter of the *Gīta*. How to transform life into a continuous worship by offering everything to the Lord; the all-important sannyasa yoga, or the yoga of renunciation, which nullifies the good and bad effects of karma; and how God remains impartial to all—the author discusses all this here with admirable clarity. The author disabuses the Lord of partiality and says that the difference is in *us*, not in God, just as the difference is in the mirror and not in the sun.

Sanskrit Studies and Comparative Philology in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Europe is the third and final instalment of a research article by Swami Tathagatanandaji. The author discusses with copious references Max Müller's love for India and his immense contribution to the spread of Sanskrit literature, Paul Deussen's fascination for and contribution to the spread of Vedanta, and Russia's interest in Vedanta. The author is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and heads the Vedanta Society of New York.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*—An Exposition

is a commentary by Swami Premeshanandaji on sutras 11 to 33 of the fourth chapter, 'Kāivalya Pāda'. This is the final instalment of the author's illuminating reflections on the *Yoga Sūtras*. We are grateful to Swami Sunitanandaji, Assistant Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, for the original Bengali notes of this exposition. Sri Shoutir Kishore Chatterjee, translator of the notes, is a former Professor of Statistics from Calcutta University.

Parabrahma Upaniṣad is the first instalment of a translation of this important Sannyasa Upanishad by Swami Atmapriyanandaji, Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Vidya-mandira, Belur. This instalment discusses the greatness of Brahman and certain characteristics of a knower of Brahman. The elaborate notes are based on Upanishad Brahmayogin's commentary.

'May the guest be your God,' teaches the *Taittirīya Upanishad*. **Glimpses of Holy Lives** features an incident from the life of Ilayankudi Mara Nayanar, who lived up to this dictum even when he himself had nothing to eat.

The human mind is an enigma. Vedanta grants it material status; only, it is considered subtler than the body. In his research article **A Survey of the Mind**, Swami Satyaswarupanandaji examines certain theoretical and empirical perspectives about the mind by Western thinkers and compares them in the light of Yoga and Vedanta. In the first instalment he analyses some experimental studies and physical theories about the mind. The author is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order from Belur Math.

Uprightness

EDITORIAL

Mullah Nasruddin found a diamond by the roadside, but, according to law, finders become keepers only if they first announced their find in the centre of the marketplace on three separate occasions. Now, Nasruddin was too religious-minded to disregard the law and too greedy to run the risk of parting with his find. So on three consecutive nights when he was sure that everyone was fast asleep he went to the centre of the marketplace and there announced in a soft voice, 'I have found a diamond on the road that leads to the town. Anyone knowing who the owner is should contact me at once.' No one was wiser for the mullah's words, of course, except for one man who happened to be standing at his window on the third night and heard the mullah mumble something. When he attempted to find out what it was, Nasruddin replied, 'I am in no way obliged to tell you. But this much I shall say: Being a religious man, I went out there at night to pronounce certain words in fulfilment of the law.'¹

That was observing religious injunctions to the letter, holding fast at the same time to one's selfish interests. It was again a manifestation of crookedness, a trait not uncommon among out-and-out worldly people. There are, of course, honourable examples to the contrary. Sri Ramakrishna's father Khudiram Chattopadhyay had to lose his possessions in his native village Dere for refusing to bear false witness to a greedy landlord. He was a poor brahmin and an embodiment of virtues like devotion, truthfulness and uprightiness. He had a price to pay for his virtues, but had Sri Ramakrishna, adored by millions as an incarnation of God, as his son. As the well-known saying goes, 'Those who don't stand

for something, fall for anything.' Sri Ramakrishna's father was upright and stood for truth.

The Consequence of Crookedness

Though crookedness appears to rule the roost in the world and conduce to the material advancement of its practitioner, it too does not come without a price: Any compromise we make in principles leaves its mark on our character. Every action or thought leaves a subtle impression in our mind, impelling us to repeat the action or thought. This effect may not seem to be of much consequence in the beginning, but the kinks in character and their power become evident only when one begins to turn a new leaf. One then begins to appreciate Duryodhana's predicament. A bundle of bad impressions, he let his notorious uncle strengthen them by his bad designs. When the situation went beyond his control, Duryodhana remarked, 'I know what is dharma, but am not able to practise it. I know what is adharma, but I am not able to refrain from it.'²

The Significance of Uprightness

According to Vedanta we are divine in the core of our being, but it remains hidden from us. Animal nature, human nature and divine nature are intertwined in our personality. Divinity remains an unknown component in us until we transcend our animal nature and human nature and begin to manifest our divine nature. And true religion, says Swami Vivekananda, is supposed to bring about precisely this: transformation of character.³

All lasting happiness and knowledge stem from our divine nature. Human life becomes meaningful to the extent this hidden divinity becomes manifest. Sri Shankaracharya glorifies human birth and says that not striv-

True simplicity entails tallying one's words with one's thought. And Sri Ramakrishna considered this quality inevitable for success in spiritual life. ... Perfect alignment in thought, word and deed constitute true simplicity.

ing to attain Self-knowledge is tantamount to killing oneself, since one holds fast to unreal things of the world.⁴

If crookedness forges one more link in the chain that binds us to the world, uprightness help us manifest our hidden divine qualities. The *Bhagavadgita* lists *ārjava*, or uprightness or simplicity, as a sign of Knowledge.⁵ Like the traits of a man of steady wisdom listed in its second chapter, uprightness too is a virtue an aspirant needs to assiduously cultivate on the path to perfection.

Connotations of Uprightness

Sri Shankara explains *ārjava* as simplicity (*saratātā*) or the absence of crookedness (*akuṭīlatā*). True simplicity entails tallying one's words with one's thought. And Sri Ramakrishna considered this quality inevitable for success in spiritual life: 'There is a sect of Vaisnavas known as the Ghoshpārā, who describe God as the "Sahaja", the "Simple One"'. They say further that a man cannot recognize this "Simple One" unless he too is simple.⁶ Sri Ramanuja explains *ārjava* as a uniform disposition towards others in speech, mind and body.⁷ Simplicity thus goes much deeper than our dress or habits. Perfect alignment in thought, word and deed constitute true simplicity.

Sant Jnaneshvar elaborates on *ārjava* a little more. In his celebrated commentary on the *Gīta*, called *Jnaneshvari*, he gives the following meanings for *ārjava*:⁸

Favouring all equally without likes or dislikes: As a corollary, this amounts to loving all equally. Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi taught a

little girl how to do that: 'Do not demand anything of those you love. If you make demands, some will give you more and some less. In that case you will love more those who give you more and less those who give you less. Thus your love will not be the same for all. You will not be able to love all impar-

tially.'⁹

Not making any distinction of 'mine' or 'of others': Lack of simplicity arises primarily from selfishness and a feeling of 'I' and 'mine' that characterize human life. How can we get rid of our 'I' and 'mine'? Certainly it is not easy to give up this sense of 'unripe ego' all of a sudden. Sri Ramakrishna advises us instead to cultivate the 'ripe ego', which says, 'I am a child of God.' He further explains how to live in the world as a maidservant does in a rich man's house:

Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all—with wife and children, father and mother—and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as 'my Rama' or 'my Hari'. But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.¹⁰

Sri Ramakrishna also advocated an attitude of trusteeship to one's wealth and encouraged spending it in service of God and his devotees.

An upright mental attitude: According to Jnaneshvar, an upright person does not bear grudge against anyone. His mental attitude is straight like the sweep of the wind and he is free from desire and doubt. He does not hold his mind on a leash, nor does he leave it absolutely free. An aspirant, however, needs to keep his mind on a leash for a long time, till it is

sufficiently trained and purified and begins to act as his true friend.

A disciplined sensory system: His sense organs are pure and free from deceit. The undisciplined mind and the senses act as our enemy and deceive us into sense pleasure, making us believe as if that is the goal of life. With his senses controlled, a man of Knowledge does not let his senses deceive him. For Arjuna Sri Krishna prescribed sense control as the preliminary discipline to get rid of desires.¹¹

Uprightness Necessitates Discipline

All may not be as crooked as Duryodhana, but shades of it inhere in everyone until the dawn of Self-knowledge. In other words, perfect alignment in thought, word and deed is possible only when we attain perfection. In everyday life we know how difficult it is to carry out resolutions: acquiring a new good habit or kicking a bad one. Where lies the difficulty? The problem stems from the kinks in our character or the knots in our mind. Any attempt to discipline the mind invites its instant resistance, since by nature it likes to follow the path of least resistance. That is, it always likes to tag itself to sense organs and their respective sense objects. This link applies not only to gross objects, but also subtle enjoyments. A weak will and a dormant buddhi are responsible for this tendency of the mind. The first step towards uprightness is disciplining the mind and the senses and freeing the will from their hold.

Cultivation of Uprightness—Some Aids

Need for an ideal: Without a purpose not even a fool embarks on an undertaking, goes a well-known Indian saying.¹² Uprightness too has a purpose behind and a lofty one at that: transformation of character and God-realization, which amounts to Self-realization or the

Where lies the difficulty? The problem stems from the kinks in our character or the knots in our mind. Any attempt to discipline the mind invites its instant resistance, since by nature it likes to follow the path of least resistance.

manifestation of our potential divinity. With this ideal before us cultivation of noble virtues becomes a rewarding challenge. An ideal before us can serve as a radar for our spiritual journey: we can become aware of the pitfalls on the journey and correct our course. How important having an ideal is becomes clear from Swamiji's words: 'Unfortunately in this life, the vast majority of persons are groping through this dark life without any ideal at all. If a man with an ideal makes a thousand mistakes, I am sure that the man without an ideal makes fifty thousand. Therefore, it is better to have an ideal.'¹³ In other words, a man with an ideal knows if he commits mistakes, since he has a reference point with which he can judge his actions. He commits less mistakes than someone who does not have an ideal.

Purifying the means: Work is not an end in itself, but only a means to purification of mind and manifestation of divinity. When this point is lost sight of, the end becomes more important than the means and often justifies it. But such an attitude does come with a price. We may accomplish the work all right, but the questionable means adopted will leave an impression in the mind, strengthen the bad impressions already in store, and thus forge one more link in the chain that binds us to the world. In his illuminating lecture 'Work and Its Secret' Swamiji assures us, 'Let us perfect the means; the end will take care of itself.' And what follows is more significant. Swamiji explains what means and end mean: 'For the world can be good and pure only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect and *we are the means*. Therefore, *let us purify ourselves. Let us*

Augmenting our good impressions by noble thoughts and deeds is an important step towards purification of mind. When performed with concentration of mind, work affords us an opportunity to observe the vagaries of the mind. Trying not to be distracted by mental gyrations is a good exercise in training the mind and strengthening our will power.

make ourselves perfect.' (2.9; *emphasis added*)

Doing work as worship: Augmenting our good impressions by noble thoughts and deeds is an important step towards purification of mind. When performed with concentration of mind, work affords us an opportunity to observe the vagaries of the mind. Trying not to be distracted by mental gyrations is a good exercise in training the mind and strengthening our will power. Says Swamiji, 'When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being.' (1.71) 'Whatever you do, devote your whole mind, heart and soul to it. I once met a great sannyasin who cleansed his brass cooking utensils, making them shine like gold, with as much care and attention as he bestowed on his worship and meditation.'¹⁴

* * *

'It is simple to be happy, but it is difficult to be simple,' according to an old adage. True and lasting happiness is possible only in our inner Self, the infinite dimension of our per-

sonality.¹⁵ This bliss is ours to the extent the kinks in our character get straightened, making us more and more simple. The difficulty in being simple is due to an undisciplined mind. And simplicity or uprightness is something to be cultivated by working on ourselves, by disciplining the mind and the sensory system with a strengthened will. *

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11. *Gita*, 3.41.
12. *Prayojanam anuddīśya na mando'pi pravartate.*
13. CW, 2.152.
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15. *Yo vai bhūmā tatsukham, nālpe sukhamasti.* —*Chandogya Upanishad*, 7.23.1.

The art of simplicity is simply to simplify. Simplicity avoids the superficial, penetrates the complex, goes to the heart of the problem and pinpoints the key factors. Simplicity does not beat around the bush. It does not take winding detours. It follows a straight line to the objective. Simplicity is the shortest distance between two points.

—Wilfred Peterson

Prabuddha Bharata—100 Years Ago

July 1904

Concerning Ideals

To those who are early drawn into the whirlpool of life, what battle, courage and persistence are required to maintain their ideals. They see people affected by the deleterious influences around them, yielding to the clamorous appeals of the senses, and pursuing pleasure—which in too many instances becomes the sum total of existence. There is nothing so important for us as to resolve to have an ideal, and be zealous followers of the same. It will restore our perspective, correct our vision, so that we see things in their right proportion. A man, to be of value, to be true to himself, must hold to an ideal; he must be able to think beyond his work and precedent, and have power to show in the line of life he has chosen, in what his heart is centred. He will then be able to wrestle more intelligently with the problems of life as presented in his daily round.

The ideal should be for the inspiration, direction and organization of our moral, social, intellectual and religious forces. ... The fundamental principle of the ideal is to bridge the chasm of life, making it possible not merely to fix a role of conduct, but bring about a revolution in one's life, absolutely inconceivable before. Ideals are full of the deepest meanings, assertions of new beauties, incentives to fresh endeavours, demanding devotion of the human mind to all that is noble and untried. They appear radiant with suggestive wisdom and full of rare excellence. Things that seem permanent and final become unsettled and provisional in their light, for they provide other standpoints. They must be judged as they conduce, more or less, according to the qualitative and quantitative advance due to their influence, to a higher and ampler standard of life.

The loyal, cool qualities indispensable to the carrying out of our ideals must be impregnated with love, gentleness, and forethought, in touch with the best conceptions of the day, disclaiming at the same time any illiberality regarding the ideals of others. They will thus prove a world-power in a spiritual sense, a pacificator among men of all creeds.

The same spirit illumines diverse natures, and the most various and the most different can assimilate similar ideals, with the differences necessitated by their natures and their interior aptitudes, and it is this unity and this variety which, in their true reality, realize the supreme Principle. Without this spiritual understanding we shall fail to deepen our knowledge, for the things of the intellect may become either a help or a hindrance to the attainment of our ideals. Therefore, let us listen to the voice within, and try to rouse this sense of knowledge which lies dormant in each one of us. Its chosen soil is the pure heart, and we shall do well to ponder over the ever-recurring suggestions of our reflective and serious moods, and seek to enlarge the spiritual vision to the perception of something infinite. We cannot hope to realize our ideals if the mind conforms to any worthless inclinations, for in order to make our labours fruitful we must be conscious of our inherent pure nature. Beyond all else in the world, ideality demands an invincible strength and an indomitable energy—it must never be allied to weakness.

We perceive, then, that to grasp our ideals is no easy task to be undertaken lightly, seeing that they involve a vast change in ourselves. Consequently we must never slacken in our pursuit of them. Spasmodic efforts in this or that direction will be of no avail until we have been brought to acknowledge that there is a definite and wisely ordered purpose in our aims. They should also not be irrecon-

cilable with practical work, though we have misgivings, grope about, now and then start off in the wrong direction, oftentimes discouraged, or again gloomy fears brood over our resolutions and longings. Only few can retain the ideals with sufficient firmness to apply them consistently at all seasons, but a false step or failure of application is of no more consequence here than in other paths of life. ... External activity is in itself only the shadow of the profound life which has its source in the Self—therefore, it is possible to participate in the contemplative and the active aspects of life. There is much that is good and beneficial in the interchange of activity and retirement. As activity sweetens retirement, so retirement prepares the mind for renewed activity and reinforces the springs of inward cognition.

... First and foremost, the truth one strives for is the truth one grows into, that pervades our consciousness, rather than something that manifests itself to the outer world—a perception whereby the eyes of the soul are unsealed.

Our great thoughts, the truth of our lives, must never quit us. Our convictions will be a resistless potency to spur us on to unlimited self-sacrifice for the ideal that possesses us, a devotion to it making straight for the goal firmly and calmly under its disciplinary influence.

To take the spiritual ideal, quiet and meditation will lead us much farther than we had thought possible, and noting the immensity of that power, we shall ask ourselves how it had been gained by the old rishis in their mountain solitudes. We believe that they were nearer the solution of the mysteries of life than we are, just because they recognized spiritual purity as higher than intellectual development. Far back in the traditions of humanity there exist deep echoes of these saints, which are re-awakened at a touch. It is surely worthwhile to contemplate those things that have been bequeathed to us, and to recall to the memory of men the ideals which so seldom arrest their attention. ... We are almost astonished to find that men of such austere simplicity should have been competent to grapple with stupendous philosophic ideals, forgetting that 'concentration is to thought, what heat is to the plant.' They steadily directed their attention towards the Self, and their philosophy strove to inculcate in them a contempt for human happiness and all the vanities of this world. Contemplating the Eternal, their keenness of vision, in this way, became strong in spiritual perceptions, and detachment from material environments obtained for them the supreme Self-light, and the most exquisite purity of soul. Thus, these consecrated beings, in whom the tremendous growth of religious ideas entered, helped to reveal to mankind their divine origin.

When we revert to the world, we forget ourselves from the point of view of that which is real, seeking and finding ourselves from the point of view of that which is false. It lures us with Utopias, soothes us with fallacious expectations, pandering to our fancies and foibles, and offering dead sea-fruits for our acceptance. So much for the fragility of earthly bliss! The realization of the real even in part is nothing less than a spiritual realization, and demonstrates how we can become conscious of our Self. We shall then discover ourselves again, as though we had regained a part of ourselves that was essential and unknown, in which the passions of life have been hushed to a perpetual silence, and our will is coalesced in that of Him, who is all in all. We should cling with all our might to this transcendent, penetrative life, having that spiritual virility that appeals to the high Self and subtly exalts life by ministering to the cravings of the God-nature, for in it we shall attain what we can attain nowhere else. Our life is crowned by breathing this rarefied air of benediction and revelation, for 'the soul is still oracular' and by communing with the spirit that quickens, we enter into the secret place of the Most High, winning that holy peace, which is the greatest joy of an illumined soul at one with Itself.

—Advaitin

Reflections on the *Bhagavadgita*

SWAMI ATULANANDA

Chapter 9 (continued)

Because the Lord is so much pleased with whatever His devotees offer to Him in love and because that love brings the highest result, namely moksha, the Lord says:

27. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation, whatever you give away and whatever austerities you perform, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering to Me.

St Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'¹ We see that the yoke of God is easy indeed and His burden light. None need do any special thing for Him; but in the performance of the ordinary acts of life He is fully worshipped if they are performed for His sake alone. The interior spirit is superior to all works. 'And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus.'²

How blessed is such a life, free from fear, free from anxiety, and it would be so simple if our natures were not so perverted. We have to

eat and drink and sleep and work. We cannot be without it. Why not then make the best use of all these necessities and make every action an offering to God? Then it will serve a double purpose. We will be fed physically and spiritually as well. Our physical thirst as also our spiritual thirst will be satisfied. We will rest the body and we will find rest in the Spirit; we will work performing our allotted duties in life and we will at the same time work for the glory of God.

Of him who with a simple and trustful heart can thus practise the presence of God at all times, Sri Krishna says:

28. Thus you will be freed from the bondage of actions that bear good and evil results, and with the heart steadfastly engaged in this yoga of renunciation, liberated, you will come to Me.

This practice of offering everything to the Lord is called sannyasa yoga, the yoga of renunciation. It purifies the heart and frees us from the bondage that follows all actions good and bad, because there is no desire to reap any fruit from the action, the whole life being offered to God.

Otherwise every act good or bad causes bondage. Every deed, word or thought is like a seed planted in our life and the fruit will come in time, sweet or bitter. A golden chain binds as much as an iron chain. Good deeds bind as well as evil deeds, unless these good

deeds are performed to please God or in obedience to His command. Then we can perform the deeds, but we are not attached to the outcome of the act. Such deeds cannot bind us to earth. The fruit has been renounced by offering it to God. Our deeds are then like a rope that is burnt. It still looks like a rope, but nothing can be bound with it. Thus, we work out our karma. Thus, we pay karma's debts. Then the soul is free, free even while living in the body. And when the body is laid aside, the soul is reunited with God.

The highest life that man can live is a life

in which every act, every thought, every word is dedicated to God. What do we mean by that? Is it possible to live such a life? We all know that when we love a person intensely, few moments of the day pass by when the beloved one does not live in our consciousness. No matter what we do, no matter how we are occupied, that picture so dear to us is before our mental eye. We live constantly in the presence of such a person though physically we may be far away. The relationship between the bhakta and his God is just like that. He cannot help thinking of his Beloved. His thoughts go towards Him without any effort; love draws them there. And every act we perform while our mind lovingly goes towards the Lord is an act dedicated to Him. For then it becomes impossible to do things which we know will displease Him. We cannot think of the One whom we love and then deliberately do an act that we know would greatly grieve Him. That would be insincerity. And therefore this practice of living in the presence of God is such a great help in our daily life to keep us from what is wrong and to incite us to noble and virtuous deeds. It will give a beautiful colour to our whole existence. We cannot then utter unkind words, we cannot cause sorrow to others willingly, we cannot harbour undesirable thoughts, we cannot but do such acts as we know will be pleasing to God.

That is the practical side of religion. If *lived*, religion cannot but make us better and be an influence for the better on our surroundings. And as we rise higher in spiritual knowledge our life will also express higher and nobler ideals. If we come to know God in spirit and in truth, our life will be the embodiment of spirituality and truth. Then we will know God as the Reality, the enduring Soul, in all bodies. In every person good or bad we will see God more or less obscured by an ignorant personality. That is the glory of the spiritual man that he sees God everywhere and always. God can never be hidden from him, no matter behind what manifestation He is. And so the bhakta's

life will be filled with the feeling that he is always in God's presence.

But like everything else, this is an accomplishment born of previous practice. The scholar has to study many years before he becomes a scholar; the artist also has to work many years before he can count on success. It is so in every department of life, and the spiritual life does not offer any exception. The successful devotee is one who has tried long and hard. Often, forgetting God, he stumbles and falls, but remembers Him again, gains his footing and rises up. So at last success has come.

First our actions are the outcome of gross selfishness. We want riches, name and power over others. But when we grow older and wiser we begin to realize that after all very little is gained. Our wealth, power and fame, some way or other, are not what we expected. These do not make us as happy as we had hoped they would. We are rich but are still miserable; fame has come to us, but it weighs on us rather like a burden. No, the secret of happiness must lie in a different direction. Then we discover that selfishness cannot make us happy. And perhaps we have noticed that we have been happy only in the few instances where we have brought joy to others. Then a light gleams in the horizon. Can it be true that by making others happy we become happy in return? And then, service as an ideal is introduced into our lives. And as we live our ideal, as service to others becomes a practical part of our life, happier and happier we become. But still, we shall meet with many disappointments, for the selfishness in us is still strong and we are looking for gratitude and recognition. And these we do not always meet with. We discern that something is still lacking as an element to secure happiness to us. And then the voice may be heard far away; faint, very faint, sounds that voice at first but gradually it gains in strength and volume and we hear distinctly a new message: 'If you long for happiness, then care not for results. To work

you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof.' That is a great revelation. The secret has been revealed. 'Renounce. Renounce, and peace, joy and fearlessness will be yours.'

That is the voice of the Spirit. The voice of the little self has called out, 'Possess, take, gather up, wield power and command respect.' The Spirit speaks, 'Renounce, give, distribute, serve, honour others and work, but care not for results.'

But how can we work if we do not care for results? Where is the motive for work in that case? 'Make Me your motive,' says the Lord. 'If you want results, good and well, but offer the results to Me. Do not hold them; do not be attached to them. Make it a practice to offer all to Me.' That is the yoga of renunciation, which leads to freedom. All actions good and bad lose their binding effect when done as an offering to Me. We cannot live without doing acts all the time. Every act binds. Every act forges a new link in our chain of karma, unless it is done unselfishly, unless it is performed as a sacrifice, an offering, to the Lord.

This is the main teaching of the *Gita*. It shows us the path of liberation: to be in the world and at the same time to rise beyond the world. Not by running away from the field shall Arjuna rise in Spirit, but by fighting a righteous war; not by avoiding, but by overcoming, not by idleness but by industry, not by serving self but by service of God. 'Be up and doing, but do everything for Me. Do not starve yourself and neglect your duties and live a miserly life. No, whatever you eat, whatever duty you perform, whatever you give, do that as an offering to Me. Then doing all these things, you will be free from sin and bondage.'

That habit we must establish: to offer all to God, by remembering him constantly and with great love. He is always watching us, always near us, for does he not dwell in our heart? Is He not our very Soul, our inner Being? We cannot escape from ourselves. Let us know the Truth. We are God. The real 'I' in us is God. He works and manifests through this

personality, this body and mind and ego, and we know it as Mr So-and-so. This living in the presence of God and offering everything to Him is no superstition. It means doing consciously what we ordinarily do unconsciously. It means knowing the fact instead of the delusion, serving Truth instead of falsehood. Now we know only the animal man in us and we offer everything to him. Then, we shall know the God man in us and we shall give all to Him. The animal man and the God man are one and the same Spirit working through an animal or spiritual medium. We are the beast and we are the man, and we are the angel and we are the God in us. There is but One and He appears as many-sided. One and the same man is the loving husband and father and the cruel, tyrannical master. The same man working through love is the praiseworthy husband and father and working through cruelty he is the despicable master. And working through jnana that same man will become a saint. The husband and the master and the saint are the different masks behind which the one man is hidden. These are the differently coloured glasses behind which he is seen. Remove all masks, all coloured glasses, and the true man, the God in man stands revealed. The different steps in our spiritual life mean clearing the spectacles, replacing the black glasses with grey ones, and the dark grey ones with light grey, and the light grey ones with pure glass; always becoming purer and purer, always driving out the darkness of ignorance by the light of wisdom, always trying to see God as He is in His purity and not as we imagine Him through our coloured minds.

It may interest you to know how in India, this idea of offering all to God takes a concrete form. We have seen in an earlier lesson how sannyasins are regarded as living Gods. They are addressed as Narayana, the God living within man, and food is offered to them as if it is offered to God. To feed the sannyasins therefore is a great privilege and a meritorious deed. At festivals sannyasins and brahmacha-

rins and brahmins are always invited and entertained. But not only in the sannyasin does the Hindu try to see God, but he regards every human being as the deity. And in greeting the Hindu does not shake hands as we do, but he holds his hands before him and bowing the head he salutes the divinity in the other person. 'Namaskar, I bow down to you' is the greeting; high and low, intimate or stranger—anyone becomes great in that way, when we bow down to the divine in him.

In India food is prepared not for the householder but for the deity worshipped by the householder. The cook belongs to the priest caste. Cooking is a religious act. The kitchen is like a temple and only the priest can enter there. Even the householder is not allowed to enter a certain part of his own kitchen. The cook cooks for the Lord and when the food is prepared no one is allowed to taste it until it has been offered to the household deity. The cook takes the prepared food to the worship room (which every Hindu possesses) and there he places it before the family deity and after performing a short ceremony the food is removed and the members of the family are served.

Of course, under our conditions we need not imitate Eastern customs, but if not in these external things, at least in spirit such ideas are well worth practising. The so-called idol in India is a great help to the bhakta there, to draw the mind towards God, for the idol stands for God. And God is regarded as personal and dear and near to the bhakta. He loves his idol; it reminds him of God, who is the indwelling Spirit. He treats the idol with great respect as if God were present before him in living form. And the mind of the devotee often during the day visits the worship room while he himself is at work or elsewhere.

There are bhaktas to whom the idol is no longer an idol but God Himself, living and real. They speak to Him and hear His voice and to Him they go for comfort and guidance. And God does not disappoint them. Perhaps

we all have heard the story of the little boy who was told to take the food to the idol and offer it to the deity. For some reason or other the father could not take the food inside the worship room himself on that day. So he told his son to take it. The boy took the food, placed it before the idol and offered it to the Lord. Then he waited for the idol to partake of the food. But the food remained the same. It was not touched by the idol. Therefore the boy became very sorry. He prayed very sincerely that the Lord might be pleased to take the food. It was getting late and he was also hungry. He asked again and again that the Lord might take the food so that he might go. And he also felt very sorry that the deity was not pleased to take the food when he brought it, while daily He took it when offered by his father. Once more the boy sat down, closed his eyes and prayed, 'Lord, please take the food. Why do you not take the food from me? Are you angry with me?' But when he opened his eyes, all the food was gone. Then the boy was happy and he went to take his dinner. The father said, 'Son, where is the dinner? Did you not bring it from the worship room?' 'No, father,' said the boy. 'How could I bring it? The Lord has finished every bit. The plates are all empty.' Then the father went and saw for himself. And he was surprised for the deity had never taken the food from him so perceptibly. He realized how great is the love of the Lord for His devotees who have real faith. For the boy's faith had worked this miracle.

Sri Krishna has said that the devotee thus practising sannyasa yoga will be liberated and will come unto Him. We have seen that though the Lord is not partial, to some devotees He is granting them what he would not grant others. But now another question arises. Though impartial to His different devotees, is He not partial in bestowing this highest blessing on His devotees and not on others who are not bhaktas? Does not the Lord make a distinction between the pious and the indifferent? Not so. Listen!

29. Alike am I to all beings; hated or beloved there is none to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me and I am in them.

The Lord says that He is alike to all beings. He neither hates nor loves anyone in the sense that we human beings love and hate. Still there is a difference in His relationship to men. Some men live in Him and He in them. We cannot say that fire is partial, that it hates one person and loves another. Still to some it does great harm and to others great good. It gives heat to those who draw near. And so God's love is felt by those who draw near to Him. The heat of the fire is for all and so is God's love for all who desire it. God's grace falls upon all, but not all open their hearts to let His grace shine there. The wind blows for all alike, but only those who unfurl the sails of their boats will speed on their way. The others will lag behind; the wind will not benefit them. Sun and rain are alike for all, but only the field that is worked and prepared will be benefited by the rain and the sunshine. God's grace works in the heart of the bhakta, but not owing to any attachment on His part, but because the bhakta has prepared his heart to receive and to be benefited by that grace.

The sun is reflected in the clear mirror, but not in the mirror that is covered with dust. So the divine Light of God shines in the heart of only those who have cleansed their minds of all the dirt of ignorance through the practice of devotion, the minds of the bhaktas rendered fit to reflect God's light. So the Lord dwells in those clean hearts as a matter of course. The difference is in *us*, not in God, just

as the difference is in the mirror and not in the sun. '... He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'³ The just and the good know how to receive the sunlight and the rain of grace, but the evil and the unjust close their hearts to God's influence. It is our own fault. How can God be partial? Has he not created us all? Are we not all, every one of us, His manifestation? What does He care for our good or evil deeds? A mother loves even her sinful son. And should God be less than His creatures? No, the difference is in us. We put up barriers that prevent the light from shining through. Did not Job say, 'If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him, or *if* thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou to Him? Or what receiveth He of thine hand?'⁴ Love, devotion to the Lord, removes all obstacles. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,' said the Lord.⁵ And hear in the next verse what Sri Krishna says about the excellence of devotion.

(To be continued)

References

1. *1 Corinthians*, 10.31.
2. *Colossians*, 3.17.
3. *St Matthew*, 5.45.
4. *Job*, 35.6-7.
5. *Isaiah*, 1.18.

The Lord is constantly with us. ... If one seeks God earnestly for a moment, He appears before that person. But who seeks Him? We only babble: our prayers come from our lips and not from our hearts. The Lord is omniscient and knows what is in our hearts. We read this in the scriptures but don't believe it. Krishna says in the *Gita*, 'I am seated in the hearts of all.' (15.15) 'An eternal portion of Myself has become the living soul in a world of living beings.' (15.7) Are these statements untrue? They are true, but they appear to us to be untrue. Why? Because we only read these things; neither do we believe them nor do we search for God. That is why we are in this pitiable condition.

—Swami Turiyananda

Sanskrit Studies and Comparative Philology in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Europe

SWAMI TATHAGATANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Friedrich Max Müller

We look to the great German philosopher and Sanskritist Max Müller, who realized 'how small a strip [had] as yet been explored of the vast continent of Sanskrit literature', to express the impact of Sanskrit studies. In his book *India: What Can It Teach Us?* the learned professor dealt with some facts of Indian culture of which Sanskrit was one. He wrote of the mind-invigorating and mind-inspiring cause of Sanskrit studies:

Sanskrit literature ... is full of human interests, full of lessons which even Greek could never teach us. ... Sanskrit literature allows you an insight into strata of thought deeper than any you have known before, and rich in lessons that appeal to the deepest sympathies of the human heart. ...

I may perhaps be able [to show] how imperfect our knowledge of universal history, our insight into the development of the human intellect, must always remain, if we narrow our horizon to the history of Greeks and Romans, Saxons and Celts, with a dim background of Palestine, Egypt, and Babylon, and leave out of sight our nearest intellectual relatives, the Āryas of India, the framers of the most wonderful language, the Sanskrit, the fellow-workers in the construction of our fundamental concepts, the fathers of the most natural of natural religions, the makers of the most transparent of mythologies, the inventors of the most subtle philosophy, and the givers of the most elaborate laws.¹

Urged by Burnouf to carry on the work of the Vedas in 1844,² Müller settled down at Oxford as a professor in 1850 and began his lifelong study of the Vedas. His highly authentic

(and the first) English edition *Rig-Veda with Sayana's Commentary* was published in six volumes (Oxford, 1849-73).³ It is a landmark work in the history of Sanskrit studies. Prior to this edition, only a small part of the *Rig Veda* had been published by Friedrich August Rosen, whose *Rig-Veda Samhita: Sanskrit et Latines*, published posthumously in Calcutta in 1838, attracted many Western scholars to the Vedas, known as the 'The Great Book'. After Rosen's death, Rudolf von Roth (1821-95) published the *Atharva Veda* in Germany in 1856 along with other works on Vedic literature and history.

The publication costs for the *Rig Veda* were borne by the East India Company at first, and later by Queen Victoria's privy purse.⁴ Müller received solid support from Wilson and Christian Karl Bunsen (1791-1860). According to Henri Martin, Bunsen believed that 'the Aryan spirit alone had discovered the Bible's universal and historical meaning.'⁵ Wilson and Bunsen persuaded the board of directors of the East India Company to sustain all expenses of editing and publishing the complete *Rig Veda* in six volumes at Oxford University's printing press (1849-75). This was followed by the publication of *Rig-Veda Samhita* (1869), *Rig-Veda Pratisakya* (text with German translation, 1859-69) and *Rig-Veda* (text only, 1873).⁶ In 1859, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, Müller's treatment of Vedic religion, was also published.

In 1899, Swami Vivekananda commented on Müller's work:

The *Rig-Veda Samhita*, the whole of which no

one could even get at before, is now very neatly printed and made accessible to the public, thanks to the munificent generosity of the East India Company and to the professor's prodigious labours extending over years. The alphabetical characters of most of the manuscripts, collected from different parts of India, are of various forms, and many words in them are inaccurate. We cannot easily comprehend how difficult it is for a foreigner, however learned he may be, to find out the accuracy or inaccuracy of these Sanskrit characters, and more especially to make out clearly the meaning of an extremely condensed and complicated commentary. In the life of Professor Max Müller, the publication of the *Rig-Veda* is a great event. Besides this, he has been dwelling, as it were, and spending his whole lifetime amidst ancient Sanskrit literature.⁷

'If I were asked,' Müller once said, 'what I considered the most important discovery of the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line: Sanskrit *Dyaus Pitar* = Greek *Zeús Pater* = Latin *Jupiter* = Old Norse *Tyr*.'⁸ H G Rawlinson quoted Müller's remark and added:

This work was carried on by Burnouf, Roth and Max Müller, and from their patient researches sprang the study of Comparative Religion, which has had an effect upon modern thought only comparable to that of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Max Müller said that the two great formative influences in his life were the *Rig-Veda* and the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

From Oxford Müller embarked upon a massive project, a labour of love that culminated in the publication of *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford, 1879). It was a work of fifty-one volumes, which he edited in collaboration with nineteen outstanding scholars from various countries. As chief editor, he contributed the translations of the Upanishads and the *Dhammapada*. One can see his scholarly output by going through the select bibliography of his work. *The Sacred Books of the East* contained English translations of twelve principal Upanishads, each with annotations and introduc-

tions, in the first and fifteenth volumes. One is amazed at his scholarly enthusiasm, hard labour, sharp intellect and love for Indian wisdom. Müller wrote in the introduction to the first volume, '... the earliest of these philosophical treatises will always, I believe, maintain a place in the literature of the world, among the most astounding productions of the human mind in any age and in any country.'¹⁰ In the introduction to his second volume of the Upanishads, published as Volume 15 of *The Sacred Books of the East*, he wrote of 'the dark side of the Upanishads' and that 'the true scholar will find even in the darkest and dustiest shafts what they are seeking for, real nuggets of thought and precious jewels of faith and hope.'¹¹ Forty-eight volumes were published during his lifetime and three were published posthumously, including two indexes. Of the forty-nine volumes, twenty-one discuss Hinduism, ten Buddhism and two Jainism; the rest are devoted to the religions of the Persians, Mohammedans and Chinese. It was an epoch-making series, the first authoritative and comprehensive translation of the Upanishads. Müller receives singular credit for broadcasting the wisdom of the Upanishads to the world.

In 1882, Müller delivered a bold series of lectures at the University of Cambridge. He gave his lectures the title, 'India: What Can It Teach Us?' These lectures became a landmark publication of 315 pages on the historical record of Europe's understanding of Indian philosophy and religion.¹²

In the first lecture he expressed the highest admiration for India:

If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have

studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.¹³

Sixteen years after delivering another series of Hibbert lectures about India's place in the historical origin and development of religion, Müller delivered three lectures about Vedanta at the Royal Institution in London, a significant centre of the British establishment. *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* was published in 1894. In this work, Müller described the passion for truth for the welfare of humanity that was the pure motive driving the ancient sages in their quest:

I believe much of the excellency of the ancient Sanskrit philosophers is due to their having been undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease. They thought of nothing but the work they had determined to do; their one idea was to make it as perfect as it could be made. There was no applause they valued unless it came from their equals or their betters; publishers, editors and logrollers did not yet exist. Need we wonder then that their work was done as well as it could be done, and that it has lasted for thousands of years?¹⁴

It is significant that prior to these three lectures, Müller had never spoken or written about any Greek or Christian philosophy.¹⁵ He substantiated his conviction that the Graeco-Roman-Judaic-Christian mind of Europe needed India's 'corrective' of the Vedanta teachings in order to become 'more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, more truly human'. In the very first lecture, he gave the competent testimony of three Europeans: Sir William Jones, Victor Cousin and Friedrich von Schlegel. Each had testified to the greatness of Indian thought.¹⁶

While in England, Swami Vivekananda met Müller and gave a hint of his deep appreciation when he assigned to him a great distinction: 'Max Müller is a Vedantist of Vedantists.'¹⁷ Swamiji's engaging account of his two visits to Müller at his Oxford residence and Müller's inspired works on Sri Ramakrishna, including his article 'A Real Mahatman', which caused many learned Europeans to be 'attracted towards its subject, Sri Ramakrishna Deva, with the result that the wrong ideas of the civilized West about India ... began to be corrected'¹⁸ according to Swami Vivekananda, can be found by the interested reader in the present author's book, *Journey of the Upanishads to the West*.¹⁹ Müller's deeper interest in Sri Ramakrishna resulted in his book *Ramakrishna, His Life and Sayings*. It was published on 18 October 1898.²⁰ Many copies of the book were sold and three editions were published in May of the following year. Müller wrote that he gave a fuller account of Sri Ramakrishna's life and utterances in this book for the benefit of the reading public, because

every human heart has its religious yearnings, it has a hunger for religion which sooner or later wants to be satisfied. Now the religion taught by the disciples of Ramakrishna comes to these hungry souls without any outward authority. ... If they listen to it ... it is of their own free will; and if they believe in any part of it, it is of their own free choice. A chosen religion is always stronger than an inherited religion. ... There can be no doubt that a religion ... which calls itself with perfect truth the oldest religion and philosophy of the world, viz. the Vedanta ... deserves our careful attention.²¹

Striking a universal chord, Max Müller evokes great feeling in those who share his experience. His expression at the end of his life beautifully expresses the appreciation of German scholars for Hindu philosophy and culture:

We all come from the East—all that we value most has come to us from the East, and in going to the East, not only those who have received a

special Oriental training, but everybody who has enjoyed the advantages of a liberal, that is, of a truly historical education, ought to feel that he is going to his 'old home,' full of memories, if only he can read them.²²

Max Müller's work has been preserved for posterity in numerous works, including his *Rig Veda* (6 vols, 1849-74), *Chips from A German Workshop: Collected Essays* (4 vols, 1865-75), *A Sanskrit Grammar* (London, 1866), *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (London, 1869), *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (1883), *Physical Religion* (1891), *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* (1894), *The Sacred Books of the East* (51 vols, 1879-94), *Contributions to the Science of Mythology* (2 vols, 1897), *Ramakrishna, His Life and Sayings* (1898), and *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (1899). The publication of *Rig Veda* brought him world fame. In the field of philology he had few equals, while in early Sanskrit learning he was almost an innovator. He viewed Sanskrit as a pivot of culture; he urged talented scholars and interested individuals to study seriously Sanskrit grammar, literature and thought. It was the way he prescribed for them to gain entry into what he considered to be the most ideal wisdom of India. In his introduction to Müller's *India: What Can It Teach Us?* Professor Alexander Wilder agreed: 'In that study of the history of the human mind, in that study of ourselves, our true selves, India occupies a place which is second to no other country.'²³

Paul Deussen

Paul Deussen, Müller's successor, expressed his appreciation of Indian thought in the value he placed on Vedanta as a singular human accomplishment in man's quest for truth. He captured the essence of the Upanishads in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, which formed the second part of his *General History of Philosophy: 'The Atman is the sole Reality (satyam, satyasya satyam); for it is the metaphysical unity that is manifested in all empirical plurality.'*²⁴ Deussen 'was the great pioneer who,

like no other man in his time, contributed towards securing for Indian philosophy its due place in the entire field of philosophy,' Glase-napp wrote in his great work, *Image of India*.²⁵

Beginning in 1883, his translations and commentaries of Hindu scriptures, especially Vedanta, formed a powerful conduit through which the Vedanta philosophy flowed to Europe. He gave the first important exposition of Shankara's system of Vedanta in 1883.²⁶ Anquetil-Duperron's *Oupnek'hat* had been newly translated into German from Dresden in 1882. Deussen translated it again fifteen years later, when he was a professor occupying the chair of philosophy at the University of Kiel, a post he kept from 1889 until his death. (362) In 1887 he published the *Sutras of Vedanta with Shankara's Commentary* in German. His monumental annotated and cross-referenced translation, *Sixty Upanishads* (1897), which included interpretative introductions to each Upanishad, was considered the most scholarly translation. (363) Collaborating with his brilliant pupil, Otto Strauss (1881-1940), he added the philosophical texts of the *Mahabharata* in 1906. (363)

Deussen's *History of Philosophy* was published in six volumes. The first three expound the Indian philosophy and the remaining three the philosophies of Greece, the Middle Ages and the period from Descartes to Schopenhauer. Deussen understood the importance of Vedanta's message for the West better than his contemporaries did. His *Spirit of the Upanishads* was published in 1907—from as far west as Chicago. It extracted the choicest essence of the philosophy of the Hindus.

Deussen's most prodigious work on the philosophy of the Upanishads appeared in German from Leipzig in 1899.²⁷ A S Geden translated it into English in 1906. *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* still enjoys singular prestige due to its rare systematic, linguistic and scholarly comprehensiveness. Deussen's prediction in the introduction to the monumental work is recalled:

The identity of the *Brahman* and the *atman*, of

God and the soul, is the fundamental thought [of the Upanishads]. ... It will be found to possess a significance reaching far beyond their time and country; nay, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind. One thing we may assert with confidence—whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, this principle will remain permanently unshaken and from it no deviation can possibly take place.²⁸

There are many other eminent German Sanskritists who delved into the meaning of the Vedanta and published translations, catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts and accomplished brilliant Vedic studies. Although they are worthy of mention together with German Indologists, whose more recent scholarship indicates their primary focus on Sanskrit along with recent studies of modern Indian languages, we are unable to include them. Indology is stronger in Germany than in any other Western country today. We encourage the reader who wants to learn more of the dependable works of scholarship that came from Germany to read the present author's book, *Journey of the Upanishads to the West*.

Russia's Interest in Vedanta

Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russian scholars and writers shared with Western Europe an intense interest in Indian studies, especially studies in Buddhism. During the same period that Anquetil-Dupéron was writing his Latin translation, *Oupnek'hat*, in Paris, the message of Vedanta was entering Russia. N I Norikov, whose work relied on Wilkins' English version, introduced it in 1787.²⁹ It was the first Russian translation of the *Bhagavadgīta*.

At the request of Czar Alexander I, Gerasim Lebedev (1746-1817) set up the imperial printing house of Sanskrit with Devanagari types at St Petersburg.³⁰ In 1801, he published a grammar from London with a long, descriptive title—*A Grammar of the Pure and Mixed East Indian Dialects ... according to the Brahmenian System, of the Shamscrit Language ... with a*

Recitation of the Assertions of Sir William Jones, Respecting the Shamscrit Alphabet ... Calculated for the Use of Europeans. In 1805 he published his *Unbiased Contemplation of the East Indian System of the Brahmins, Their Religious Rites and Popular Customs* in Russian from St Petersburg.³¹

From the middle of the nineteenth century, Russia's interest in Sanskrit and Hindu literature produced a growing commitment to Indian studies by her scholars. Uvarov was chancellor of the University of Saint Petersburg. *Projet d'une Académie Asiatique* (1810), the work of Uvarov, the chancellor of the University of Saint Petersburg, described his plan to establish an Asiatic Academy at the University and was inspired by Calcutta's Asiatic Society. Russian instruction of the Oriental languages, with a preference for Sanskrit, finally began in 1818 when Uvarov, who had become a government minister, inaugurated the Asiatic Academy at the University of Saint Petersburg.

Initially, foreign scholars taught Sanskrit and other oriental languages at this Academy. (79, 449) Most of them came from Germany, like Friedrich Adelung. (79, 450) Adelung, who was a councillor of state, became the director of the Oriental Institute at St Petersburg in 1823 after writing his German papers on the relationship between Sanskrit and Russian in 1811. The Institute was attached to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. He was also the first to compile a bibliography of Sanskrit works, which was titled *Bibliotheca Sanscrita* in the second edition (1837). (172)

Count S S Novarov created a Sanskrit chair when he was appointed a Minister of Public Instruction and the president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. Robert Lenz (1808-36) filled the chair as a professor of Sanskrit and comparative philology at the Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg for only one year due to his early death. The sustained interest of Russian scholars in Sanskrit studies required a replacement. Pavel

Yakovlevich Petrov (1814-75) was appointed to two chairs of Sanskrit, one at Kazan University in 1841 and the other at the University of Moscow from 1852 to 1875. (79) Petrov translated part of the *Ramayana* into Russian, adding grammatical notes and a Sanskrit glossary, in 1836.³²

A significant event occurred between 1852 and 1875. The Academy of Sciences published the unexcelled *Saint Petersburg Sanskrit-German Dictionary* in seven volumes that was the fruit of Rudolf von Roth and Otto Böhtlingk's labour.³³ Nearly all of Europe was now potentially in the realm of wisdom conveyed only through Sanskrit. The *Chandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Katha*, *Aitareya*, and *Prashna Upanishads*—all containing the Devanagari script—also became available. By the late nineteenth century, partial translations of the *Rig Veda*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* also appeared in Russian.

Ivan Pavlovich Minayev (1840-90) was appointed a professor of Sanskrit in 1869 and a professor of the comparative grammar of Indo-European languages in 1873 at the University of Saint Petersburg. He travelled extensively throughout India, lecturing in Sanskrit and mixing with Indians from all stations in life. Minayev's first journey, from June 1874 to December of the following year, included trips to Calcutta, Nepal and Sri Lanka. His second visit five years later, from January to May 1880, took him to many cities throughout India. On his final visit, begun in December of 1885 and lasting five months, he travelled to Calcutta and Burma. He spent much more time in Calcutta on this last visit and met many leading Bengali intellectuals, including the literary luminary, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94).

Throughout his journeys, Minayev acquired a vast collection of Indian works and brought them back to Russia.³⁴ His meetings with Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837-1925) and other Indian scholars greatly aided him in this work. Bhandarkar was later elected

to the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1888 as an honorary corresponding member.³⁵ The Sanskrit and Pali manuscripts Minayev collected are preserved at the State Library of Saint Petersburg; his collections of art and archaeology are housed in the museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg.³⁶

Theodore Stcherbatsky was drawn to Indian literature and philosophy. Two important works that he published were a study of Harikavi's epic poem of the seventh century in German (1900) and a work on the theory of Indian poetry in Russian (1902). In 1903 he published the first volume of *Theory of Knowledge and Logic in the Doctrines of Later Buddhism* in Russian, followed by the second volume in 1909. In 1909 he was also appointed assistant professor of Sanskrit at the University of Saint Petersburg and later occupied the chair of Sanskrit until his death. His subsequent mastery as an interpreter of Indian philosophy and his discovery of rare Sanskrit, Buddhist and Jain manuscripts earned him high regard as a leading Western authority on Buddhism. After travelling to India in 1910-11, he received the help of traditional Sanskrit scholars and translated the essence of Nyaya logic into Russian with their help. He preserved many rare, ancient texts on Nyaya logic by photographing them (they could not be purchased) for later use.³⁷

In 1916, London's Royal Asiatic Society published Stcherbatsky's *Central Conception of Buddhism* in English. His greatest work, *Buddhist Logic*, included references to the six main schools of Indian philosophy. It was published in two volumes as part of the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* series in 1935. He published many translations of works on Buddhism and Sanskrit, including Dandin's *Dashakumara Charitam* in three instalments in Russian between 1923 and 1925 and *Abhisamayalankara Prajna Paramita* by Maitreyanatha (270-350 AD) with the Sanskrit text and an English translation in 1929.

Stcherbatsky was the director of the Russian Institute of Buddhist Culture from 1928 to 1930 and head of the Indo-Tibetan section of the Institute of Oriental Studies from 1930 to 1942. Because he presented Buddhism in a non-theistic way while he was living in Russia, his contributions on Buddhism survived the Communist regime.³⁸

Mikhael Tubyanski (1893-1943) lectured on the Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengali languages at the Leningrad Institute of Modern Oriental Languages from 1920 to 1927, and later taught at Leningrad University. He published the Sanskrit text of *Nyaya Pravvesha* accompanied by the Mongol and Tibetan equivalents, another work on Bengali literature in 1922, and left other unpublished works.³⁹

Sergei Oldenburg (1863-1934) became the professor of Sanskrit at the University of Saint Petersburg and sponsored the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* series under the auspices of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1897. His expeditions to Central Turkestan, Mongolia and Tibet resulted in a vast collection of archaeological artefacts and literary materials. He was appointed the director of the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1916. The Museum and its collection were transferred to the Oriental Institute in 1930, after which Oldenburg reorganized the Institute. His works include *Buddhiskrija Legendi* (1894-95) and *Notes on Buddhistic Art* (1897). (359-60)

E E Obermiller (1901-35) joined the Academy of Sciences and assisted the editor of the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* series. He edited the *Sanskrit and Tibetan Index Verborum to Nyayabindu* according to the *Nyayabindu Tika* in 1927. He translated the Sanskrit text of the *Abhisamayalankara* into Tibetan and published it with Stcherbatsky as co-editor in 1929. In 1931 he published a Russian translation of the *Uttaratantra of Boddhisattva Maitreya* with Asanga's commentary. Other works include a study on the doctrine of the *Prajna Paramita* and a history of Buddhism in two parts; both works were published in 1931-32. (358)

Alexei Petrovich Barannikov (1890-1952) published several Russian translations of Hindi works, including the *Ramcharitmanas* of Tulsidas. As head of the Oriental Department at the University of Saint Petersburg, he lectured at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences on ancient Indian literature and on Sanskrit language, grammar and poetics. He translated Adi Paravan's *Mahabharata* and Aryasura's *Jatakmalā* into Russian for the *Bibliotheca Buddhica*. (286-7)

The works of other Russian scholars and artists who were inspired by Vedanta are beyond the scope of this article and may also be found in the book, *Journey of the Upanishads to the West*. Today, Soviet intellectuals in reputable posts in Russia are gradually showing their sustained interest in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda phenomenon. Dr Chelishchev was the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow and the vice president of the Committee for Comprehensive Study of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. He was head of the Indian Languages and Literature Section at Moscow University's Institute of International Relations before assuming his post as the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Dr Chelishchev was a member of the Soviet Writers Union and the Soviet Peace Committee and the vice president of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Society. He also received the Jawaharlal Nehru Prize for Peace. Several of his articles appear in *Swami Vivekananda Studies in the Soviet Union*, including 'Swami Vivekananda—The Indian Humanist, Democrat and Patriot.' The lengthy article was chosen to be included in the *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume*.⁴⁰ Russian scholarship on Swami Vivekananda has been going on for the last thirty years.

From the 1980s, Professor V S Kostyuchenko's monograph, 'Conception of Neo-Vedantism,' Rybakov's 'Bourgeois Reformation of Hinduism,' and other Russian studies of the religious and philosophical heritage of Rama-

krishna and Vivekananda have been published in Russia. In October 1984, Swami Lokeshwarananda's visit and lectures in Russia culminated in meetings with eight Russian scholars in order to study India's culture and philosophy. Harish C Gupta translated their works from Russian into English for the authoritative book, *Swami Vivekananda Studies in the Soviet Union*, which was published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in 1987. The 150th birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was observed the same year in a three-day seminar held by the Institute from 16 to 18 January. It was organized in collaboration with the Cultural Affairs Committee of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow and the Soviet Writers Union. Fourteen Russian scholars from various disciplines led by R B Rybakov participated in the seminar.

We close with a poignant example of the profound and far-reaching capacity of Sanskrit scriptures to inspire and transform people. Theodor Springmann, a German officer during World War I, translated the *Bhagavad-gita* and carried the sacred scripture into the trenches with him. Only months before his death while performing his duty as a commander of mine-throwing, he wrote the Preface to his translation and gave a meaningful epigraph:

One can never find anything right in life without abstraction and metaphysical knowledge, thoroughness and piety. What is needed is an educated overview of the whole, the fervour of the faith and feeling, which inspires to action and which gives them real value; also needed is the self-discipline acquired through long effort, the ability to concentrate instantly all the powers on one single point. Thus, the various systems and ways of salvation are mobilized in the *Bhagavad Gita* to show the necessity to fight against the enemies of justice and to give moral strength to those fighting in this battle. The very brahmanic cult of sacrifice can teach us to look at the entire life as a sacrifice. The greatest sacrifice is the sacrifice of the warrior's life upon the altar of the battle. The gates of Heaven are open

to him.⁴¹

Theodor Springmann's sentiment highlights the potential to transcend pessimistic thought, which is typically grounded in actions of the will in the West, and from which the Western philosophers sought release through the inspiration they received from the East. *

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Judgment

God won't ask the square footage of your house,
but He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet,
but He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.

God won't ask what your highest salary was,
but He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.

God won't ask what your job title was,
but He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

God won't ask how many friends you had,
but He'll ask how many people you were a friend to.

God won't ask in what neighbourhood you lived,
but He'll ask how you treated your neighbours.

God won't ask about the colour of your skin,
but He'll ask about the content of your character.

God won't ask why it took you so long to seek salvation,
but He'll lovingly take you to your mansion in heaven, and not to the gates of hell.

—from cyberspace

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras—An Exposition

SWAMI PREMESHANANDA

(Translated by Shoutir Kishore Chatterjee)

Chapter 4 (continued)

11. *Hetu-phalāśrayālbambanaiḥ saṅgrhitatvād-eṣām-abhāve tad-abhāvaḥ.*

As desires are held together by cause [the pain-bearing obstructions (2.3) and actions (4.7)], effect [species, life and experience of pleasure and pain (2.13)], support [the mind-stuff] and [external] objects [which present themselves to the senses], in the absence of these [factors] is its [desire's] absence.

Comment: Endless varieties of play of manifestations of life ranging from a blade of grass up to human beings go on in this creation. It generates awe in our mind when we think about what tremendous efforts every jiva makes in its life to achieve the twin purposes of preservation of life and enjoyment of sense objects. A little attention would show us what an immense struggle is going on day and night within our bodies. What elaborate provisions are made for the alleviation of suffering! Nobody knows what the purpose of all this is, wherefrom it started or what its outcome will be!

Yet the state of the matter is rather strange—it is just like that story about 'all for a piece of loin cloth'.¹ Nobody knows the means to get relief from this misery. One does not succeed even if one tries somehow to know a little bit. That is why the Lord has said, 'Among

thousands of men one perchance struggles for perfection. Even if one or two among such men achieve success, rarely do we find someone who attains complete liberation.'²

According to Yoga shastra, all activities of this life are just like the working of a machine. As long as the machine is not removed from our presence, we are sure to experience its working and it is impossible to prevent the reaction to that. Therefore if one can restrain the mind-stuff by following the prescribed practice of yoga and thus gradually get rid of this 'unripe I', all troubles will cease. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'All trouble and botheration come to an end when the 'I' dies.'³ Sri Krishna said, 'All action in its entirety, O Partha, attains its consummation in knowledge.'⁴ This implies that no misery remains if one comprehends one's true nature.

12. *Atitānāgatam svarūpatō'sty-adhva-bhedād-dharmāṅām.*

The past and future exist in their own nature, qualities having different ways. [That is, the past and future, though not existing in a manifested form, yet exist in a fine form, since existence never comes out of non-existence.]

13. *Te vyakta-sūkṣmā guṇātmanaḥ.*

They are manifested or fine, being of the nature of the gunas. [That is, past and future arise from the different modes of manifestation of the three gunas.]

14. *Pariṇāmaikatvād-vastu-tattvam.*

The unity in things is from the unity in changes.

Comment: We see time as divided into three parts. We observe the changes that occur in nature with the passage of time and think along the lines that ‘something is not present now’ and ‘something will be there in the future’. But ‘The unreal has no existence, and the real has no non-existence.’⁵ How can what exists be not there; and from where will come the existence of what is not there? Hence the wise (jnanis) understand that even if something is not present before us, it inheres within its cause; and what will materialize will also ap-

pear out of what is already present. If an object becomes manifest, we see it as existent at the present time and if an object becomes unmanifest, we think it is no longer there. The apparent changes in an object with change of time are but illusory. The wise do not make this mistake because they have realized the true natures of what is *sat* (Real) and what is *asat* (unreal). Basically, there is no second thing other than the One. It is only one nature comprised of the three gunas that appears to us in various forms.

15. *Vastu-sāmye citta-bhedāt-tayor-vibhaktāḥ panthāḥ.*

Since perception and desire vary with regard to the same object, mind and object are of different nature [that is, there is an objective world independent of our minds].

16. *Tad-uparāgāpekṣitvāc-cittasya vastu jñātā-jñātam.*

Things are known or unknown to the mind, being dependent on the colouring which they give to the mind.

17. *Sadā jñātās-citta-vṛttayas-tat-prabhoh puruṣasyāpariṇāmitvāt.*

The states of the mind [which is continuously changing] are always known, because the Lord of the mind, the Purusha, is unchangeable.

18. *Na tat svābhāsam dṛśyatvāt.*

The mind is not self-luminous [that is, not essentially intelligent], since it is an object [for the Purusha to perceive].

19. *Ekasamaye cobhayānavadhāraṇam.*

From its being unable to cognize both [itself and its objects] at the same time.

Comment: Even though the object may remain same, it does not always become manifest in the mind-stuff of a jiva. That is why there is so much difference in knowledge between one man and another. If that is so, is it that something which nobody knows does not exist? It is not like that. Actually, the process of cognition takes place in relation to the mind-stuff.

The Lord of this universe, *chit* or Consciousness, quietly looks on at nature through eternity. Therefore He can always know all the

happenings in nature. Our mind and intellect are objects being viewed by *chit* or Purusha. This is because when we perceive something with the help of the senses we can cognize the process, but when the mind-intellect combination perceives something [directly] it becomes identified with that and cannot [at the same time reflect on itself and] cognize that it is perceiving the thing. Therefore Purusha alone is the perceiver; all else are merely perceptible objects.

20. *Cittāntara-dṛśye buddhi-buddher-atiprasaṅgaḥ smṛti-saṅkaraśca.*

Another cognizing mind being assumed, there will be no end to such assumptions, and confusion of memory will be the result.

21. *Citer-apratisaṅkramāyās-tad-ākārāpattau sva-buddhi-saṁvedanam.*

The essence of knowledge (the Purusha) is unchangeable; when the mind takes its form, it [the mind for the time being] becomes conscious [and seems as if it were itself the Purusha].

22. *Draṣṭṛ-dṛśyoparaktam cittam sarvārtham.*

Coloured by the seer and the seen [both of which are reflected on the mind], the mind is able to understand everything.

Comment: Some philosophers used to assert that when the mind cognizes an object by assuming the form of the object, another mind posits itself behind the earlier one and cognizes the separateness of the latter's existence. But such a proposition is out and out illogical. If we assume a second mind then it becomes necessary to assume another mind to perceive its function. In this way we have to go on assuming mind after mind and never reach the end of our assumptions. But if we realize the truth that there is one Purusha, who is the seer of mind in its entirety, then the problem becomes completely solved.

How can the mind, which is insentient, know the distinctiveness of an object? Being

posited before the Purusha, the mind becomes illumined by Purusha's luminosity. As a result, objects become reflected on it. Then, a person deluded by ignorance erroneously thinks, 'I have seen'; a person of realization, on the other hand, perceives that the external objects have merely been reflected on the mind. The secret of the matter here is that when by the influence of maya the play of creation starts, the Purusha (or *chit*) finds the mind or intellect before Him; and as creation is present before the mind, it also gets reflected on the mind. The play of creation begins as soon as the mind is placed in front of the Purusha and the universe is placed in front of the mind.

23. *Tad-asamkhyeya-vāsanābhiś-citram-api parārtham saṁhatya-kāritoāt.*

Though variegated by innumerable desires, the mind [cannot work for itself; it] acts for another (the Purusha), because it acts in combination [that is, as a compound of various things. The combination is for the sake of the Purusha].

Comment: If we observe the functioning of the mind-stuff, it seems that the intellect is engaged in multifarious activities to meet its own needs and as if there is no end to its needs. But however busy the intellect (buddhi) may be, it cannot do anything on its own; the ego,

the mind (manas) and past impressions standing behind it, keep it engaged in activity. From this it conclusively follows that the Purusha from behind contrives this arrangement and makes the intellect toil like a servant; the intellect is not independent or autonomous.

24. *Viśeṣa-darśina ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā-nivṛtīḥ.*

For the discriminating, the perception of the mind as Atman ceases.

Comment: The intellect of man gets very sharp through long observation of such pastimes of nature. We always find in this world that long cultivation of an art by a person leads

to the development of the sharpness of his faculties with regard to it. In matters of agriculture we have to take advice from a farmer. If a learned and intelligent person has to graze cat-

tle, he has to learn the art from somebody who has grazed cattle for a long time. The power of discrimination becomes manifest in the intellect of one who carries out investigations into cosmogony for a long time. When that power reaches its culmination, it is called *viveka-khyāti*, or discriminative knowledge. When the intellect attains that state, the aspirant can clearly see the distinction between the insentient [nature] and Consciousness.

The process is like a chemical reaction. To separate out curd from milk, we mix a little

acid in the milk. Just like that, if we mix *viveka-khyāti* in our faculty of understanding, the Purusha on the one hand and nature (or nescience, or maya) on the other become completely separated. Then one can distinctly see that one's 'I' is neither the mind nor the intellect, nor the ego, but completely separate from all this. At that time one no longer has any thought or worry about oneself.

25. *Tadā viveka-nimnariṅ kaivalya-prāgbhāvariṅ cittam.*

Then, bent on discriminating, the mind attains the previous state of *kaivalya* (isolation).

Comment: This condition of the mind represents the stage immediately preceding the attainment of *kaivalya*. At this stage, buddhi

remains completely immersed in *viveka-khyāti*.

26. *Tac-chidreṣu pratyayāntarāṅi saṅskārebhyaḥ.*

[At this time] the [other] thoughts that [occasionally] arise as obstructions to that [through breaks in discriminative knowledge, making us believe that we require something external to make us happy,] are from [past] impressions.

27. *Hānam-eṣāṅ kleśavad-uktam.*

The destruction [of such obstructing thoughts] is in the same manner as [that of the saṅskaras such as] ignorance, egoism and so on, as said before.⁶

Comment: It is strange that even in this state one sometimes feels bits of indications of past impressions. We have already mentioned

that celestial beings try to distract the mind of a yogi.⁷

28. *Prasaṅkhyāne'py-akusidasya sarvathā viveka-khyāter-dharma-meghaḥ samādhiḥ.*

Even when arriving at the right discriminating knowledge of the essences, he who gives up [that is, loses interest in] the fruits [thereof, such as omniscience], to him comes, as the result of perfect discrimination, the samadhi called *dharma-megha*, or the cloud of virtue, [and as the consequence, peace, calmness and perfect purity become their own nature].

29. *Tataḥ kleśa-karma-nivṛttiḥ.*

From that comes the cessation of pain and works.

Comment: There are a few who after reaching this state can preserve their *viveka-khyāti*. They do not utilize the omniscience and omnipotence attained by them and can keep the mind and intellect directed towards libera-

tion. No trace of delusion or suffering remains in their lives and they become embodiments of purity. By the influence of their purity, anyone coming near them also feels himself pure.

30. *Tadā sarvāvaraṇa-malāpetasya jñānasyā'nantyañ-jñeyam-alpam.*

[At this stage] the knowledge, bereft of covering and impurities, becoming infinite, the knowable becomes small.

Comment: In the *Gita* the Lord has said, 'I exist supporting this entire universe by a portion of Myself.'⁸ Sri Ramakrishna saw the creation of the infinite universe in the *cidākāśa* (space of Consciousness). Swami Turiyananda used to say, 'When Brahman is realized in the essence of one's consciousness, this creation seems to be insignificant.'

This creation is nothing but the play of *maya*. Nature, or *maya*, performs tilting and swinging movements of her body and creates this world with the help of the three *gunas*. We remain so deluded by its diversity that we cannot at all see the reality behind this phenomenon.

Around us evaporate masses of water and rise to the sky; the vapour condenses to

appear in the form of clouds. Anyone who has keenly observed knows what shapes, what lustre of light and what play of lightning are exhibited in the clouds. The root cause of such wonderful play of clouds is only that vapour. Likewise, all the happenings of this creation are nothing but the varied sport of *maya* constituted by the three *gunas*. To those who for once find out their real Self, this sport seems so insignificant that they do not have the least interest in turning their eyes towards it. Further, the thing which they realize in the essence of their consciousness, is absolutely the most sublime in every way. That is called Brahman because there is nothing greater than It. 'The Greatest'—that is what Brahman means.

31. *Tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāma-krama-samāptir-guṇānām.*

Then are finished the successive transformations of the qualities (*gunas*), their having attained the end.

32. *Kṣaṇa-pratīyogī pariṇāmāparānta-nirgrāhyaḥ kramah.*

The changes that exist in relation to moments and which are perceived at the other end (of a series) are [called] succession. [But for the mind that has realized omnipresence there is no succession; to it the present alone exists and everything is known to it like a flash.]

33. *Puruṣārtha-śūnyānām guṇānām prati-prasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ svarūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citi-śakter-iti.*

The resolution in the inverse order⁹ of the qualities [*gunas*], [when they are] bereft of any motive of action for the Purusha, is *kaivalya* [or isolation], or it is the establishment of the power of knowledge in its own [isolated] nature.

Comment: When the yogi attains this state, he no longer looks back at nature. Therefore all the transformations of nature which had been going on so long, completely cease now. So long, nature had been playing and keeping the Purusha charmed by offering various experiences. Now with the cessation of the gathering of experiences, the Purusha becomes re-established in his forgotten true Self.

tion, August 2003, 424), although the essential points of *Yoga shastra* are not difficult to grasp, the many subtle arguments contained in the aphorisms and discussed in the numerous commentaries and glosses are generally incomprehensible to common people. Side by side, we have the lucid exposition of Swami Vivekananda, which to the general public would seem to be quite extensive.¹⁰

The present exposition is mainly based on Swamiji's explanation. However, in the case of the intricate aphorisms, we have con-

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier (in the Introduc-

sidered merely the gist of the meaning. For various reasons, novel explanations have been provided at certain places. Understanding will be easier if one reads the present exposition along with the exceptionally lucid and meaningful explanation given by Swamiji.

Swamiji said that the life of Sri Ramakrishna fully harmonizes knowledge, work, yoga, and devotion. Doubts may arise in the mind of some that raja yoga dwells exclusively on concentration of the mind; where does it discuss devotion? If somebody tries to concentrate his mind on something, should we not take it that he regards the thing as extremely dear to his heart? It is for this reason that one should get one's Chosen Deity (spiritual ideal) from the right teacher. In our country the guru instructs the disciple specifically about the mantra corresponding to his Chosen Deity. *

Notes and References

1. The story is about a hermit who had re-

nounced everything except a piece of loin cloth. To ward off mice that tended to bite holes in that loin cloth, he started rearing a cat. Then to provide milk for the cat, he had to maintain a cow. Ultimately in order that the cow could be properly cared for, he had to marry and start a household. —Translator.

2. *Bhagavadgita*, 7.3.
3. M, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 149.
4. *Gita*, 4.33.
5. *Ibid.*, 2.16.
6. See sutras 2.10-1.
7. See sutra 3.52 and the corresponding note (May 2004, 320).
8. *Gita*, 10.42.
9. That is, from effect to cause; see sutra 2.10, November 2003, 568.
10. While translating, we have condensed this portion slightly; the original here repeats some observations made in Subsection 7 of the Introduction. —Translator.

Beautiful Pearls

Jenny was a bright-eyed, pretty five-year-old girl. One day her mother bought her a plastic pearl necklace worth \$2.50. How Jenny loved those pearls. She wore them everywhere—to kindergarten, bed and when she went out with her mother to run errands. The only time she didn't wear them was in the shower. Her mother had told her that they would turn her neck green! When Jenny went to bed, her father would get up from his favourite chair every night and read to her a favourite story.

One night when he finished the story, he said, 'Jenny, do you love me?' 'Oh yes, daddy, you know I love you,' the little girl said. 'Well, then, give me your pearls.' 'Oh! Daddy, not my pearls!' she said. 'But you can have Rosy, my favourite doll.' 'Oh no, darling, that's okay. Good night, sweet dreams.' The same thing happened a week later, when Jenny was prepared to give him a toy horse, not the pearls. Some days later, when her father came to read her a story, she was sitting on her bed with her lips trembling. 'Here, daddy,' she said and held out her hand. She opened it and her beloved pearl necklace was inside. She let it slip into her father's hand. With one hand her father held the plastic pearls and with the other he pulled out of his pocket a blue velvet box. Inside the box were real, genuine, beautiful pearls. He had had them all along. He was waiting for Jenny to give up the cheap stuff so he could give her the real thing.

So it is with God. He is waiting for us to give up the cheap things of life so He can give us beautiful treasures. Isn't God good?

—from cyberspace

Parabrahma Upaniṣad

TRANSLATED BY SWAMI ATMAPRIYANANDA

Synopsis

A part of the *Atharva Veda*, this Upaniṣad discusses the following: Brahman-knowledge (*brahma-vidyā*) as the highest wisdom, the greatness of action performed without desires, the means to realize the 'three-footed' (*tripad*) Brahman, the true significance of the tuft and the sacred thread (*śikhā* and *sūtra*), the nature of the attributeless Brahman and the means to be adopted by a seeker of Liberation.

Peace Chant (*Śānti-mantra*)

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः । स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाँ सस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om. O gods (shining ones), may our ears hear what is auspicious.¹ May [we], while engaged in sacrificial worship, see with our eyes what is auspicious.² May [we], while engaged in singing the praise (glory) [of the Divine], obtain our [full] span of life as graciously ordained by the Supreme [*deva*, God], [being blessed with] perfect (literally, 'steady', 'firm') limbs and organs and [healthy] bodies (that is, energetic and strong physiques).³ *Om.* Peace, Peace, Peace.

Brahman-knowledge (*Brahma-vidyā*), the highest wisdom

वरिष्ठा ब्रह्मविद्या

अथ हैनं महाशालः शौनकोऽङ्गिरसं भगवन्तं पिप्पलादं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ । दिव्ये ब्रह्मपुरे संप्रतिष्ठिता भवन्ति खलु । कथं सृजन्नित्यात्मन एष महिमा विभज्य एष महिमा विभुः कः । एष तस्मै स होवाच । एतत्सत्यं यत्प्रब्रवीमि ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां देवेभ्यः प्राणेभ्यः परब्रह्मपुरे विरजं निष्कलं शुभ्रमक्षरं विरजं विभाति स नियच्छति मधुकरराश्या निर्मकः अकर्मस्वपुरस्थितः कर्मकः कर्षकवत् फलमनुभवति । कर्ममर्मज्ञाता कर्म करोति । कर्ममर्म ज्ञात्वा कर्म कुर्यात् । को जालं विक्षिपेदेकेनैनमपकर्षत्यपकर्षति ॥१॥

1. Well, then, Śaunaka, the great householder, approached the venerable sage (*bhagavān*)⁴ Pippalāda of Aṅgiras lineage in the proper manner and asked him: [All created things in the world] are indeed surely well established in the divinely luminous city of Brahman.⁵ How does this great Lord⁶ project them⁷ out of Himself in [diverse forms] through [the process of] differentiation? Who is this great and omnipresent [Lord]? To him [that is, the questioner, Śaunaka, the well-known sage Pippalāda] said [in reply]: The noblest [the most excellent] knowledge of Brahman, which I [now] expound—this [Brahman] is the Truth.⁸ It shines with splendour in the supreme city of Brahman, devoid of [the three *guṇas* like] *rajas*, unfragmented [whole], [spotlessly] pure, imperishable, [sustaining the powers of] the shining ones (the senses) and the vital forces.⁹ He is the creator of the group of bees [the conglomeration of individual souls]; [further] He [the creator God] restrains [their outward-going tendencies].¹⁰ He remains established in His own [interior] city [of inner Self, which is]¹¹ actionless.¹² [On the other hand, one given to outward vision becomes] a performer of actions and enjoys the fruits [of his action], like a farmer.¹³ [Thus] the knower of the secret of work performs [all] actions [in the right spirit].¹⁴ [Therefore,

one should] perform actions after knowing the secret of work. Which [discriminating] person will throw the net [of actions with desires] on Brahman, the One [without a second]?¹⁵ [The actions performed by such a desireless person] do not drag him down [to wordliness]; [verily,] they do not drag him down.¹⁶

(To be continued)

Notes

1. That is, the words of the holy scriptures; elevating, noble thoughts.
2. If the word *yajatrāḥ* is taken to mean the gods (in the vocative case, in the sense of addressing them), then it would mean ‘worshipful ones’, so that the sentence would mean, ‘O worshipful ones, may we see with our eyes that which is auspicious.’
3. It is significant to note that the Vedic *ṛṣis* were not world-negating ascetics: their sense of dispassion, or *vairāgya*, was not negative, but had a definite and highly elevating positive content. Their prayer is for living a long life of health, strength and vitality, so that they would be able to spend their whole energy and life absorbed in the contemplation of the Divine and in singing the glory of the supreme Being, in a mood of joyous abandon of their little selves in the infinity of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*).
4. Sages endowed with godly qualities are usually referred to in the scriptures as *bhagavān*. The meaning of the word as found in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (and quoted by Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary on the *Gītā*, 3.37) is as follows: ‘*Bhagavān* is one in whom the sixfold *bhaga* ever abides collectively and in perfection.’ *Bhaga* means the divine excellences (of the Lord): absolute glory, rectitude, honour, splendour, dispassion and freedom.

Another verse quoted by Śaṅkara in the same context is as follows: ‘He who knows the origin and destruction (evolution and dissolution), the course and movement of (all) beings and (the meaning and purport of) knowledge and ignorance—such a one is called *bhagavān*.’

5. That is, the ‘space of Consciousness’ called the heart (*hṛdayākāśa*) or the Cosmic Person (known as *hiraṇyagarbha*). —Upaniṣad Brahmayogin’s commentary.
6. *Bhagavān*, endowed with the power to make the impossible possible. —Upaniṣad Brahmayogin’s commentary.
7. That is, the things which are (already) present within himself.
8. The word *satyam* used in the text in regard to Brahman means Truth as well as Existence. Brahman is the only pure Existence; all else is naught (*sanmātram asadanyat*). It is absolute Existence, the One without a second.
9. This is in answer to the question, Where is this Brahman realized? In reply the Upaniṣad asserts that It is realized in the city of Brahman (which has already been identified as the *hṛdayākāśa*, the ‘space of Consciousness’, or the heart) and characterized by a transcendence of all *guṇas* (*triguṇātita*), partlessness or wholeness (*niṣkala*), absolute purity (*śubhra*), immutability or indestructibility (*akṣara*). Further, it is this power of Brahman which sustains and maintains the powers manifested through the sense organs and vital energy (compare *Kāṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.1.3: ‘*Yena rūpaṁ rasaṁ gandhaṁ śabdān sparśāṁśca maithunān; Yenaiva vijānāti kimatra pariśiṣyate; etadvai tat*). The word *deva* in the text is interpreted by Upaniṣad Brahmayogin as the senses. Alternatively, it could perhaps also mean the various gods who derive their power from the power of Brahman (compare *Kena Upaniṣad*, 3.1: ‘*Brahma ha devebhyo vijigye, tasya ha brahmaṇo vijaye devā amahīyanta*’; 4.1: ‘*Sā brahmeti hovaca brahmaṇo vā etadvijaye mahīyadhvamiti*’).
10. Upaniṣad Brahmayogin interprets ‘bees’ as symbolic of *jīvas*, or embodied souls. The supreme Lord Paramēśvara has created groups of *jīvas* characterized by bondage and endowed with the capacity

for liberation alongside, till the moment of final dissolution (*samplava*). The supreme Lord, out of compassion for spiritual aspirants who eagerly seek liberation, restrains, or completely obliterates, their outward-going propensity and grants them the blessing of inward vision through which Brahman is realized.

11. From the Advaitic point of view the blessing of inward vision that is granted to the aspirant is, in fact, the grace that comes from his own Self. This grace is thus the supreme prize that the Self of man awards Itself, thereby remaining established in Self-hood as pure Being. This is figuratively called the city of the inner Self (*brahmapuri* or *ātmaloka*).
12. The question arises: What work does an aspirant of interiorized vision do? In reply, the *śruti* says, '*Karmaṇā badhyate janturvidyayā ca vimucyate; Tasmāt karma na kuroanti yatayaḥ pāradaśinaḥ*; One is bound by work and released by Knowledge. Therefore monks (or ascetics) with transcendental vision do not engage themselves in work.' A deep contemplation of the meaning of the above statement and the realization of its true import lead to a state of mind in which there is absolutely no sprout of desire in the heart. Such a person of realization hence becomes actionless and a mendicant monk, for he enjoys the bliss and contentment of inner fulfilment born of absolute desirelessness (*nirvāsanā*). Again, there is this *śruti* statement: '*Kartavyam naiva tasyāsti*; He has verily no duty to perform.'
13. Whereas a person of inner vision becomes actionless on account of absorption in his higher Self, the opposite is the case with one who is given to outer vision. Such a one is constantly engaged in doing various types of activities with a desire to attain the fruits thereof in this world and the next. Like a farmer he reaps his harvest, which is of the nature of taking repeated births in a variety of wombs.
14. The idea is that a wise man seeking liberation from his own world of illusion ought to do work knowing fully the secret of work and perform actions pertaining to his own order (*āśrama*) with a heightened awareness and devoid of all desires. The question 'Who on earth will try to get entangled in a network of various kinds of activities calculated to fulfil one's desires, rather than perform desireless action leading to the knowledge of the attributeless Brahman?' does not really seek an answer. It has the thrust of asserting that 'None will do so.'
15. On account of the knowledge of the secret of work—that work done with desire is the cause of birth and so on—he performs all work for the purification of the mind and with the awareness that all work is actually worship of the supreme Lord.
16. The actions performed by such a wise, desireless person of discriminating intellect do not drag him down even a wee bit towards worldliness. The repetition of the statement 'They don't drag him down' indicates that by the performance of selfless actions without desires, one shall attain the state of supreme Blessedness through mental purification followed by Knowledge. It also indicates that the *sādhaka* should strive to attain the supreme state of Brahman-realization by Knowledge obtained from purification of the mind arising from a faithful discharge of his duties.

How to Work

One need have no fear so long as one clings to the idea 'I am thankful that I am able to do His work, to serve Him through this (work).' One should keep strict vigil over one's mind, analysing it at every turn. Whenever you notice that the course of the mind is altering even slightly, you should at once start praying to Him in all humility, and you should apply yourself more intensely to your spiritual practices. Not that one has to work all the twenty-four hours of the day. And even while working, one has to maintain a constant current of thought about Him.

—Mahapurush Swami Shivananda

Glimpses of Holy Lives

'May the Guest Be Your God!'

It was raining heavily throughout the day in Ilayankudi. That remote village in Tamil Nadu had not seen such a heavy downpour for a long time. Maran was confined to his house. He had had just a glass of water that morning; nothing more throughout the day—not because he was on some fast, but there was nothing to eat. It was late in the evening now. Across the room lay his wife. Theirs was a life devoted to the service of Lord Shiva and his devotees. Before entertaining a sannyasin for the day, neither of them ate anything. But there was no visitor that day yet. When they themselves had nothing to eat, the heavy downpour proved a blessing in disguise: no one could possibly visit their house now.

Maran was a devoted farmer. There was a time when he reaped rich harvest from his field. Both he and his wife loved to entertain guests. Satisfied by a sumptuous meal and their loving hospitality, the guests left the house with a cheerful face and kind words for them. Sannyasins would assemble in front of his house awaiting his arrival from the field. When Maran was back home, his wife would be ready with food for more people than necessary. He would wash his face, hands and feet, apply sacred ash on his forehead and prostrate before the sannyasins along with his wife. They would then feed them with great devotion. The sannyasins would leave after expressing their gratitude and blessings in the name of Shiva. Maran and his wife would eat then, considering the food as prasad.

All that was past. Maran was in poverty now thanks to repeated crop failure. More than his hunger that day, it was his inability to feed a sannyasin that disturbed Maran more. Amid flashes of lightning and thunder, Maran heard a knock on the door. He and his wife

went to the door with an earthen lamp in hand. '*Shivo'ham*'—there stood before them a sannyasin. They welcomed him. 'I am hungry,' said the visitor. 'I was told that a devoted farmer lives here, so I came here straight.' 'You did well, holy one,' said Maran. He gave the drenched visitor a new ochre cloth and made him comfortable. 'Be seated, holy one; food will be ready in a moment.'

Maran looked at his wife, who said there was nothing to cook. She had borrowed from others many a time. Now she did not know what to do. Maran suddenly thought of something and rushed to his field, covering his head with a basket. In that dark night he waded through knee-deep slush, retrieved with difficulty a fraction of the paddy he had sown that morning and rushed back to his house. His wife wondered what they would do for firewood. Maran removed the wooden beam that supported a major part of his house and hacked it to pieces. He then got some greens from the backyard. His wife cooked the rice grains and made some dishes from the greens. The rain intensified in the meanwhile. As his wife spread a leaf for the guest, Maran invited the sannyasin for food. There was a flash of lightning—not from outside but inside the house. The sannyasin vanished and there stood Shiva, His luminous form lighting up the room. He said, 'You didn't care for your own hunger, My dear, but retrieved the sown grains from the field for a sannyasin's sake. Come here, My child, with your wife. You will be with Me for eternity. All the gods will be at your service.' Both Maran and his wife merged in the luminous form of their Lord.

Ilayankudi Mara Nayanar is adored as one of the sixty-three Shaiva saints of Tamil Nadu. *

A Survey of the Mind

SWAMI SATYASWARUPANANDA

Amidst the *Gita* discourse, when Arjuna confessed his helplessness in getting to terms with his mind, comparing it to the impossible task of controlling the winds, he was not just speaking out the minds of all spiritual aspirants; he could well have been speaking for the endless stream of thinkers and scientists whose wits and imaginations have been engaged in cracking the riddle of the mind. For, just as spiritual aspirants have always been struggling to master their own minds, philosophers and empiricists have been trying, with limited success, to understand the nature of the human mind in intellectual and scientific terms. The human mind, however, has remained an enigma. Be that as it may, the range of knowledge and discipline that has been brought to bear on these investigations has been truly phenomenal, and even a brief review of some of these conceptual and empirical efforts can be highly educative.

Early Philosophical Theories

The classical Western¹ concept of the mind has been defined by Rene Descartes' dualistic view of it as an 'unextended and thinking substance' distinct from the body, a view that could be traced back to the Socratic and Platonic concept of the 'psyche' (a word traditionally translated as 'soul') as distinct from 'soma', or the body. Of course, what Descartes actually meant by 'substance' has remained obscure and this has been a cause of much confusion in Western thought; but this position lead to what Gilbert Ryle called, the 'ghost in the machine' view of an immaterial entity called 'mind' controlling bodily function. Termed *dualist-interactionism*, this theory is also favoured by some neuroscientists who are convinced about the inadequacy of neural

events in explaining mental phenomena.² However, nobody has been able to provide a plausible explanation as to how a non-material mind could bring about physical changes in the brain. Monistic viewpoints of an immaterial mind were also propounded as a reaction to the rising popularity of materialism. Bishop Berkeley took an idealistic position and argued that 'existence is perception' (*esse et percipi*), for one is aware of even the so-called objective world only in terms of the impressions it leaves on the mind. Bradley insisted that there is only one infinite Mind, Idea or Experience that comprehends all of existence within it. Spinoza considered both matter and mind as attributes of an underlying substance called God or Nature.

In contrast, almost all mainstream Indian philosophical positions since ancient times took a materialistic view of the mind ever since the Sankhyas conceived of a sharp distinction between the conscious Purusha and the material Prakriti. The latter (comprised of three basic constituents called *gunas*³), with all its evolutes (which include the mind), has been conceived of as dynamic but devoid of consciousness. The Vedantists essentially accept this duality, though they discovered a transcendent unity, of the nature of pure consciousness, in Brahman. While the Sankhyas considered the mind to be one of the early evolutes of Prakriti (there being twenty-three other evolutes), the Vedantists conceived it as composed of a combination of the *sattvic* components of the five elements in their subtle (or *tanmātra*) form. The Naiyayikas, or logicians, on the other hand, proposed that the mind was a distinct material category (at par with eight others, namely the five elements, time, the directions and the soul).

With the progress of the Enlightenment, the triumph of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, and the concomitant rise of empiricism and positivism (which recognized only scientifically established facts as valid), Western thinkers veered progressively towards a material explanation of mental phenomena.

Gilbert Ryle, who was for many years the editor of the reputed philosophical journal *Mind*, in his well-recognized and polemical work *Concept of Mind* tried to refute the Cartesian view of the separation of mental and physical existence—the ‘ghost in the machine’ concept. He argued that human nature differs only in degree from a clockwork and that thought, imagination, perception, feeling and the like are nothing but expressions of different physical states (a position termed *reductive materialism*) if not, on occasions, simple meaningless verbiage (*eliminative materialism*). In his later days, however, Ryle was more discreet about writing off mental phenomena, probably realizing that doing so would reduce all his arguments also to meaningless verbiage; arguments after all are not physical entities. Although Ryle’s was essentially a linguistic analysis, his ideas were also boosted by the behavioural school of psychologists, remarkable advances in neuroanatomy and neurophysiology, and the early ideas of the exponents of artificial intelligence.

Early Experimental Studies

The first half of the twentieth century saw the behaviourists describing human behaviour as determined responses to environmental stimuli. Pavlov demonstrated the classical conditioned response of involuntary bodily function to a conditioning environmental stimulus—the famous Pavlovian dog salivating in response to a bell that was earlier sounded regularly before food. Skinner and his associates studied the process of operant conditioning whereby voluntary behaviour is controlled through rewards and punishments

—rats learning to run in a maze or pigeons pressing a lever for food are typical examples. Behaviourists like Watson and Skinner were convinced that all observable human behaviour could be explained in terms of conditioned learning. Although behaviourism remained very influential through much of the last century, it is now well recognized that a great deal of what is distinctively human behaviour is not simply conditioning but is acquired through *cognitive learning*, a process that involves *understanding* how a task is accomplished. Comparison of the language used by chimpanzees and humans illustrates this very well. Although chimpanzees have been taught to communicate through sign language, this chimpanzee language has been entirely of the expressive and signalling variety, totally devoid of abstraction. In contrast, even a two- or three-year-old human child spontaneously learns to speak according to the rules of grammar (though rudimentary to begin with), and uses language for abstract descriptive and argumentative purposes.

Around the middle of the last century scientists and clinicians were also making rapid advances in their understanding of neuronal and cerebral structure and function. By selectively stimulating or destroying small portions of the brain, in experimental animals as well as humans, Penfield, Old, Gazzaniga, Sperry and others dramatically demonstrated how discrete areas in the brain subserved distinct sensory, motor or emotional function. This was the beginning of the idea of a ‘modular’ brain, wherein the brain was seen as an ensemble of specialized units or modules, each subserving a specific mental function. Mental functioning thus became identified with definitive brain activity, a position upheld by most scientists. Physicists went a step further and attempted to simulate this activity. Neuroanatomists had shown that the human nervous system, including the brain, was essentially a massive mass of extensively interconnected neurons along which information

could flow in the form of electrical impulses. In 1943, McCulloch and Pitts, in a classic paper, presented *A Logical Calculus of the Idea Immanent in Nervous Activity*,⁴ essentially a mathematical algorithm that could be used by a computer (which were at that time at a rudimentary state of development) to simulate neural function. The idea caught on quickly. If the function of one neuron could be simulated, then so could that of an entire mass of nerve cells, and thus, essentially of the entire brain. Subsequently, phenomenal advances in computer technology as well as neurophysiology have kept alive this idea (termed artificial intelligence or AI) of man-made machines being able to simulate human brain function some day.

The development of rudimentary computers in the first half of the twentieth century was preceded by the attempt by mathematicians to work out a set of algorithmic procedures that could be used to solve any, and every, mathematical problem. This was the famous Hilbert programme, essentially an attempt to show that every mathematical problem could be reduced to a finite series of calculations (and was therefore amenable to computer simulation). This effort was given a decisive blow by Kurt Godel through his classical 'incompleteness theorem' (formulated in 1930) which indisputably established that no formal system of sound mathematical rules of proof can ever suffice, even in principle, to establish all the true propositions of ordinary arithmetic. Although the formal proof of this theorem is complicated, it essentially amounts to showing that even if one managed to construct a 'super-algorithm' that could consistently be used to check the validity of other mathematical propositions, it could not logically be used to prove its own validity.⁵

Tremendous advances in recent times in computer technology and cybernetics, however, testify to the fact that the failure of the Hilbert programme has in no way deterred people in their attempt to develop AI systems;

and they have achieved no mean success. Cyber-systems can handle massive volumes of logical operations at phenomenal speeds as well as electronically store and retrieve entire libraries of information as 'memory'. Modern robotics has been used to carry out complex operations, and 'servo-control' mechanisms have been developed not only to fine-tune robotic 'intentionality' but also incorporate 'experiential learning behaviour' in robots. Machines have also been programmed to sense and respond to apparently subjective issues like human emotion. A lie-detector is a simple example.

The Criterion of the 'Mental'

Despite these remarkable achievements, no one is willing to grant machines a 'mental' status—all these efforts remain mere simulations. What, then, characterizes mental activity? While a lot of phenomena are commonly taken as mental, a strict defining criterion for mental events has been difficult to formulate. The subjective nature of mental events—of consciousness, of 'raw' feeling and the privacy of the mental world—has been recognized. Awareness (including self-awareness), understanding (or abstract thinking), purposeful or intentional behaviour, emotional dispositions, and the ability for introspection and reflexive thinking (knowing that one knows) have all been proposed as phenomena suggesting the presence of a mind. The very subjectivity of these effects has made an objective definition difficult to come by. This, in itself, is an indicator of something fundamental involved in that consciousness which typifies mental phenomena, the thing-in-itself in Kantian terms that remains unknown and unknowable.

Physical Theories of the Mind

While the subject-object dichotomy has been taken as an inviolable principle by many philosophical systems, the empiricists and positivists—who constitute the dominant philo-

sophical position in the present scientific community—have either tried to avoid the issue of subjectivity or tried to wish it away, naively taking it to be an epiphenomenon or a by-product of objective events in the brain.⁶ This *epiphenomenalism*, as also the more reductive *identity theory*, which takes the mind to be simply another description of physical events in the brain, unfortunately runs into several pragmatic problems. First, none of the laws of physics or neurobiology has anything to say about the emergence or existence of consciousness, which is a fundamental attribute of mental phenomena. Second, till date, it has not been possible to show that consciousness emerges spontaneously at a certain level of complexity in a material system. The recent interest in theories of Chaos, that is, the study of highly complex and irregular systems determined effectively by a few initial physical parameters (for example the behaviour of a complex cyclone, which could dramatically change with small changes in the weather conditions at the origin), has failed to provide any meaningful insight into consciousness, although it is true that the apparently random train of thoughts emerging from an idle mind could, technically speaking, be quite accurately described as *chaotic*. So to aver that with further advances in the neurosciences, all mental phenomena, including self-awareness, would be shown to result from specific brain activity remains wishful thinking. This position has been termed *promissory materialism* by the philosopher of science Karl Popper.

There have also been dissenting voices from within the scientific community. One such person is Roger Penrose, a mathematician and theoretical physicist of renown, who has in recent times contributed substantially to the understanding of the fundamental scientific and philosophical issues involved in the working of the mind. Penrose believes that, as empiricists, scientists must try to explain mental phenomena in terms of physical processes—consciousness, after all, manifests

itself through the physical medium of a brain—but he is convinced that ‘any genuine progress in the physical understanding of the phenomenon of *consciousness* will also need—as a prerequisite—a fundamental change in our physical world view.’⁷ And how does Penrose view the physical world? ‘We might well ask,’ says he, ‘What is matter according to the best theories that science has been able to provide? The answer comes back in the form of mathematics, not so much as a system of equations (though equations are important too) but as subtle mathematical concepts that take a long time to grasp properly.’⁸ He adds, ‘Every one of our conscious brains is woven from subtle, physical ingredients that somehow enable us to take advantage of the profound organization of our mathematically underpinned Universe—so that we, in turn, are capable of some kind of direct access, through the Platonic quality of “understanding”, to the very ways in which our universe behaves at many different levels.’ Penrose is referring here to the world of ‘Absolute Ideas’ that Plato conceived of as underlying (and, in a way, of greater permanence than) the perceptual world. He concedes that some people find it hard to conceive of this Platonic world as existing on its own—they may think of mathematical concepts merely as idealizations of our physical world (a useful tool for understanding it)—but is quick to add:

Now, this is not how I think of mathematics, nor, I believe, is it how most mathematicians or mathematical physicists think about the world. They think about it in a rather different way, as a structure precisely governed according to timeless mathematical laws. ... One of the remarkable things about the behaviour of the world is how it seems grounded in mathematics to a quite extraordinary degree of accuracy. The more we understand about the physical world, and the deeper we probe into the laws of nature, the more it seems as though the physical world almost evaporates and we are left only with mathematics. The deeper we understand the laws of physics, the more we are driven into

the world of mathematics and of mathematical concepts.

Anybody involved deeply in theoretical physics should be able to corroborate Penrose's thoughts. Eugene Wigner had also discussed this issue in a paper titled 'The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences', written in 1960. The ability of scientists to arrive at physically valid results through thought experiments, the high degree of experimental accuracy of apparently counter-intuitive propositions like 'warping of the space-time continuum' as the Einsteinian explanation of gravity, and the ability to make strong, experimentally verifiable predictions as a test of validity of any new physical theory—all suggest a close link between the 'mental' and the 'physical' world.

Mathematical truths, in fact, constitute only one of the Platonic absolutes. Plato also conceived of Beauty and Goodness as absolute values. Physiologists tell us that the human brain with its two cerebral hemispheres often shows a clear distinction between its two halves—the left hemisphere is involved primarily with logical operations, as in mathematics, and the right in appreciating spatio-temporal configurations essential to the aesthetic sense. Of course, many people have a harmonious blend of these faculties. Paul Dirac, the famous quantum physicist and Nobel laureate, was reputed to judge the validity of his mathematical formulations in terms of their intrinsic aesthetic 'beauty'. As regards human ethical values (the correlate of goodness), however, biologists have, till now, very little to offer in terms of explanation, although the idea of a conscience or of dharma has been taken by various civilizations as intrinsic to human nature.¹⁰

(To be continued)

Notes and References

1. In an era of globalization the use of the terms Eastern and Western may appear anachronistic. However, the fact remains that modern scientific discipline is closely aligned to values developed in the Western hemisphere, while Yoga and Vedanta still remain largely identified with Eastern cultures, though millions of people in the West are actually using it in one form or other. Also, the world-views espoused by these two paradigms are very dissimilar in some respects. This article highlights some of these dissimilarities with the aim of suggesting a fusion of horizons at a deeper level.
2. For example see Sir John Eccles and Daniel N Robinson, *The Wonder of Being Human: Our Brain and Our Mind* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1985).
3. The three gunas are tamas (inertia), rajas (activity) and sattva (the principle of equilibrium). In the physical world tamas and rajas manifest as matter and energy while sattva mediates consciousness (*sattvam laghu prakāśakam*).
4. Reprinted in W S McCulloch, *Embodiments of Mind* (Boston: MIT Press, 1965) and quoted in Roger Penrose, *Shadows of the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 352.
5. See Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 138-41; also, Swami Atmapriyananda, 'Vedanta and Mathematical Logic' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, May and June 1999.
6. Darwin had wondered why thought as a secretion of the brain should be considered more wonderful than gravity as a property of matter.
7. *Shadows*, 391.
8. *Ibid.*, 419.
9. Roger Penrose et al, *The Large, the Small, and the Human Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2-3.
10. See Swami Vivekananda, 'The Real Nature of Man' in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), 2.70-87; also, Swami Bhajananda, 'Why Should We Be Moral?' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, January 1985.

Journey of the Upanishads to the West

Swami Tathagatananda. The Vedanta Society of New York, 34 West 71st Street, New York, NY 10023. 2002. E-mail: vedantasoc@aol.com. 599 pp. Rs 200. Available at Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014. E-mail: advaita@vsnl.com.

Swami Tathagatananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and spiritual head of the Vedanta Society of New York, who has impressed us with publications such as *Meditations on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda* (1993) and *The Vedanta Society of New York* (2000), has now come up with a gem of a book, very appropriately titled *Journey of the Upanishads to the West*, detailing Western scholars' contribution to the dissemination of the Truth that was first discovered by the ancient rishis of India.

The Upanishads contain the very essence of the Vedas and are also referred to as Vedanta because they constitute the concluding portion of the Vedas. Vedanta is a philosophy and a religion at the same time. In India philosophy is called '*darshana*, that which provides the vision of Truth'. To the extent Vedanta constitutes a search for the supreme Truth, it is a philosophy and to the extent it ordains ways towards the realization of the supreme Truth through intense spiritual practice, it is a religion. Both as a philosophy and as a religion Vedanta holds that the ultimate fulfilment of human life lies in the search for and realization of the supreme Truth that the Atman is Brahman and that man is divine ('*Tattvamasi*, Thou art That.') 'This declared oneness of the individual and God,' as Tathagatananda most perceptively observes, 'is the most inspiring message of Vedanta. ... The discovery of Vedanta in the most ancient times of the supreme idea of the in-depth Reality within human beings is not found in any other ancient or modern literature. Knowledge of the impressive spectrum of power hidden within us as the At-

man is the singular contribution to the world of the Indian heritage.' (35)

Tathagatananda gives a graphic description of how the leading countries of the West—Greece, France, Germany, England, USA and Russia—received the Indian Upanishadic thought. It will be instructive to give a summary of the vastly detailed discussion presented in this regard in as many as six chapters of the book.

II

As regards Greece, he refutes the popular notion that with Alexander's invasion in 326-27 BC, India became open to all sorts of influences from Greece, and shows that long before Alexander's invasion, Pythagoras had perhaps travelled to India in the sixth century BC and that his theory of the harmony of the spheres reflected the 'esoteric use of numbers in the Vedas and the Upanishads'. (111)

Further, Socrates (469-399 BC) had occasion to meet an Indian philosopher in course of roaming on the streets of Athens and was greatly moved by the latter's Upanishadic observation that humans—the relative—could be properly understood only in the light of an understanding of the Divine—the Absolute.

The Indian influence is most discernible in the writings of Plato. His 'myth of the cave' reflecting the Vedantic doctrine of *maya*, his concept of *nous* showing its similarity to the Upanishadic concept of Atman and his idea of omniscience, somewhat similar to *jnana yoga*, the way of knowledge in the Upanishads and the *Bhagavadgita*—all indicate the influence of

Indian Upanishadic and religious thought on Plato. Indeed, Max Müller was startled to note the similarity between Plato's language and that of the Upanishads. And Urwick went to the length of observing that most of Plato's *Republic* was a paraphrasing of Indian ideas.

In modern times, the Greek mind turned to India in the quest for its spiritual wisdom when Demetrius Galanos of Athens (1760-1833), a self-effacing scholar acclaimed as 'the Plato of this age', embraced India as his second motherland, lived a life of penury in his adopted country and breathed his last in his beloved Varanasi, proving himself to be one of the earliest and ablest pioneers of Indology.

On the whole, the Greek culture, of which the rest of Europe is the inheritor and descendant, was practical rather than contemplative, this-worldly rather than other-worldly. Yet there were points of confluence, as noted above, between Greece and India; and to the extent India, with her spiritual culture of the Upanishads, reminded Greece that liberty of the soul was also to be striven for along with the liberty of the body, India was able to do her bit for the enrichment of Greece and through her for the enrichment of the rest of Europe as well.

III

The crucial initial role in bringing about the expansion of India's spiritual culture to France was played in the year 1671 by a French traveller to India by the name of Francis Bernier, who brought to France in that year the Persian translation of fifty Upanishads made by Prince Dara Shukoh in 1656. The French interest in India's spiritual literature, awakened by this event, received a boost when Voltaire received the gift of a copy of the *Yajur Veda* in 1760, which he regarded as the most precious 'for which the West was ever indebted to the East'. The distinguished French philosopher Victor Cousin (1792-1867) poured his heart's reverence for the Vedanta philosophy of India by acknowledging it as the high-

est philosophy that mankind had ever produced.

Among the early French scholars none opened the soul of India to the West better than Anquetil-Duperron (1731-1805). After forty years of dedicated struggle he brought out his Latin translation of the Upanishads. The work titled *Oupnek'hat*, which was a Latin translation of Dara Shukoh's Persian version of the Upanishads, attracted the minds of the greatest philosophers of Europe including Schopenhauer and Paul Deussen. This Latin magnum opus of Anquetil was published in 1801-02. Anquetil died not long afterwards, exhausted, no doubt, from the extreme penury in which he lived while working on this life's work of his. Of the same nature as the sages of India to whom he dedicated his work, Anquetil wrote, 'I live in poverty [one-twelfth of an Indian rupee for his daily food] ... bereft of all worldly goods, all alone. ... With perfect peace of mind I await the dissolution of the body which is not far off for me.' That the grinding poverty could not unnerve the sage that Anquetil was could be seen from what he went on to write of himself: 'With unceasing effort I aspire to God, the highest and most perfect Being.' (186)

Like Anquetil-Duperron, Eugene Bernouf too died a martyr to the cause of learning. Among his Indic research are French and Latin translations of extracts from the *Bṛihadaran-yaka Upanishad*.

The French appreciation of India's spiritual culture, carried on through Sylvain Levi and Louis Renou, found its culmination in modern times in Romain Rolland (1866-1944). Rolland expounded to the West Vedanta's two greatest exemplars—Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda—by publishing their biographies, namely *The Life of Ramakrishna* and *The Life of Swami Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, published in 1929 and 1931, respectively. Rolland's purpose in writing these two inspired biographies was to bring, as Rolland himself said, 'the good effect of that

great thought ... into the soul of the West, wounded but still hard and contracted. It is a serious moment for the West, which has learnt nothing from the troubles it has already had. If it doesn't do something to gain possession of itself, the spell would be cast.' No Western savior has ever spoken more prophetic words about the eternal value of the message of Vedanta and has ever sounded a more relevant warning to the West.

IV

Among the German scholars who played the pivotal role in promoting the journey of the Upanishads to the West, Friedrich Von Schelling (1775-1854), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) and Paul Deussen (1854-1919) deserve special mention. Schelling's admiration for the Upanishads followed from his study of the *Oupnek'hat*. He was so charmed by the ideas of the Upanishads that he wanted their widest possible circulation in Germany and to that end he set Max Müller to the task of translating a portion of the Upanishads.

Schopenhauer, whose *The World as Will and Idea* was influenced by the *Chandogya Upanishad*, held that the Upanishads were the most beneficial and elevating study that the world had ever produced and that 'it has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death'.

Max Müller devoted nearly 25 years of his life to editing the 51-volume *Sacred Books of the East* and was known for his voluminous writings on India and Indology, including the 6-volume *Rig-Veda with Sayana's Commentary*, *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* and *What Can India Teach Us?* He became the greatest exponent of Oriental sacred literature and was the most forthcoming among the Western scholars to acknowledge the fact that the Vedanta philosophy contained thoughts unequalled in any language of the West and that India with such philosophy and culture of

thought could indeed teach the West to become 'more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal [and] more truly human'. (53). Extolling the silent forests of India as infinitely better observatories of the soul than the noisy centres of Western civilization, Müller raised a question that has been at the centre of the Upanishadic thought and Vedanta philosophy: 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' (57)

Max Müller rendered another service to the cause of Vedanta in the West. His meeting with Swami Vivekananda in London on 28 May 1896 set him to the task of writing *Ramakrishna, His Life and Sayings*, which was published in 1898. The West came to know Sri Ramakrishna, the guru of Swami Vivekananda, as the consummation of Vedanta in our times and this, together with Swami Vivekananda's brilliant success at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in September 1893, greatly facilitated Vivekananda's mission of preaching Vedanta to the West.

Paul Deussen, acknowledged as his heir and successor by Max Müller himself, immensely enriched Upanishadic studies in the West with publications such as *Sixty Upanishads*, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* and *Spirit of the Upanishads*. Deussen found the essence of the Upanishads in the doctrine of the identity of Brahman and Atman and held that this Upanishadic idea had 'a significance reaching far beyond their time and country; nay, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind.' (291)

V

The services that England gave to the cause of Indic studies through scholars such as Sir William Jones (1746-94) and others that followed him were glorious by all means. Jones founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784. Under his able guidance, Indic studies in general and Vedic studies in particular received an organized focus and direction. 'One correct version of any celebrated

Hindu book would be of greater value than all the dissertations or essays that could be composed on the same subject,' stated Jones, who also asserted that 'without detracting from the "never-fading laurels of Newton" the whole of Newton's theology and part of his philosophy were to be found in the Vedas and other Indian works.' Known for his 6-volume *Works*, Jones' English translation of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* was also the first translation of any Upanishad into a European language.

Sir Charles Wilkins (1750-1836), known for his memorable contributions to the research of the Asiatic Society, was the first to bring out a translation of the *Gita* into a European language. 'The essence of the Hindu thought, as elegantly and concisely put forth in the *Bhagavad Gita*, was disseminated throughout all of Europe thanks to Wilkins' translation. His *Gita* was later translated into all major languages and reached a universal audience.' (341) It carried in its preface the assertion of Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India and a great patron of the Asiatic Society, that 'the study and the true practice of *Gita's* teachings would lead humanity to peace and bliss.' (339)

Horace H Wilson (1786-1860)—the founder of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta in 1824 and one of the architects of the Hindu College (renamed Presidency College) in 1817, and the first European to study the Puranas seriously—also made his valuable contribution towards making the *Rig Veda* known to European scholars by rendering it in English verse in as many as six volumes, covering in them Sayana's commentary as well.

Sir Monier-Williams, a noted student of Wilson's at Oxford, who succeeded Wilson as Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford from 1860 to 1888, distinguished himself in Indological research with books such as *Hinduism* (1877) in which his proclaimed thesis was that 'the Hindu faith was universal and accommodated all other religions.' Tathagatananda brings out succinctly the difference in the ap-

proaches of Deussen and Monier-Williams with the following observation: 'In comparison to Deussen's thinking that Vedanta's sages were "equal in rank to Plato and Kant", Monier-Williams accepted the *Vedas* as the foundation of Hinduism and as the quintessence of all religious thought. The untrammelled truth-seekers of Vedic times had already journeyed through many schools of philosophy, commonly thought to have originated in the West, namely, atheism, agnosticism, nihilism, materialism, spiritualism, theism, deism, pluralism, dualism, monism and monotheism. Monier-Williams recognized that the sages had actually anticipated Plato, Kant, Hume, Hegel, Schopenhauer and other Western philosophers.' (353)

William Blake and other English poets of the Romantic period such as Wordsworth and Shelley, researchers such as Sir Edwin Arnold (*The Light of Asia*, 1879), E B Havell (*The Ideals of Indian Art*, 1911) and Arthur B Keith (*The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, 1925), and others like Annie Besant, Margaret E Noble (Sister Nivedita) and John G Woodroffe are among English people of eminence who played a considerable part in facilitating the Vedantic and cultural journey of India to the West.

VI

The popular notion is that Vedanta made its journey to America for the first time through Swami Vivekananda in 1893 with the message he broadcast at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in September 1893. But the ground for the reception of such a message was prepared during the nineteenth century by the American transcendentalists such as Ralph W Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman. The transcendentalists' basic message that life was not limited to the five senses and that the individual ego was to be transcended for knowing truth, ultimately went back to the Upanishads. Emerson, the first prominent American to em-

brace Indian thought, received the gift of a copy of the *Bhagavadgita* (the English translation of Charles Wilkins) from Carlyle and made this most inspiring book his lifelong companion. Among the Upanishads it was the *Katha Upanishad* that influenced him most. His comments on the 'Over-Soul' showed his awareness of the Upanishadic concept of the Paramatman. His poems 'The Celestial Love' and 'Wood-Notes' reflected his knowledge of the immanence of the supreme Being. Above all, his poem 'Brahma' indicated his profound harmony with the Indian scriptures. Indeed, in this poem 'American Vedantism', as Tathagatananda puts it, 'reached its highest level'. (431)

Thoreau stood on an equal footing with Emerson as an avatara of Indian wisdom in the United States. By his own acknowledgement, he acquired such wisdom from his study of the Vedas. As he said, 'What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like a light of a higher and purer luminary.' (441) *Ex Oriente Lux* ('light from the East') was the proclaimed motto of Thoreau's life.

Whitman's compositions, especially his *Leaves of Grass*, bear such strains of Upanishadic message—transcendence of the ego, immanence of God and intuitability of knowledge—that one could see very clearly that he was very deeply influenced by the Upanishads and that he was thoroughly seized of the oriental spirit.

Apart from the American transcendentalists, two other agencies—the American Oriental Society, formed in Boston in 1842, and Harvard University through the *Harvard Oriental Series*, started in 1891—gave a boost to studies of Indian wisdom in America.

Such was the state of Vedic and Indian studies in America when Vivekananda came to America to address the Parliament of Religions. As the embodiment of Vedanta, his job was to give life to the dry bones of Vedantic ideas presented by Emerson, Thoreau and others. To describe the mission of Swamiji in

the words of Tathagatananda:

Entering into this glorious history of journey of Vedanta to the West, Vivekananda came to teach Americans for the first time about their divinity, about the inner self, the *Atman* and its identity with the *Brahman*. He did this job indefatigably, from his appearance at the Parliament and throughout his life in the United States during his two visits: July 1893 to April 1896 and August 1899 to July 1900. By giving America its individual and national soul, Vivekananda helped Americans to understand their true freedom of expression. (496)

And if in today's America there is a resurgence of interest in Sri Ramakrishna, 'Vedanta's greatest exemplar', according to Christopher Isherwood (*Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, 1964), and 'the prophet of the New Age', according to Richard Shiffman (*Sri Ramakrishna: A Prophet for the New Age*, 1989); if the concept of man totally devoid of the divine spark and the concept of a God extra-cosmic and separate from mortal man are being increasingly criticized; if there have been increasing emphases on 'the physics of consciousness'; (501) and if 'turning to the East for inspiration has been a repeating pattern in the chronicle of religious life in America' (457)—it only proves that the Vedantic teachings given by Swami Vivekananda, after all, has had its impact on America. And in keeping up such impact the Vedanta Societies founded by Swamiji himself and those established subsequently by the Ramakrishna Order have certainly played a very positive role.

VII

The Russian interest in Vedanta began as early as when Anquetil-Duperron was writing his Latin translation of the Upanishads, *Oupnek'hat*, but became pronounced with Tolstoy's expressing his keen interest in the Upanishads, the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Tirukkural* (a Tamil classic) and in the spiritual literature of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Having read Swamiji's *Raja Yoga* and two volumes of his speeches and articles, To-

Istoy rated Swamiji as 'India's greatest modern philosopher' and 'placed him among the world's greatest thinkers, along with Socrates, Rousseau and Kant'. (528)

The Russian interest in Vedanta and Indian thought continued during and after the Communist regime through works of dedicated scholars such as Stcherbatsky, Oldenburg, Vostrikov, Vladimirostov, Roerich, Chelisev and Rybakov. *Swami Vivekananda in the Soviet Union*, a collective work by Russian scholars, published in 1987, is an evidence of such interest.

As for the interest of post-Communist Russia in Swamiji and Sri Ramakrishna, it will be in order to quote the observations of two Russian scholars, R B Rybakov and Natalia Tots. Rybakov had the following to observe in a commemorative volume on Swami Vivekananda published in 1994: 'A preacher of an eternal philosophy, Swamiji is the most suitable person to help our country today. What is required by a tormented land is moral rejuvenation. Swamiji himself has said that even if all the wealth of the world were invested in one village of India, the conditions there would never improve. What is required is the awakening of the sleeping souls.' Rybakov believed that such awakening could only come from the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, 'a perfect blend of religion and science' and unlike most ideologies, free from 'an imposed rigidity'. (533)

And Natalia Tots, a young lady who sought to capture the essence of the voluminous *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* in an 80-page book titled *The Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna*, had the following to say in 1997 about the ever-present relevance of Sri Ramakrishna: 'I was absolutely bowled over by the philosophical message of '*jata mat tata path*, as many minds, so many paths.' In a world torn apart by religions, I found this to be the only answer to peace. Tots has pithily given expression to the feelings of millions of lovers of humanity today who, no doubt, would also heartily ap-

prove of Swami Tathagatananda's concluding observation that the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda 'was relevant in the past in India and in the world at large, but it is still more relevant in the present Indian context and in the context of the contemporary world.' (553)

VIII

To cut the long story short, the book under review shows who were the first among scholars to play the pioneering and pivotal role in bringing the Vedanta philosophy as contained in the Upanishads to the shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific; how the eminent Western savants of Indology in the six Western countries of Greece, France, Germany, England, America and Russia made sustained efforts towards translating the message of the Upanishads from the classical Indian language of Sanskrit into classical Latin and modern European languages; how their efforts—in many cases lifelong and selfless in the true, spiritual sense of that word—towards translating and interpreting the eternal spiritual thoughts of Vedanta contributed towards the enlightenment of humanity; and how the truth of Vedanta and its leading exemplars in the persons of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda can serve the cause of human happiness and welfare by showing humanity its ultimate identity—its divinity—and thereby helping it transcend its littleness in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, material interest and the like.

Thus, if this book, spread over 599 pages comprising eight chapters, bibliographic references, index and photographs of the leading lights of Vedanta and Western culture (Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, Socrates, Plato, Romain Rolland, Sylvain Levi, Max Müller, Paul Deussen, Schopenhauer, Sir William Jones, Sir Edwin Arnold and two associates of Swami Vivekananda, namely Goodwin and Josephine MacLeod) has any extended message, everlasting

and relevant as ever, it is this that humanity is one in its essence, that so-called barriers of littleness—the real sources of the current spiritual crisis of humanity—are to be broken down and that humanity is to celebrate not its differences, not its otherness but its oneness. The ancient rishis realized the truth of that message through their sadhana in the forest retreats of India. The scholars of modern times took the pains of disseminating it throughout the world and it is for humanity at large to absorb it in its consciousness, making this world an infinitely better place to live in.

Swami Tathagatananda's efforts towards putting across the truth of Vedanta and towards distilling the essence of the Upanishadic message from the writings of scholars of six Western countries are, to say the least, monumental. But for years of dedicated and enormously painstaking research, documented with quotations from the works of distinguished scholars, a work of such magnitude could not have been produced. Swami Tathagatananda has indeed very deservedly earned the gratitude of humanity with this

work of lasting value.

A few words about the get-up of the book. The frontispiece is embellished with beautiful drawings of ships sailing across the seas (symbolizing the journey of the Upanishads from India to the West). The top of the cover page has the picture of a fully risen sun scattering from the Eastern sky its rays of knowledge over the Western hemisphere duly depicted by a map of that part of the world. Besides the get-up, the book is so exquisitely printed and so beautifully cloth-bound that no words are adequate to appreciate the good work that the Vedanta Society of New York has done in this respect; and all this for an unbelievably low price of Rs 200 for a book of 599 pages. May the book, with its quality and affordability, be the proud possession of everybody who cares for the really good things of life. And that the book should be compulsory reading for all students of Indology and the history of civilization needs no saying.

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Why the Righteous Suffer

Rabbi Dov Ber, known as the Maggid of Mezritch, explains with the following parable why righteous people may at times experience suffering and the wicked may prosper:

A father who wishes to teach his child to walk will, in the beginning, walk together with the child and hold its hand. Then he will move away from the child, leaving it on its own. The child will then take a step toward its father and the father will retreat a bit further so that the child will take a few more steps on its own. The father will repeat this process in order to get the child to walk greater and greater distances. To the child it may seem that the father is moving away and ignoring it, yet the father does this out of love and care, for he knows that the child's growth and development depends on this.

It is the same with righteous people. At times it may seem that God is ignoring them, yet, in truth, as they come closer to God He will move away from them so that they will continuously move closer to Him. Through this process, the righteous person ascends higher and higher spiritually.

—from cyberspace



Reviews



*For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA
publishers need to send two copies of their latest publications.*

Bhagavadgita and Modern Problems.
Compilation of papers at an international seminar. Bharatheeya Vichara Kendram and Gita Swadhyaya Samithi, Samskriti Bhavanam, Fort PO, Thiruvananthapuram 695 023. 2001. 420 pp. Rs 250.

The *Bhagavadgita*, the basic holy book of the Hindus, has always had an eternal charm and irresistible appeal to all thinking minds ever since it was composed thousands of years ago. Saints and scientists, secularists and spiritualists alike, have found it to be a practical guide to solve life's complicated problems. No wonder the book has been translated into several languages of the world and has been received with warmth everywhere, cutting across religious, geographical and other bounds.

The encomiums paid to the work are immense. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a staunch advocate of rationalism and an avowed secularist, described the *Gita* as a poem of crisis, of political and social crisis, and even more so, of the crisis in the spirit of man. To Aldous Huxley, the *Gita* is the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy not only for Indians but for all mankind. Even Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist in living memory, admitted that the *Gita* had been the source of his inspiration and guidance for the purpose of scientific investigation and formulation of his theories. Mahatma Gandhi likened the *Gita* to a universal mother who welcomes everyone. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of the *Gita* dwells in perennial joy and peace. There has never been a person who had worshipped the *Gita* in that spirit and gone away disappointed, said Gandhiji.

Several thousands of volumes and articles have been written on the *Gita*, yet its charm and appeal are fresh and inexhaustible. It is indeed gratifying that such an accomplished book was the theme of an international seminar held at Thiruvananthapuram from 7 to 10 December 2000.

The Gita Swadhyaya Samithi and the Bharatheeya Vichara Kendram, the twin organisers of the seminar and publishers of this invaluable book, have been working for the all-round cultural and social regeneration of the nation in a non-sectarian and non-political way.

The book under review is a fine compilation of learned papers presented at the above seminar by eminent scholars representing a vast cross section of society, such as educationists, scientists, management experts, spiritual dignitaries, judges, journalists, diplomats, social activists, doctors and police officials. The interpretations and presentations by a wide variety and range of thinkers clearly demonstrate that the *Gita* is a relevant guide to the contemporary problems of the world and not just a holy book preaching individual salvation.

Social scientists have found out that hatred, bitterness and frustration arise out of undue attachment to the fruits of our actions and identifying ourselves with our successes and failures. The *Bhagavadgita* helps us to overcome this by exhorting us to work without expecting the fruits of our actions.

By advocating simple offerings to God like a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water instead of the elaborate Vedic sacrifices involving animals and large quantities of firewood, the *Gita* teaches us to be environment-friendly—an imperative need of the day, says Sri Adiyogi, a former vice chancellor.

The Inspector General of Kerala, Dr Alexander Jacob, points out that the three fundamental functions of the police force, namely protection of the good, destruction of the wicked and establishment of the rule of law have their roots in the *Gita*, and therefore concludes that the police force can find inspiration and guidance from the *Gita*.

While management science teaches one to manage efficiently one's finances, raw materials, capital equipment, inventories, subordinates, superiors, competitors, neighbours, bankers, government officials and clients, the *Gita* alone teaches one how to manage oneself, says Dr V R Pancharukhi.

The book contains references like the ones men-

tioned above and calls upon the Government of India to declare the *Bhagavadgita* as the national scripture.

A book everyone ought to read.

Swami Abhiramananda
Acharya, Probationers' Training Centre
Belur Math

Handbook of Vastu. *B Niranjan Babu.* UBS Publishers' Distributors, 5 Ansari Road, New Delhi 110 002. 2001. 176 pp. Rs 175.

In the last decade *vastu* shastra suddenly gained popularity due to the publication of many books on this ancient science of dwellings. An interesting attempt is made by Sri Niranjan Babu to compile the basic principles of *vastu* with diagrams and tables for easy understanding by common people.

The book is divided into five sections, of which the first three are divided into several chapters, each beginning with an at-a-glance paragraph. The fourth section answers some common queries, while the fifth illustrates a few building plans for a working knowledge of *vastu*.

Spread over eighty pages, Section I introduces various technical concepts like *vastu purusha*, importance of directions, selection of sites, orientation of buildings on sites, ancient systems of measurement (like *angula* and *hasta*), building formulae (*ayadi shadvarga*), *brahmasthana*, location of different functions in a house (like kitchens and master bedrooms) and location of main doors.

Section II covers forty pages and has eighteen chapters discussing details of room layouts in a house with instructions on location of equipment, furniture and fixtures in every room. Section III runs into ten pages and has notes and diagrams on open spaces, apartments and multi-storeyed buildings, and landscaping. Section IV answers in about seventeen pages common questions on the direction in which doors should open, the need of having verandas around the house, size of furniture and the like. The last section shows in nine pages diagrams of house plans with discussion on their *vastu* suitability. The book has a two-page index.

In all, the book provides in a short span good hints on the specifics of *vastu* as related especially to the house, the site and the landscape without getting too technical. The language is lucid and simple. It is a book containing practical hints meant for general reading. Except for a few names of original

scriptures, there are no detailed references to the sources based on which observations are made. A few diagrams, for instance those depicting the four types of houses (figures 15.05 and 15.08) and main doors (figures 16.05 and 16.10), are not clear.

Swami Tattwajnanananda
Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Shilpamandira
Belur Math

Vedanta in Practice. *Swami Lokeshwarananda.* Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Kolkata 700 029. e-mail: rmic@vsnl.com. 2001. 212 pp. Rs 40.

Vedanta is not only a philosophy but a way of life. Swami Lokeshwarananda has done an excellent service in presenting a deep philosophy in an intelligible way, relating it to today's problems. Covering 105 topics in about 750 words, this book presents the author's views on varied topics of common interest such as feminism, racism, scholarship, faith, renunciation, spirituality and culture.

The author rightly observes that scholarship is useful only if it is backed by wisdom. Knowledge by itself is not of much use, because it could be used for harming others. Wisdom is character, the by-product of a man's evolution in moral and spiritual terms.

On religion and ethics, the author is of the opinion that both go together. Religion endows man with more self-control as he progresses on the straight and narrow path. Ethics is the forerunner to religion, and as ethics grows, religious feeling grows stronger.

The author clearly brings out that the essence of Vedanta is belief in the divinity of human beings. According to Vedanta, Self-knowledge is the highest goal of life. But where is the Self? Vedanta says, the Self is hidden in our heart. It reveals Itself when our mind becomes pure. But what is meant by a pure mind? One becomes pure when one becomes free from the sense of ego. The Self will reveal itself when the ego is removed and one sees Oneness everywhere.

I would recommend this book especially to young people for whom it will be especially beneficial.

Aspi T Contractor
Mumbai

Value Education. *Seminar Proceedings.* Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, Ramakrishna Ashram Marg, New Delhi 110 055. E-mail: ashram@rkmissiondel.org. 2002. viii + 113 pp. Rs 100.

The term 'education' itself means a teaching of values to the student, a regularizing of his emotions and sculpting his vision of what he wants to be and what he wants to achieve. Of late, however, the term has fallen into evil days and there is a sneer that accompanies a reference to an 'educated' person. This is mainly because the goings-on in an increasingly materialistic world that is aided by massive globalization is setting aside those niceties of behaviour and subtleties of thinking that marked high civilization. India has always stood in the forefront in matters of education, having mastered all the arts and crafts as also the sciences of man-made civilization. At the same time India guarded the eternal verities too in education which gave a special glow to the educated Indian abroad. But now?

The need to inculcate good values has been felt just in time. Fortunately, India is a land of *acharya samriddhi* ('profusion of teachers'). The organizers of the seminar on value education on 4 March 2002 as a part of the platinum jubilee celebrations of Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, have been able to draw freely from these creative springs of India's past. Each one of the participants harks back to someone or other of the great educators of yesterday. In his presidential address, Dr Karan Singh has underlined the need to inculcate social values, ecological values (the 'Bhu Suktam' of the *Atharva Veda* is a great help), inter-faith values, spiritual values and the value enshrined in the phrase, *bahujana sukhāya, bahujana hitāya*. For what is the value of education if it does not help to bring the greatest good to the greatest number?

Swami Prabhananda gets down to the brass tacks in his keynote address. The twentieth century has been an age of sweeping transformations in the realms of science and technology. Between the atom and the byte, we have garnered plenty of knowledge but very little of wisdom. The swami

has two valid suggestions: Students must have access to the biographies and teachings of great personalities and an inspirational ethos must be created by recruiting teachers who exemplify high ideals. These teachers should interact with the students at all levels and place the stress upon the dynamic aspects of values.

Several scholars have presented papers at the seminar and each has a special approach. P P Srivastava has experiential wisdom and refers to the Western mindset of post-Independence India, which has also taken a deep draught of the no-religion cry of communism fascinated by the Russian Revolution.

Students see around them a ceaseless greed for money, lust for power and the criminalization of politics and breathe the foul air all the time. But if things are still not totally doomed, it is due to the voluntary work of idealist schools like those of the Ramakrishna Mission in the difficult Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh. Swami Yuktatmananda gives a pointed reference in this regard to the Ramakrishna Institute of Moral and Spiritual Education in Mysore and a gist of Swami Vivekananda's teachings that inspire such activities.

Our seminars do a lot of good but their major contribution is in getting people to interact during the question hour. The present seminar seems to have had enriching interactions but the best message comes from Swami Chinmayananda who told the story of the cow Bhagavati, which is a lesson for all seminarians:

'The whole day we have been thinking about value education. Don't just leave it here, for God's sake. Take it to your home, go on pondering over it, give a good thought to it and be a good teacher, be a good student, be a good citizen and give good education to your children so that they can become the best educated citizens.' (91)

That way Swami Vivekananda's dream would come true.

Dr Prema Nandakumar
Researcher and Literary Critic
Srirangam

One of the saddest things about envy is its smallness, the narrow compass within which it lives. To be envious is to turn eternally like a caged rat within the tight radius of malice.

—Karl Olsson

ॐ Reports ॐ

Started. A sub-centre of Ramakrishna Math, Chennai; in Cuddapah; with land and buildings received from Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samithi, Cuddapah; in April 2004. The address of the centre is: Ramakrishna Math, 5/476 Trunk Road, Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh 516 001 (Phone: 08562-241633).

Visited. Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chandigarh; by Sri O P Verma, Governor of Punjab and Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh, Sri Binod Roy, Chief Justice of Punjab, and Sri Vishnukant Shastri, Governor of Uttar Pradesh; on 2, 3 and 4 April, respectively.

Inaugurated. The new monks' quarters building; at Ramakrishna Mission, Shivana-halli; on 22 April (Akshaya Tritiya).

Inaugurated. 'Sri Ma Sarada Darshan', a nation-wide exhibition project to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi; by Sri T N Chaturvedi, Governor of Karnataka; at Ramakrish-

na Ashrama, Mysore; on 9 May. Sri Chaturvedi released *Adarsha Nagarika*, Sri Ko Channabasappa's Kannada translation of Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj's *Enlightened Citizenship*. Dr H N Muralidhara, Professor of Kannada, VVN Degree College, Bangalore, spoke on the occasion and Swami Sureshanandaji Maharaj, former President of the centre, presided over the function.

Each exhibition kit consists of 40 multi-colour posters measuring 730 mm x 480 mm, printed on thick duplex boards, laminated, mounted on plastic flute boards and framed with black PVC channels. The bilingual write-up on each panel is in English and one regional language (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu versions are available). Most of the 800 kits produced have already been despatched to various organizations and individuals across the country.

(Interested persons may send Rs 1000 per kit by demand drafts drawn in favour of 'Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore', to President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Yadavagiri, Mysore 570

020; e-mail: vivekaprabha@eth.net, giving their full address, phone number and the language preferred.)



Sri Chaturvedi inaugurating the exhibition

Distributed. 16 sets of dhotis, saris, towels, mosquito-nets and carpets; by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Malda; among 16 families whose houses were destroyed by a fire in Shyamsundartola, Malda district; in April.