

# CONTENTS

## ENGLISH SECTION

1. Matri Vani	...	...	...	41
2. Mataji's Amara Vani	...	...	....	44
3. The Divine Degrees—Miss Silburn	...	...	...	50
4. Religion and Science—Lama Anagarika Govinda Acharya				56
5. From the life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi	...	...	...	60
6. Tower of Silence—Sri U. C. Dutta	....	...	...	65
7. Matri Lila	....	....	....	70
8. The Dual conception of Brahman in Indian Philosophy				
			—Dr. Rama Choudhuri	74

Price : Re. 1/-

Annual subscription ( for four issues ) : India Rs. 4/- Foreign Rs. 5/-

---

*Printed & Published by—*Brahmachari Kamal Bhattacharjee for  
Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangh, Varanasi, at the Kamala Press, Godhowlia, Varanasi.



The ONE who is the Eternal, the Atman,  
He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,  
He is all in all, He alone is.

## MATRI VANI

( Replies to letters from different people at different times. )

116.

Mataji said : He should keep his mind free from cares and worries and be ever full of inner joy—this is the important thing ! He should invoke God with his mind and heart and voice, in whatever way and by whatever words that come to him easily. Why only mornings and evenings ? At every moment ! For this is indeed the unfailing panacea for every kind of trouble. HE is the Supreme Father, Mother, Friend and Beloved, all in one. All names and forms as well as the nameless and the formless are His. Therefore one should make use of any means or device that may aid one to sustain at all times in one's heart and mind the remembrance of Him and thereby to find peace.

117.

There is no need for him to do penance. The atonement has already been accomplished by his readiness to make amends. Tell him not to cause worry to anyone by worrying himself. Keeping one's mind concentrated on God puts an end to all worries and anxieties.

---

\*The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in Ananda Varta, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 281.

## 118.

Do not keep concealed within yourself what weighs on your mind. If you write it all to me freely and frankly, your heart will be unburdened even more. Father, why have you kept it suppressed within yourself for such a long time? To confide it to this body (*Mataji*) brings relief, does it not? Truly, this body belongs to all; for this reason it behaves and speaks as far as possible so as to fulfil the needs of the people with whom it deals at any particular time.

When the worship of an image or any other puja is performed according to the rites laid down in the Shastras—as accepted by all Brahmana priests—and when *Kumari Puja* forms part of the ceremonial as prescribed by the Shastras, then the priests and others concerned must be allowed to have their say according to what they feel to be right. Write this to him! But of course, when this body plays with its friends, little girls or boys, it does not pay attention to the injunctions of the priests—the child may be of any caste! The other day—did you not see that the little girl taken as a focus for the worship was certainly not the daughter of a Brahmana; yet the person who performed the Puja offered clothes, food and everything else exactly as it should be done, did he not? To this body everyone and everything is equal.

## 119.

Write to him to make his mind sound and vigorous as that of a wise and brave man. To allow the mind to be in this unhealthy state will not do. What is there to be afraid of? Ever remember that God IS—may His Will be done. HE is everyone's very own and has full claim on those whom He has created, to direct them according to His free and absolute Will; whatever He does is all-beneficent.

## 120.

One may well say: What harm can there be in doing Kirtan, Japa, meditation, etc. together with others? But to feel the attraction of company constitutes an obstacle. This will naturally bring about unsteadiness. Moreover if a desire lurks or arises in one to be the head or leader of the congregation, it is also harmful. This holds good in the case of both women and men.

If however you ask this body for advice, it will tell you to stay quietly in one place and practise *sadhana* as a sincere and earnest aspirant and first of all to fill your own emptiness ; then the treasure you have accumulated will of its own accord seek an outlet and thus communicate itself to others. Whereas if you start distributing right from the beginning by serving and giving spiritual instructions to others, you will soon be empty yourself and repentance is bound to follow. Of course, if serving and teaching is your aim, then it is quite a different matter. But if you want to attain to perfection your method of proceeding is not right, for it creates obstacles. This body maintains that you should abide by whichever of the two paths you prefer. To change one's mind again and again will not lead anywhere. Whatever one does must be done one-pointedly. Having turned away from worldly enjoyment and started advancing towards the Goal of human life, one should endeavour to arrive at Self-realisation.

## MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(25)•

Someone declared that *Vedanta* and *Bhakti* were two entirely different doctrines or lines of approach.

*Mataji* : Where doctrines are, there differences and disputes will of necessity exist. But this state is not the one that marks the end of difference and identity (*bhedabheda*). Some maintain that the conception of Radha-Krishna is completely *vedantic* ( non-dualistic ), for Krishna cannot be without Radha, nor Radha without Krishna—they are two in one and one in two.

*Question* : It is said that God's Eternal *Lila* (play) is based on duality.

*Mataji* : To say it is based on duality is also to say it is within Oneness ; some advocate this opinion.

*Question* : What is the actual significance of the terms † *dhāma*, *līla*, *parikara* ?

*Mataji* : They say that even in the midst of this *Lila* Oneness remains unimpaired. The idea of *Lila* implies the enjoyment of it, whereas in *Vedanta*

\* The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in *Ananda Varta*, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 243.

† *Dhāma*, *Lila*, *Parikara*.

*Dhāma* = abode i.e. Plane of Divine Life and Activity.

*Līla* = Sport i.e. Divine Play.

*Parikara* = Companions, etc.

These are technical terms used in Vaishnavite literature dealing with the philosophy of Divine Love and the manner of its fulfilment on a Divine or Supernatural Plane of Existence. This Plane itself is known as *Dhāma* which corresponds to the Christian conception of "Kingdom of God."

*Līla* is the Divine Play which aims at giving Joy and Bliss to the lovers of God in the manner and to the extent consistent with the nature of that love. All the lovers of God, of all denominations and varieties, participate, according to the nature of each individual and the measure of his capacity, in the Divine Joy actualised in the *Lila* concerned.

duality is out of question. Although the doctrine of *Bhakti* seems founded on duality, yet here also there is nothing but oneness. If one does not see things through the spectacles of the *Bhakti*, this cannot be grasped. Seen from his angle of vision it appears thus.

Suppose when giving initiation the Gurn instructs the disciple to practise the formal worship of *Radha-Krishna* and to regard himself as the servant and *Radha-Krishna* as his Master. By regularly engaging in worship and service of this kind, the following development may take place :

(1) First of all one feels that the room in which the worship is being performed has to be kept pure and undefiled. Before eating, the food has to be consecrated to the Lord, and He has also to be worshipped with lights, incense, etc. (*Arati*). As one continues day after day to carry out these acts of worship, one begins to question : 'Is my Lord as small as this little image ? Does He dwell only in my prayer-room and nowhere else ?' By performing His service one gradually comes to feel that all is His. This feeling grips one and spreads like an infectious disease. Someone once said : "Do not venture near Anandamayī Ma, there are small-pox germs with Her." (Laughter) Single-minded devotion engenders deep thought, which expresses itself in action. The Lord's light descends on the devotee, His power awakens in him and as a result profound inner inquiry blossoms forth.

(2) Then follows a stage where it happens that one may have a vision of the Lord ; for instance, while scrubbing the vessels used for the Puja ; or one lies asleep and sees Him standing near one's bed. Look, at first one believed the Lord to be present in one's prayer-room, but by and by one is able to perceive Him here and there. At a further stage it is not anymore in particular places, but wherever one turns one's eyes : He is seen sitting on the trees, standing in water, He is perceived within animals and birds. However even here one's vision of Him is not uninterrupted.

(3) Then comes a time when the Lord does not leave one anymore ; wherever one may go, He is ever by one's side and His Presence constantly felt.

(4) What now is the next stage like ? The shape, the species, the appearance of the tree itself is also the Lord. At an earlier stage one perceived Him within all objects, but now He is not seen *within* the objects anymore, for

there is nothing but He alone. Trees, flowers, the water and the land—everything is the Lord and only He. Every form, variety and manifestation, whatever exists is He, there is none beside Him. It may occur that a sadhaka continues in this state for the rest of his life.

(5) If everything is the Lord and nothing but He, then one's body must also be He—He, the One Existence. In this state, when one is absorbed in *dhyana* (meditation), worship or service become impossible, for He alone IS, one no longer exists apart from Him. What do the *Vedantists* say? "There is only one Brahman without a second." Nevertheless for some who have attained to this condition the relationship between the Lord and His servant remains and is felt thus: He is the Whole and I am part of Him, and yet there is only the One Self (*Ek Atma*).' If the *Brahman* is described as the splendour of Krishna's body—why should one object? Verily, everything is identical, undivided. To realize this means that one has been merged completely into the Ocean of Oneness.

(6) After this has been accomplished one can again do *puja* and service, for the relationship between Master and servant persists. Mahabir said: "He and I are one; but He is the whole and I am part of Him, He is the Master, I am His servant." One experiences Wholeness as well as the status of the Lord's servant. When the One Self has been realized, why should there be any objection to continuing in the spirit of: 'He is the Master, I am His servant'? At first one was serving in order to attain to one's Goal. After Realization it is He, the One, who serves. In this state everything becomes service—call it Liberation, call it *Parabhakti*, call it what you will.

The spiritual Teacher gives instruction. For Him doing or not doing *japa* is exactly the same. Calling Him 'World-teacher', how can one still find fault with Him?

*Question* : After having realized the Oneness of all, due to what need or imperfection does it become necessary again to worship a particular deity?

*Mataji* : In that state there is no need.

*The Questioner* : But then it can surely not be real service or worship!

*Mataji* : You may call it anything. The point is this: Sukadeva was a liberated being; why then did he relate the *Srimad Bhagavata*? What



reply have you to this ? The need or imperfection that prompted one to serve and worship at the initial stage, has no place here.

The Vedantists discard one thing after another, saying "not this, not this ! (*neti, neti*)". Indeed you see a beautiful flower and a few days later it has become earth : therefore what they say is perfectly true. What is subject to change will most certainly change. On the other hand, if expressed in the terms of those who believe in the reality of Name and Form, one may say : 'All names are Thy Name, all forms Thy Form'. Here Name and Form are also true. Yet, it may be argued that it is the world which is bound by evolution and change and that by persevering in the practice of discrimination one finally becomes established in the One Reality. When one perceives only the One Ocean—nothing but water, and cannot see oneself as separate from the All, it indicates that one has dived into the Ocean and been fully immersed in it. Nevertheless if outwardly or inwardly even as much as a hair has remained dry, it signifies that complete immersion has not yet occurred. Just as when a seed has been fried it can never sprout again, so when one has realized Oneness one may do anything ; it does no longer contain the seed of Karma and where this seed is not present, there all form and variety are but THAT. Look, by intense devotion as well as by the discrimination of Vedanta one has arrived at the One Essence. Does 'to merge into IT' then mean to become as a stone ? Not so indeed ! Form, variety, manifestation are nothing but THAT.

According to each person's particular path, the colouring or flavour peculiar to it will of course be preserved, yet what is attained is the One THING as such, in which no doubt, no uncertainty can survive. In fact what is there to be attained ? We ARE THAT—eternal Truth. Because we imagine that it has to be experienced, realized, it remains apart from us. On some levels this point of view is valid, but on others it is not. The Eternal ever IS. What is styled "the veil of ignorance" signifies continual motion. Motion means change, incessant transformation. Yet again no change takes place where there is non-action in action. For such an one duality does not exist—who then eats and what can he eat ? In this state how can there be theories or disputes ? If some one argues that since a certain person speaks he cannot have attained to this state—what do I speak and to whom and who is he ? This is so when full Realization has come about.

By explaining it to others one then feels one has come to understand it oneself, but essentially one has not understood that state. If one had one would have to ask : Have you reverted to ignorance ? The perfect man has realized both being able to understand and being unable to understand. From the point of view of the world he who is in bondage is bound. But where the vision of THAT is, there the knowledge of ignorance and the knowledge of Knowledge stand revealed before one in their fullness and no distinction between knowledge and ignorance can possibly arise. Actions such as eating, etc. have now become actions in inaction. Whether one still does *Puja* or not, what difference does it make ? To know and not to know in their entirety are now contained within one. But to understand this state is very difficult. It is easy to comprehend a particular line or level. But here there is no question of stability or non-stability and therefore even instability is no shortcoming either. However if the very slightest attachment has remained this sublime state cannot be reached. By selling imitation goods people may become rich. Why are imitation goods purchased at all ? This is the wonder of it ! But by using the things the deception will come to light and then one will again search for the genuine article.

Having realized the One Self and that there is nothing outside of it, one knows that the image one has worshipped is THAT in a certain form. Having found Reality one perceives It in this particular guise : the deity I worshipped is none else but the One Self, the Brahman without a second. When one has dived down into the depth of the sea, He is known to be that water in one form. The aspirant who advances along the path of *Bhakti* will, when he has attained to the vision of his Master, become a true servant. The two methods of "not this, not this" and "this is Thou, this is Thou" lead to the One Goal. By proceeding in the one direction it is reached and by taking the other direction it is also reached. Those who follow the path of surrender to the Divine Energy ( *Shakti* ) and those who worship the image of *Shiva*, both must finally attain to the One *Shakti*, the One *Shiva*. Those who advance along the line of Vedanta will find that ice is water, that there is no form, but only the formless ; whereas the Bhakta comes to realize that his Beloved is but the Brahman—everyone has his own method of approach. Equality, Oneness must come and become a permanent state. Having achieved it, if someone says : "I am renouncing liberation, I am giving up the worship of my "*Ishta*"—even though he

may give it up, nothing will be lost, for in this condition there is no room for giving up or retaining. It may be asked why there cannot be one and the same path for all ? Because He reveals Himself in an infinite variety of ways and forms—verily, the One is all of them. So there is no 'why'. Quarrel and dispute exist merely on the way. With whom is one to quarrel ? Only while still on the way is it possible to have differences of opinion and disputes.

---

# The Divine Degrees

ACCORDING TO THE SUFI ABD AL KARIM AL JILI

*Miss Silburn*

In 'abd al-Karīm al-Jilī's celebrated book 'al-in Sān-al Kamīl, "Universal Man", the author deals with the divine Degrees in chapters IV to IX. These are Divine Nature, Oneness, Unity and Divine Obscurity (the non-manifested Reality of God). Since these Degrees show some similarity to the phases of the Paramashiva of the Trika System we propose briefly to describe certain of their aspects while leaving to others the task of establishing a comparison between the two metaphysics.\*

The Essence of Allāh is God Himself, that by which He is: the Absolute Reality, God subsisting by Himself, being neither the subject nor object of any Knowledge. It is unknowable to the creature: "Therefore one cannot conceive of It by any logical thought, any more than one can understand It from any traditional reference, because one can only understand a thing by its relation to another thing, which gives it position, or by a negation, therefore its opposite. Now there exists in the whole of life no relation

in which to place the Essence, nor any attribution of origin that applies to It, consequently nothing that can deny It, and nothing that can be its opposite.... Its premordial source is not reached by any decision of Science, nor can any silence suppress It, and no limits, however slender or incommensurable, can enclose It...( Chapter I, page 6 ).

"Yet", Titus Burkhardt tells us (P.8), "the Essence is recognizable at each degree of Reality in this sense that It is the inmost Reality of all Knowledge. God knows Himself by Himself within Himself without any inner distinction, and He knows Himself by Himself in the Universe according to ever varying relative modes." and Jilī sings :

"I know therefore that His Essence cannot be grasped.  
It is far from Thee that someone probes Thee,  
Far from Thee that someone is unconscious of Thee...O bewilderment :"( p.25).

---

\*We give here some extracts from an incomplete French translation by Titus Burkhardt of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jilī's 'L Homme universel', Algiers 1953. Collection: 'Soufisme'. All Nos. of chapters and pages given belong to the above translation.

And further on (chapter V) : "Know that the Essence ( *adhdat* ) signifies the Absolute Being stripped of all authority, relations, properties and aspects. It is not that all these are situated outside the Absolute Being, on the contrary, all these aspects and what they imply are contained in Him. They are not found there either individually or connectedly, but are in essence the Absolute Being. The latter is the pure Essence in which neither names, nor attributes, nor relations nor connexions, nor anything else manifests. As soon as something is manifested there, the appearance in question must be attributed to that which sustains this manifestation and not to the pure Essence because the principle of the Essence is precisely the synthesis of the universal and individual realities, of the apportionings and the connexions : a synthesis that is at the same time their subsistence and the cause of their disappearance under the influence of the Essence's Oneness. When one sees in This a quality or a name or no matter what attribute, it is always from a similar standpoint that this quality exists and not in the Essence as Such."

*On the Divine Nature (Godheadness)—*

The supreme affirmation of the Essence is that of Godheadness ( *al-ulūhiyah* ) and is characterized by Its

non-exclusiveness. "It is that which synthesizes all affirmations and governs all qualities ( Chapter IV ).

This is how al-Jīlī describes It : ' Know that the divine Nature which embraces all the realities of Being and holds them in their respective degrees is called Godheadness, And I mean by "realities of Being" ( *haqāic alwujūd* ) both the principles that condition the different states of manifestation ( *mawzāhir* ), and what manifests there; that is to say, God ( *al-hāqq* ) and the created thing ( *al-Khālq* ) together. Godheadness therefore signifies what totalizes the divine aspects as well as all the stages of existence and assigns to all things what comes to them from the divine Being. The name Allāh designates the Ruler of this highest estate, which can only belong to the Absolute Essence. (p.35).

Godheadness is superior to Oneness because It gives to the realities of existence and of non-existence what comes to them of Reality and excludes nothing, whilst Oneness is a Reality contained in the total of the Realities of Being. "This is why the name Allāh is the supreme name, superior to the name al-ahad, the One."

"Oneness is the most exclusive affirmation of the Essence by Itself, while Godheadness is the supreme affirmation of the Essence Itself and of others than Itself.

“It is for this reason that the Initiates have not access to the state of Oneness (*al-ahadiyah*), whereas access to Knowledge of the Divine Nature (*al-ulūhiyah*) is not forbidden them, for Oneness is the pure Essence, in which no quality appears and with greater reason no creature; consequently there can be no possible correlation between It and the created, no matter how it may be viewed .....(p.41).

Godheadness, on the contrary, unites such contrasts as the eternal and the transitory, God and His creature, the existent and the non-existent: “Thus it is that the contrasts appear in Divine Nature for It gives to each thing, to all that It encircles, the reality it has. God appears in His Godheadness in His most perfect and highest estate; In His purely universal affirmations and in His noblest names. On the other hand the contingent appears in it in all its kinds and according to all its changes and possible aspects, appearances and disappearances. As to the Divine Being (*al-wujūd*) He reveals Himself there in all the completeness of His hierarchy, in His unitive aspects that join the creature to God as well as in His separative aspects.....

“This cannot be known by the reason nor conceived of by thought; only he who has attained to divine intuition can enjoy the pure taste of this total revelation, which is called Divine Unveiling (*al-tajallī al-ilahī*), and this is an object of bewilderment to the most perfect among the Initiates.....God reveals Himself in this state by means of completeness and integration.

“The Perfect Ones in their participation in this revelation are distinguished by their capacity to transmute integral into discriminative perception with regard to the way in which the Great, the Exalted One Himself approaches them and in proportion to what traces appear to them, within their limits, of the Infinite Plenitude (*al-Kamāl*).

*On Divine Obscurity, the Obscure Cloud—(al-'ama).....*

This divine Obscurity is the Essence's primal state, free of all connexions, as It is before creation\*. It is the Reality of Realities that cannot be qualified as the Divinity or the creature, being pure Essence, unconnected with any divine or creative degree, so-

\* But al-Jili precisely states that if a manifestation always proceeds from a state of non-manifestation, then here it is merely a question a non-temporal, purely primary principle, for Allah is too sublime to have between Himself and His creation any temporal relation. (p. 58).

that no name or quality can be attributed to It. This is the meaning of the Prophet's words: "There is no air above the dark Cloud, nor under It". That is to say, there is no Divinity above It nor created nature below It. Divine Obscurity is then the potential of Oneness (*al-ahadiyah*): just as all names and qualities become obliterated in the Oneness, in which not anything is manifested, so neither does anything manifest in the Divine Obscurity.

"There is nevertheless a distinction to be made between the Divine Obscurity and Oneness, in this way that Oneness affirms the Essence by intensification, it is the essential manifestation, the Unique One, while Divine Obscurity is the Essence in relation to its Absolute Reality, a Reality so sublime or so trifling that nothing of it can be understood; it is the obscure non-manifestation of the Essence categorically opposed to the supreme manifestation, namely, Oneness: the latter reveals the purity of the Essence, whereas the former hides Itself by means of the purity of the Essence.

God, however, is too sublime for Him to hide Himself from Himself by some manifestation, or to manifest Himself to Himself outside some state of concealment; but He exists eternally in concealed states of non-manifestation, or in manifestations that spring

from His Essence, just as He always has His activities, His aspects, His relations etc., without His undergoing any change...or depriving Himself of one thing in order to seize another. All these changes arise only from the modes by which God reveals Himself to us, although remaining ever in Himself as He was before He manifested Himself to us. Now whatever be these modes His Essence assumes only one state of revelation (*tajalli*), namely that which is essentially He, so that He has but one irradiation... For it is He who reveals Himself to Himself for ever."

In a beautiful stanza al-Jili extols the Divine Obscurity:

"The Divine Obscurity is the primordial place

Where the Suns of beauty set,  
It is the Self of God Himself,

By which He is, and from which  
he never issues forth.

So that He never changes.

His symbol is the latent fire in the flint.

If the fire emanates from the stone,

Still it never separates from it either

in principle or in its latent state.

It continues to exist there unmani-

festated always,

And its manifestation does not in

any way alter its original state.

We have shown you a spectator who

is blind to Himself;

God in His greatness, cannot  
   compare Himself.  
 It fills the Intelligent with dismay  
 At their inability to grasp what, for  
   them, is obscurity.  
 It is the Divine Self, not because It  
   allows darkness,  
 But because It brings light, if under-  
   stood aright.  
 Other than the unknowable Oneness,  
 Or the knowable Oneness of the Many,  
 Ungraspable of Itself, screened from  
   all sight.  
 'This is called Divine Obscurity.'  
   (Chap. IX—p. 54 sqq.)

*On Oneness (al-ahadiyah)*

Oneness appears as the undifferentiated, the absence of all aspects, of all qualities.

"The word Oneness designates the revelation of the Essence in which neither names, nor qualities, nor any trace of their effects appear. It is therefore a name for the Essence when considered as above all comparisons, either divine or creaturely.

"Now there exists for Oneness, in the whole of the Cosmos, no place of manifestation more suitable than thyself when thou sinkest into thine own essence forgetting all connexions, and thou layest hold of thyself freed from all thine aspects.....It is in this state

that man becomes the most perfect place in the whole of existence for the manifestation of Oneness. It is the first descent (*tanazzul*) of the Essence from the darkness of the Cloud (*al-amā*) towards the light of revelations, and also the first of all Its revelations, because of its purity, and absence of all attributes, names, connexions or analogies; for all is contained in the mode of non-manifestation (*bātin*)."

*On Unity (al-wahidiyah)*

Unity is the chief aspect of the Divine Nature. It is the revelation of the Essence which follows that of Oneness. The Essence appears as attribute and the attribute as the Essence, so that each divine attribute shows itself as the determinative essential of each of the others.

This is what al-Jīlī says :

"Unity is a revealing of the Essence,  
 Which appears as a synthesis because  
   of the differentiation of its qualities,  
 All in It is uniform and differentiated  
   at the same time.  
 Wonder at the Multiplcity that is  
   essentially One !  
 In It this one and that one are the  
   very same,  
 And that which goes away is as that  
   which comes.  
 It is the divine Reality (*al-haqiqah*)  
   of the Many



Contained in the Unique (*al-wahdah*)  
without dispersal.

Through It is to be found the source  
of each thing

And in this respect the negative is  
the same as the affirmative.

Its complete form is that of the spirit  
of Discrimination,

And the manifold variety of attri-  
butes (appearing in it) is like that of  
the Verses (in the Sacred Book).

Then in the same chapter al-Jili  
compares Divine Nature, Oneness and  
Unity :

"The way in which Oneness (*al-ahadiyah*) Unity (*al-wahidiyah*) and Divine Nature (*al-uluhiyah*) differ from one another consists in this that in Oneness, nothing of the names or attributes, are manifested; It relates to the pure Essence in its immediate Reality, while in Unity names and qualities and their activities are manifested, but only in regard to the Essence, not in a separative manner, so that each one is the essential determinative of

the other. In Godheadness, names and attributes are manifested there according to what is peculiar to each one ... However Oneness appears in the Divine Nature according to the demands of the law of Unity, so that It embraces in Its revelation the law of all revelations, and gives to everything that is Real that which comes to it of Reality.

"...It is for this that Oneness is superior to Unity, because It is the pure Essence, and that Godheadness is superior to Oneness since It gives to It its Reality.....Its superiority to Oneness is as the superiority of the whole to the part, whilst the superiority of Oneness to other revelations of the Essence is as that of the root over the branches. With regard to the superiority of Unity over the rest of the revelations is as that of unity over separation."

al-Jili concludes this chapter thus :  
"Search for these significations within thyself and meditate on them" (Chap. VI. p 46 sed).

# Religion And Science

*Lama Anagarika Govinda Acharya, Arya Maitreya Mandala*

“On a planet more than a thousand million years old it is hard to believe—as do Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Buddhists—that the most important event has occurred within the last few thousand years, when it is clear that there were great civilisations before that event. It is equally difficult to doubt that many events as significant for humanity will occur in the future. In that immeasurable future the destiny of humanity dwarfs that of the individual. If our planet was created a few thousand years ago to end a few years or a few thousand years hence, it is conceivable that the main purpose to be worked out on it is the salvation and perfection of individual human beings. No religion which accepts geology can regard such a purpose as being but subsidiary. If we define religion as our attitude to the universe as a whole, the new time-scale will make us humbler as individuals, but prouder as a race.” (J.B.S.Haldane, “Possible worlds”)

It certainly is true that the destiny of the individual appears to be utterly insignificant in view of the vastness of the universe and the immeasurable fu-

ture destiny of humanity. But where does the notion of the immensity and harmony of such a universe and of the eternal destiny of humanity spring up? Certainly not in the human race as such or as a whole, but in single individuals in moments of higher vision on or through persistent concentration of their mind upon problems detached from the interests of daily life. And is it thinkable that an individual as a momentary, insignificant phenomenon should be able to grasp (or to invent) the vastness and harmony of the universe, and to perceive time-spaces of many thousand million years (as in astronomy), if it were not linked up with something that outlasts the existence of the individual and even the human race, and which at every moment goes beyond the confines of individual consciousness? The individual, therefore, is more than its momentary form of appearance. It is the meeting-place of the perishable and the imperishable, the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, of which neither can be experienced (or, in fact, can, exist) without the other. If salvation or perfection is possible at all, it can only take place in the individual and

not in the 'human race', the very concept of which is the creation of, and only exists in, the individual mind.

Whether the salvation or perfection of individual human beings was the main purpose to be worked out on this planet or not, the fact that this is the only goal worthy of the human mind to strive for, cannot be denied. Whatever the purpose of our planet may be (if one can speak of a 'purpose' at all), there is no other way left to the individual human being, than to develop all its inherent qualities to the highest possible state of perfection.

The attainment of this state of 'salvation', however, implies the overcoming of all narrow individual limitations and the recognition of super-individual realities within one's own mind. Thus salvation, if we agree to define this term with Julian Huxley as the achievement of harmony within ourselves as well as with the world around us, and as "an extension of our narrow core to include in a single grasp ranges of outer experiences and inner nature",—this salvation or enlightenment, as we might call it, is no more an exclusively individual concern. It is the most universal experience the human mind can attain, and from the very outset it demands a universal attitude; for he who strives for personal salvation, without regard for his fellow-

beings, has already deprived himself of the most essential means for the realisation of his aim. Whether we are able to liberate others or not, if we are not ready to contribute to the best of our capacity towards this aim, we have no chance of progressing on the way of salvation. This is not a philosophical, but first and foremost a psychological question, a question of our practical attitude towards life.

As there are no absolute individuals and no rigid boundary lines between one form of life and the other,—because each centre of consciousness influences, penetrates and thus pertakes in the other,—it is clear that each form of life is intrinsically connected with all others, a fact which becomes more and more obvious to the individual in the course of spiritual progress. The more man liberates himself from the illusion of being a separate entity, the more he experiences himself as the totality of all that exists, and it is in this experience that he no more thinks of liberating 'himself' but the 'whole world' which has become conscious in his mind. This is the Great Way, the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle.

A religion which accepts such an outlook is neither impressed by geological time-scales nor by astronomical figures in the measurement of interstellar space, nor can it regard the perfec-

tion of individual human beings as subsidiary in view of the immensity of such time and space dimensions. On the contrary: that such discoveries were possible and that the human mind was able to grasp such immensities, proves that individual human beings are indeed capable of higher development.

Furthermore, the Buddhist conception of time and space is really an anticipation of the discoveries of modern science. The Buddhists never thought that the advent of Gotama Buddha was the first of such events in the history of the world,—as Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans thought with regard to their respective religious leaders. Just as there have been Enlightened Ones in the past, so there will be enlightened beings in the future. There is no limit in both directions. And similarly with regard to space, the Buddhist never confined his universe to this terrestrial world, but admitted the possibility of innumerable worlds. True to Indian tradition, he was accustomed to think in dimensions which even in this our scientific age arouse an almost superstitious and primitive fear in the average western mind.

Indian thinkers never lost their sense of proportion. They neither overestimated the importance of man in relationship to the universe, nor did

they underestimate his value, as modern science is inclined to do in the face of those newly discovered spatial and temporal dimensions. Even the scientist is apt to be impressed by size and duration, as if any particular value were inherent in them or attached to these properties. He feels small and insignificant in the vastness of space and time, because he forgets that these properties are the creation of his own mind. And even if they could exist independently of him, would it not be even more astonishing and significant (and pointing towards a higher value) that a mere 'speck of dust', like man, should be able to conceive and to contemplate the enormous dimensions and qualities of the sun, or even of innumerable solar systems? I very much doubt that the sun of any other of those gigantic celestial bodies, if they were gifted with consciousness, would be able to be aware of man. Man, probably, is as much bigger than the atom as the sun is bigger than man.

Thus, man takes a middle position in the scale of dimensions, and apparently it is this position which enables him to be aware of the microcosmos as well as of the macrocosmos. The 'smallness' of man, therefore, is no proof of inferiority but perhaps a positive advantage, and the same may hold good with regard to his shortlivedness.

A thousandfold longer life would perhaps imply a slowing down of his rhythm of consciousness, which would result in a lesser degree of sensibility and alertness, while a considerably shorter life might deprive him of that relative stability which is necessary for comprehending causal connections on a bigger scale.

At any rate it is futile to attach any value to size or duration as such, because the smallest fractions of time and space hold as many wonders and incomprehensible infinities as the biggest solar systems and spiral nebulae. And, after all, we could just as well regard smallness as a criterium of perfection. By reversing one's standpoint and by seeing the world from the other end, we become aware of the relativity of our habitual notions, theories, and unshakable 'facts', which we mistake for 'eternal truths'.

There are many spiritual exercises—especially among Tibetan aspirants of yoga—which “aim at destroying habitual notions accepted by routine and

without personal investigation. The object is to make one understand that other ideas can be put in their place. It is hoped that the disciple will conclude that there cannot be any absolute truth in ideas derived from sensations which can be discarded while others, even contradictory to them, take their place.” (David-Niel, “With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet”, p. 253).

The doubting of theories was a characteristic feature of Buddhism from its very beginning. The Buddha himself said, that he held no theories, neither about this world nor about the next, neither about God nor soul. Thus Buddhism, even in this respect, has forestalled science, of which Haldane says that it “owed its wonderful progress very largely to the habit of doubting all theories, even those on which one's action is founded.” (Op. cit. p. 224).

But it must be said that doubt, as much as faith, must be founded on discrimination and insight: without these positive qualities no creative progress is possible.

---

# From the Life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

( 6 )

During this period of intensive sadhana, one of Mataji's cousins Sri Nishikanta Bhattacharya paid a short visit at Bholanath's house. He was amazed to see Mataji's condition and strongly disapproved of Pitaji's tolerance of it. One day when Mataji was sitting in a yogic posture immersed in a state of bhava, he entered the room with the intention of expostulating with Her about it. Normally in accordance with village customs Mother kept Her face veiled in front of him and did not speak to him either. But that day Her demeanour was quite unusual and She did not attempt to cover Her head when the menfolk entered Her room and moreover, when Nishibabu spoke to Her, She looked straight at him and spoke with such a strange voice that he was taken aback and kept silent. Then Mataji said in a milder voice, "Don't be afraid what is it?"

Nishibabu—"Why do you perform all these *kriyas* and *asanas*? Have you been initiated into spiritual life?"

Mataji—"Yes."

Nishibabu—"Has Bholanath also been initiated?"

Mataji—"No, but he will be in five months. (Here She named a particular day and date with its presiding auspicious star.)

Nishibabu—"I do not understand what you mean by the star."

Mataji—"Go and ask Janakibabu who is fishing in the pond. He will understand."

Now Mataji had no way of knowing Janakibabu's (who was a neighbour) whereabouts, especially because it was time for him to have gone to his office. He was however found at the pond and on being fetched was able to explain what Mataji had meant by the star. He also was struck by Her extraordinary appearance. It was obvious to them that they were in the presence of a Personality which was far removed from their ordinary world. Janakibabu at last asked Her, "Who are you?"

Mataji answered this question in a loud and clear voice.\* This exalted

---

\* Not the whole of the conversation is being reproduced here.

mood lasted for sometime with the result that none of the gentlemen present went to their office that day.

The next day however Mataji reverted back to Her normal ways and went about Her duties as usual. The day that Mataji had specified for Pitaji's *diksha* drew near. Although Mataji had not mentioned the matter again, Pitaji remembered the date and on the particular day with a vague idea of avoiding anything that might happen, he hurried off to his office without taking his breakfast. At the appointed time however Mataji sent for him. When Bholanath replied that he was busy and could not leave the place, Mataji sent word to him that if he did not come home immediately, She would Herself go to the office. Not daring to risk this, Bholanath reluctantly came home. Mataji handed him a change of clothes and told him to bathe and then to sit down on an *asana* which She had kept ready for him. When Pitaji had seated himself he found that Mataji's demeanour had undergone a change. She was walking up and down the room and beautiful mystic mantras were spontaneously pouring forth from Her lips. After sometime she pronounced one single 'mantra' and Bholanath naturally concluded that it was meant for him. Later Mataji gave him detailed instructions how to use the mantras he had heard.

In this way Bholanath was initiated into spiritual life by Mataji. Much later she initiated Bhaiji into the life of renunciation ( *sanyasa* ), also in this indirect fashion. These are the only two incidents known to us when Mataji gave 'Diksha', although in a manner all Her own.

Bholanath had of course never looked upon Her as his wife, but from that moment She actually became his spiritual preceptor. Yet outwardly Her manner towards him did not change at all. She rarely did anything without his prior consent. She looked after him personally even anticipating his needs and providing for them beforehand. As already written above, we can just acknowledge the fact that it was in him to accept both Mataji's spiritual guidance as well as Her devoted service. From the month of December 1922 Mataji became *maunam* ( completely silent ) for three years. Sometimes while sitting in a yogic posture She would with one finger draw a circle ( *Kundali* ) round herself. After this a few sanskrit *mantras* would be uttered by Her. Then She would speak to people for a short time and again turn silent. There were however no rules or fixed times for these occasional interruptions of Her silence. Contrary to popular practice Mataji while observing silence never made signs with Her hands. Even Her facial

expression did not change to show approval or disapproval.

Bholanath lost his post in Bajitpur in 1924. Thinking that there would be better chances of finding work in a bigger town, he came to Dacca. Mataji accompanied him. But try as he might he was unable to find work for sometime. He ultimately decided to send Mataji home and stay on alone. But She told him to wait for another three days and only if he did not find work within that time he might do as he wished. Needless to say that within those three days he did find work. He was appointed manager of the Nawab of Dacca's extensive Shahbagh Gardens. There was a small cottage for the manager in one corner of the gardens and Bholanath stayed there with his family for nearly four years. At that time Mataji's youngest brother Makhan and Pitaji's nephew Ashu, both schoolboys, were staying with them. During the first part of Her stay in Dacca Mataji was still observing silence and for the greater part of the day She used to be in an exalted state or *Bhava*. Even so, She would get up early in the morning to prepare an early meal for the children. After She had sent them off to school She would go to the pond, clean all the utensils and then cook again for the midday bhoga. In addi-

tion to all this cooking She performed all the other household work as well. But as in Ashtagram and in Bajitpur She would now also enter into states of *samadhi* in the midst of Her work. While serving food Her hands would stop midway; while cleaning utensils in the pond She would even sometimes fall into the water. The gardens were very extensive and Pitaji had to be away from home for long stretches of time. He now began to feel worried about Mataji's wellbeing, and decided to send for his widowed sister to look after Her. This sister, who later became universally known as 'Matari Pishima,' had also stayed with Mataji in Ashtagram. Pishima and Mataji were very good friends and therefore happy to have each other's constant company.

During that period of Her life Mataji followed various rules in the matter of Her diet. For days She would eat only three morsels of food once daily. At another time She used to take just nine grains of boiled rice. Then again Her meal consisted of whatever one person could give Her in one breath. On two different occasions She remained even without water, once for 16 and at another time for 23 days. When Didi\* saw Her for the first time on December 1925, Mataji used to take just three morsels of food

---

\* Sri Gurupriya Devi.



on Mondays and Thursdays and nine grains of rice daily during the rest of the week.

Throughout these fasts Her manner was absolutely normal and She did not seem to feel in any way the effects of these rigorous observances.

Mataji gradually began to be known widely and a great number of people flocked to Her daily. All those who came once merely to see what everyone was talking about, themselves became regular visitors. But Mataji was still the retiring young wife and kept Her face veiled before strangers. Men found it difficult to approach Her and were obliged to worship Her from a distance. If Bholanath asked Her to speak to anyone She would do so, but not otherwise. She however mixed very freely with the women. Even when She was in *mouna* or in a state of *bhava* and unable to speak clearly, She would do Her utmost to make them feel welcome. She would first spread a mat for them to sit on and then offer them refreshments and bettle leaves. All who came were in any case won over by Her winsome personality rather than by anything else. Prominent among Her earlier visitors was Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Ghosh's daughter-in-law, whom everyone now knows as 'Hirandi'. She says that it was Her daily practice to go to Shahbagh; although this daily visit was not at all

approved of by her people, she could not rest unless She saw Mataji at least once a day.

Other regular visitors were Sri Prangopal Mukherji and his family, Baulbabu and his wife, Nanibabu and Sri Nishikanta Mitra. Nishibabu now lives in the Varanasi Ashram and is probably the oldest of Mataji's living bhaktas.

Up till then Mataji's *bhava* or *samadhi* had only been witnessed by a few close companions. She allowed it to be seen publicly for the first time in Shahbagh in January 1926. On the occasion of a solar eclipse the devotees decided to perform Kirtan on a large scale at Bholanath's place. As already stated above, Pitaji was a very warm hearted person and took great delight in entertaining people. With the help of Baulbabu and others, he now set about making elaborate arrangements for the kirtan. A large number of people were invited and Mataji, assisted by Matari Pishima and Didi, prepared everything for the cooking of the *Bhoga*. After completing arrangements in the kitchen, Mataji with Her companions sat down in a room from where they could watch the men performing the Kirtan. What happened after this may be best related in Didi's words: "At one moment Mataji was sitting as if one of us. The next moment Her demeanour had undergone a complete

change. Her eyes closed and Her body began to move in rhythm to the kirtan. Slowly and shakily She stood up. It was apparent to all of us that Her movements were entirely spontaneous and She was completely oblivious of Her surroundings. Mataji had a beautiful and graceful way of wearing Her clothes so that no part of Her body except Her face, hands and feet was visible. But now She did not seem to be aware of the fact that Her clothes had become disarranged. Seeing Her strange condition we knotted up Her clothes. I had never before witnessed anything so wonderful in all my life. I had only read about the *mahabhava* of Sri Gauranga Deva. Now looking at Mataji I was breathless with awe and wonder. Her eyes were fixed in an unblinking gaze. There was an unusual glow on Her face. Her body slowly

began to revolve rhythmically and in this condition She entered the main room in which the kirtan was being performed. It looked as if Her body was being wafted by the wind. A few times She would fall and get up in the same rhythm without appearing to be hurt. In this manner She arrived in the centre of the kirtan room and fell down. A strange effulgence enveloped Her body, which in the lying posture began to revolve at a tremendous speed. A few of us tried to hold Her, but it was beyond our power to check that force. Mataji's body moved like a dry leaf in a strong wind. After sometime She of Her own accord sat up slowly and Her body became absolutely motionless....."

This was the first time that Mataji's *bhava* was publicly seen.

# Tower of Silence

(BUDDHA'S REALIZATION)

*Sri U. C. Dutta*

I was going to the Cheena Peak, 8,569 ft., from the sea level, at Nainital. It was a climb of about three miles and from various points I took a view of the urban area on one side and the long ranges of wavelike hills on the other. At every stage the view was changing. I knew it was purely subjective. To me the scenes changed, the same thing appeared different as I had moved to different altitude. The world around me did not alter, with my altered position, in the same manner.

A similar idea is expressed in the Ramayana of Valmiki. In the crowded Darbar of Ajodhya Sri Ram Chandra asks Hanumanji what his attitude is to him. Sri Hanumanji replies, "From the stand-point of body consciousness (Dehabuddhi) I am your servant. From the position of an Individual soul (Jivabuddhi), I am your part; and from the point of self-consciousness (Atma buddhi), I am your own self." These three stand-points created by physical, vital and self consciousness have given rise to three different schools of thought

in Indian Philosophy—Dualism (Dvaita) qualified Monism (Vishishtadvaita) and pure Monism (Advaita) represented by Madhva, Ramanuja and Shankara respectively. All of them, apparently contradictory, indicate different stages in the journey of life. In the spiral motion of spiritual flight man experiences Truth in its various aspects. Truth is one, it has many phases different from one another. They are complementary rather than contradictory. He alone knows truly, who has taken a full and comprehensive view of life. Considering the inexhaustible potentiality of Reality, the final phase of Life does not appear to have been revealed as yet. But whatever has been manifested is undoubtedly enough to raise man above the earthly miseries, control the cycle of birth and death and connect him with the spring of Life eternal.

Every religion lays down a definite method or methods to reach a goal. Besides the path and the goal it has a metaphysical background. This background deals with three things—Chit

(spirit or consciousness), Achit (matter or unconsciousness) and Brahma (the Absolute). Popularly they are known as Self, the World and God.

The Vedas and the Upanishads that preceded Buddha have all the three aspects. According to them there is some eternal, all-pervasive element like Brahman which is identical with the Atman. One of the methods suggested is to create a state of desirelessness in self so that the Individual may be merged in the Universal. This merging is Moksha—liberation from the round of births and deaths. It is called Brahma—Nirvana in Chandogya (2.23.1). Buddha took inspiration from the Upanishads and accepted the method and the goal—the path of knowledge leading to Nirvana together with the Law of causality and the theory of re-incarnation. The cause of suffering is the thirst for existence—Kama Tanha (desire for sense pleasure), Bhava Tanha (desire for continued existence) and Vibhava Tanha (desire for self-annihilation). This is the noble truth (Tevijja Sutta, Digha Nikaya). The noble eight-fold Path involves reason, discipline, control of passions, meditation, etc. Nirvana means extinction—extinction of ego that begets desire—Gahakaraka (maker of house). It is similar to Moksha. The Buddha did not accept anything permanent like Brahman,

Atman, Soul or God. Everything is fleeting and transitory. Here he differs. If there is no soul, then who becomes free? The master shows the way to get over miseries and refused to discuss or indulge in metaphysical speculations. To the question "Suffer, suffer, they say, but who suffers?" Master's reply is: Your very question in itself is wrong. The question ought to be put thus: "What caused the arising of suffering?" The thirst for life causes suffering. Who feels the thirst? The question ought to be put thus: "What causes the arising of the thirst for life?" It is Vedana or sensation. What causes sensation? Different sense-organs coming in contact with their objects and so on. Thus the Law of dependent origination operates. There is no positive transcendental reality like soul as in the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and the Geeta. What we call Soul or ego is nothing but "a bundle of sensations" (Hume) and "the Empirical ego" (Kant).

The master's teachings were simple. He did not refer to any transcendental reality and talk of philosophy, though many philosophical systems grew after him. The Councils of Buddhist elders were called from time to time at Rajgir, Vaisali and Pataliputra to compile, clarify and propagate the teachings. The idea was to avoid schism. But

Mahayana as distinct from Hinayana came into existence in the first century of the Christian era, when Kanishka held the fourth council known as the Council of Esoterism. Mahayana aimed at the liberation of all sentient beings with the ideal of Bodhisattvahood, while Hinayana stuck to Arhatship and endeavoured for the salvation of the individual soul. Philosophic schools like Madhyamika, Yogachara, Vaibhashika and Sautrantika sprang up to support some existing views and oppose others. The Fifth and the Sixth great Councils were held in Burma in 1871 and 1954 respectively.

Nirvana, the goal of life, was not defined by the Buddha. Nagarjuna, the leader of Madhyamika school defined Nirvana as "Sunya". It is a condition about which neither existence, nor non-existence, nor both, nor the negative results of both, can be predicted. This state of being free from all the four possibilities of existence and non-existence points to something unspeakable or transcendental. Maitreyanatha and Asanga, the champions of Yogachara School, defined Nirvana as positive Sunya with a positive element of Vijnana (ideas). This definition is more convincing as the first one leads to vague Nihilism or undefined Transcendentalism.

The Yogachara School was a

combination of the Mahayana and the Saivite. The world is like a dream. It is a projection of mind. It has no objective reality. The natural and logical development of Yogachara was Vajrayana or Tantrik Buddhism. Many Hindu gods and goddesses infiltrated into Buddhism in the disguise of personifications of various powers of Buddha and made it, in spirit, another Hindu sect. As a creed it attained great popularity, but lacked purity and discipline, which ultimately led to the fall of Buddhism in India. Ultimately it was absorbed into Hinduism, during its revival under Kumarila and Shankara.

It may be noted here that the middle path (Madhypantha) of the Buddha which is the basis of the Madhyamika School, was a reaction to the Vedic ritualism on one side and the Jaina and Hindu asceticism on the other. The Geeta too recommends the middle course between self-indulgence and self-mortification. During the life-time of Buddha numerous views and doctrines were prevalent in India. He put life into some of the dead forms by his unique personality and wonderful vision.

Is this vision the same as that of self-realization of a Vedatist? Some thinkers with a temper and tendency to reconcile views hold that both are

one and the same. According to them the Buddha is rather more consistent to deny the transcendental ego or soul which is beyond the range of speech and mind. "One who says that he knows, does not know and one who says that he does not know, knows." So whatever is said about Reality is wrong and misleading. This is why the Buddha preached Shila (good conduct), the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Noble Path leading to Nirvana. The Enlightened one spoke plainly whatever was possible and profitable about the nature of the real to which he had attained. Shortly before his passing away he said to his disciple Ananda: "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps something back". Shankara is supposed to preach the same truth in disguise using some positive expressions regarding the transcendental realities of permanent nature. In fact, it is not so. Shankara's realization is not exactly the same as that of Buddha. The path of knowledge (Shuddha Jnana Marga) is common, but their final realizations of the absolute are different due to the basic difference in their personalities and potentialities.

At the end of human struggles for

illumination the aspirant following the path of devotion experiences Nitya Leela (eternal sports with God). Here a line of demarcation is deliberately maintained between the Individual and the Universal. The devotee likes to taste sugar without being sugar. The aspirant treading the path of knowledge, loses individuality and becomes merged in the Universal or the Absolute. In the process of merging which is long and continuous there are stages. They can be distinguished and termed as positive Atman (Brahman), in which this (Ananda) predominates and negative Anatman (Sunya) in which peace (Shanti) gains the upperhand and a final synthesis of the two—Param Pada (the last stage or the Supreme post) which is all embracing and at the same time all transcending is unspeakable. Atman or Brahman is a state of continuous bliss. Anatman or Sunya is a state of absolute void—absence of any feeling or sensation. Both these states are experienced, at least temporarily, by aspirants practising Psychic control or meditation. Once we accept these two aspects of life, the logical and the metaphysical necessity is to posit a unifying principle which is termed as a Param Pada. The journey to every stage is generally long, but the arrival or illumination becomes sudden. Shankara reached the positive state of Brahman, while Buddha attained to the

negative state of Sunya), presence of nothingness or (absolute void), as described by the Yogachara Champions. There is negation of everything that is on the positive side—an everlasting Nay. All the voices are hushed in a tower of silence. The difference is basic. This makes the crucial difference between the Shankarite and the Buddhistic standpoints and scriptures. Both the visions of the Absolute are equally true and supported by the Upanishads.

Numerous aspirants have realized the states of Nitya Leela, Brahman and Sunya as is evident from the scriptures and individual experiences, but very few have reached the Final

stage—Param Pada. It is the highest ideal, the realization of which presupposes the preservation of personality, an experience of all the three stages and supreme grace—grace of one's true self, the Universal.

There all the stages noted above merge into one complete whole. "The denizens of Paradise have their eyes fixed on this ideal". It is not mere liberation—Moksha or Nirvana, it is Perfection. The Son becomes as perfect as the Father who has brought about this mystery of life. Here both the circles the Individual and the Universal—coincide, being equal in every respect. This is the supreme experience of life.\*

\*The ultimate Reality is beyond the comprehension of human mind that is controlled by the formal laws of thought. A kind of transcendental logic or "logic of the infinite" has got to be evolved to prove or point out the final phase of Truth. In the ordinary sense it exists and at the same time it does not exist, it is beyond both existence and non-existence. For the Supreme it is possible to be everything and yet nothing. It is what it is—"the thing-in-itself" or "the meeting ground of all contradictions" (Aristotle). It is neither void nor non-void, nor even both simultaneously, nor above the two modes, (Nagarjuna). It is neither Being nor Non-Being; it is a state of balance like the Akasha: its nature is beyond man's power of imagination (Manju Sri). Language is capable of appealing only to the thought level of human consciousness and not beyond. So mind and speech recoil from that state (Upanishads). The scriptures and men of realization can only hint at the supreme experience of life. One can catch glimpses of Truth by transforming mind through

intuition or Yoga.

All the six systems of Hindu Philosophy aim at gradual emancipation (Krama Mukti). According to the Nyaya-vaisheshika Soul has existence (Sat) for its nature, while Samkhya and Yoga consider it to be extremely conscious as well (Sat and Chit), but according to Vedanta the nature of soul is existence-knowledge-bliss (Sat Chit Ananda). So far one has to deal with Maya. Here steps in Agama or Tantra and explores a fresh field, the realm of Suddha Maya. It is at this stage that the preparation for perfection begins. This state is followed by Chit Shakti (Spiritual power), equanimity of Shakti (Power) and Shaktiman (the powerful), and perfection the final phase. With the disappearance of Maya the knot of action (Karma granthi) is untied and Jivatma is liberated, but the knot of consciousness (bhava granthi) still persists. When it is united with the unfolding of the highest spiritual power and knowledge, Jivatma recovers all it had lost before and becomes thoroughly divinised. This is perfection.

## MATRI LILA

January—April 1958.

We have already reported in the last issue of Ananda Varta that Mataji reached *Anandakashi* on January 4th. *Anandakashi*, one mile beyond *Vasistha Gupha* and 15 miles off Rishi-Kesh on the road to Devaprayag is a secluded spot of extreme natural beauty, on the banks of the Ganges, amidst hills and forests. The Rajmata of Tehri Garhwal has a country house and a guest house there in a lovely garden with fruit trees and flowers and fountains. A few years ago she built a beautiful, little cottage for Mataji there, which is quite an ideal place for a retreat, as it is not easily accessible even from Rishi Kesh and really quiet and solitary. The only sounds that chime into one's ears are the sweet melodious song of the spring that traverses the estate and the dancing jungle of the swiftly flowing Ganges. There the river is full of mirth and gaiety, quite different from the serene, mature Ganges at Varanasi. In the centre of the garden a small Shiva temple has been erected over a *lingam* that was found deeply buried under the earth when the foundations were dug up.

Whenever Mataji visits *Ananda Kashi*, She takes only very few people with Her ; so also this time. January is the coldest month of the year, but Mataji did not seem to mind the cold. She used to sit on Her veranda from the time the first ray of the sun entered the compound and She spent the whole afternoon there until the last ray bade Her adieu. Those who stayed with Mataji were extremely fortunate to have Her close company almost throughout the day amidst ideal surroundings. On January 13th morning Mataji motored back to Hardwar, where She spent the day at *Baghat House*, only to catch the train to Varanasi that very night. A number of devotees had come from Dehradun for Mataji's *darshan*,

She arrived at Varanasi on January 14th *Sankranti* evening, just in time for the end of the yearly commemoration of the great Yajna that was celebrated at the Varanasi Ashram from January 14th 1947—January 14th 1950. The girls of the Kanyapith had been singing Kirtan since the morning and as Mataji entered the Ashram the



Kirtan reached its climax. After it was terminated Mataji distributed fruits and sweets to everyone present. She remained at Varanasi until January 23rd, when She motored to Allahabad to grace with Her presence the *Saraswati Puja* performed on January 24th at the residence of Sri Gopal Swarup Pathak. She stayed at his house till the 27th, but spent one night in between at the Ashram of the late Sri Gopal Thakur at Allenganj and attended the Saraswati Puja there as well, which the inmates of the Ashram observed on January 25th. She returned to Varanasi for two days only, leaving for Rajgirh on the 29th.

Rajgirh (or Rajagriha) in Bihar is famous both as a Buddhist place of pilgrimage as well as a health-resort, because of its hot springs that have brought relief and cure to thousands of patients since ancient times, Mataji used to visit the place off and on for a day or two, putting up at a *dharmasala*, until a very few years ago a bigha of land was acquired by the Sangha and a small Ashram built. The Ashram has recently been enlarged and also improved by the installation of water and electricity. This time Didima, Didi and a fairly large party joined Mataji, who remained there for 16 days.

On February 14th She was back at Varanasi in good time for the preparation of the *Shiva-ratri* festival that was celebrated with the usual solemnity and splendour throughout the night of February 16th. Those who wish to



participate in the *Shiva Puja* have to fast during the whole of the preceding day without partaking even of a drop of water. They are expected to remain in their seats from sunset to sun rise and perform four pujas with Kirtan in the intervals. Only after the daily morning worship has been joined to that of the night, the fast may be broken. We have on several former occasions reported in great detail about similar functions in Varanasi and Vrindaban. There were two groups of worshippers sitting in circles round *Shiva linga*, one upstairs on the veranda outside of the Annapurna Temple and another one downstairs. Mataji was present throughout the night, alternating between the two groups. From 3—3—30 a. m. when people very likely began to feel tired She Herself led the Kirtan, which fired everyone with new vigour and enthusiasm.

On February 21st Mataji left for Vrindaban, where She remained until after *Holi*. On most days She visited Sri Haribabaji's Ashram thrice daily. There *Rasa lila* or *Mahaprabhu lila* was enacted in the mornings, followed by the usual Satsang in the afternoons and Kirtan at night. *Holi* fell on March 5th. That day (*dhol purnima*) is also *Lord Gauranga's* birthday. Mataji was in an exceptional mood.

She played *Holi*, sprinkling coloured water on each and everyone and at the same time sang Kirtan. Special *Puja*, *Bhoga* and *Arati* was held in the temple of *Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*. The beautiful statues of *Sri Gauranga* and *Nitai* had been newly painted for the occasion which considerably enhanced their splendour. The temple and the *Bhagavata Hall* in front of the temple had been profusely decorated with multi-coloured floral festoons and Kirtan was sung in the hall from sunrise to sunset.

On the 8th of March Mataji arrived in New Delhi by car and spent the night at the Ashram in Chandraloka. The following day being a Sunday gave many devotees a chance to have Mataji's *darshan*. The construction of the Ashram has now been almost completed. We were happy to notice the progress it has made since the last *Samyam Vrata* in November 1957. It looks even more impressive than it did already, since it has been colour-washed yellow with a red border.

On the 9th night Mataji took the train to Hoshiarpur from Delhi Junction. She went there at the invitation of Sri Haribabaji Maharaj, who had arranged for a *Rasalila* programme which continued for seven days. A *Rasalila* party had been

called from Vrindaban and Mataji daily attended their performances. From the terrace of Mataji's room at Hoshiarpur one could enjoy the silhouette of the Kulu valley snow-range.

On March 17th Mataji left by car for Jullundur. She visited the house of some bhaktas in the city and spent the rest of the day at the *Savitri Devi* Ashram. She usually halts there whenever She comes to the Punjab. The Ashram has been built and is run by a Sikh family, Sardar Sadhu Singh and his four sons ( one of them passed away ) whom Mataji many years ago named Ramji, Lakshman, Bharat and Satarughna. A primary school in Mataji's name is maintained by the Ashram. Late at night Mataji entrained for Delhi where She stopped for 6 hours only on March 18th and then motored to Vrindaban to be present at the death anniversary celebrations for Sri Oriyababaji on March 19th. The following day She returned to New Delhi and spent the night at the new house of a devotee at Kailash colony. On the 21st morning She was once again sitting in a car on Her way to Dehradun, via Modinagar,

reaching Kishanpur the same night. The junior section of the *Kanyapith*, consisting of six girls and their teachers has since November 1957 been shifted from Varanasi to the Kishanpur Ashram. After a stay of barely two days Mataji boarded the train to Varanasi, reaching there on March 24th afternoon. From March 27th—30th *Vasanti Puja* (*Durga Puja* in spring) and *Ram Naomi* were celebrated in Mataji's presence. On this occasion we also enjoyed a well enacted *Chandi Lila*.

On April 11th Mataji, accompanied by a large party left for Calcutta, in time for the anniversary of Sri Muktananda Giri's (Mataji's mother, commonly addressed as 'Didima' by devotees) taking *Sannyasa*. A new Ashram with extensive grounds, which has been recently acquired in Agarpara near Calcutta on the banks of the Ganges was inaugurated by this festival. The celebrations of Mataji's birthday are also to take place this year at the new Ashram at Agarpara from May 2nd—May 7th. Both Didima's *Sannyasa Utsava* and Mataji's birthday are being observed on a smaller scale in the other Ashrams as well.

# The Dual Conception of Brahman in Indian Philosophy

*Dr. Rama Chaudhuri*

A unique feature of Indian Philosophy is its greater stress on the Atman—Self, than on Ísvara or Brahman—God or the Absolute. This is found right from the Vedic age, and continues throughout the different systems of Indian Philosophy in later ages. That is why even those systems, like the Sāmkhya and Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, that deny God outright, have been given honoured places amongst the six systems of Āstika or Orthodox Philosophy, it is simply because they believe in the Vedas, and in the Ātman, in self-development, self-realisation and self-help. Even in those systems, like the Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Yoga, which definitely admit God, He does not occupy by any means a very important or central place. For, all these systems, though theistic in the ordinary sense of the term, do not start with God, but

with their own special Tattvas or Categories : the Nyāya with its sixteen logical Padārthas, Vaiśeṣika with its seven Padārthas, and Sāmkhya with its two Tattvas, Purusa and Prakṛti. But it is really in the Vedānta Philosophy alone that we find a real and serious discussion regarding God or the Absolute, in all its glory and grandeur. Seldom in the history of thought have such heights been reached, such breadth and depth of vision revealed.

In the Vedānta, two main trends are found—monotheistic and monistic, as found also in the Vedas and Upanisads, no less. According to Monotheism, there is one God, no doubt, but not one Reality. In fact, there are three Realities : Ísvara, Jīva and Jagat : God, Soul and Matter. But according to Monism, there is not only

one God, but also one Reality, viz. Brahman: the Absolute, Jiva and Jagat, Soul and Matter being ultimately false, i. e. true only from the lower, empirical, phenomenal standpoint, but not from the higher, philosophical, normal one.

These two trends of Monism and Monotheism are respectively represented mainly by Śamkara's "Kevalādvaitavāda" or Absolute Monism, and Rāmānuja's "Viśiṣṭadvaita-vāda" or Qualified Monism or Monotheism. These two are, apparently, absolute studies in contrast, differing point by point, in almost every respect, as regards the nature of Brahman, Jiva, Jagat, their inter relations, Mokṣa and Sādhana, Salvation and its Means. This seems to give rise to a curious dual conception of Brahman in the Vedānta. The strangeness of this dual conception is heightened by the fact that both these conceptions are professedly based on the very same Brahma-Sūtras, the celebrated Sūtras or aphorisms of Rīṣi Bādarāyaṇa dealing with Brahman. Let us now consider these two theories of Brahman very briefly.

According to Śamkara, the central and the most fundamental characteristic of Brahman is that Brahman is "Ekamevādvitīyam" or one only without a second. From it follows that

there cannot be any Reality besides Brahman.

From it follows another characteristic of Brahman, viz that Brahman is Nirviśeṣa or devoid of all Viśeṣas or Bhedas, i. e. differences. There are three kinds of Bhedas or differences, viz., Sajātiya or differences amongst things of the same species, as between a man and a man; Vijātiya or differences amongst things of different species, as between a man and a tree; Svagata or internal differences amongst the parts of one whole, as amongst the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of a tree. Now, since, there is only one Brahman, there being no other Reality besides Brahman, there cannot, evidently, be any Sajātiya and Vijātiya Bhedas in the case of Brahman. Finally, there is not even any Svagata Bheda in Brahman, as Brahman has no parts at all. Brahman, thus, is a whole; but ordinarily "whole" means a whole or total of parts, which Brahman is not. So the more proper term would be "One", instead of "whole". In this way, Brahman is absolutely Nirviśeṣa.

Again, from this it follows that Brahman is Nirguṇa or devoid of all qualities. For, if there be no difference, not even Svagata or internal difference, in Brahman, there cannot, evidently,

be any Svagata or internal difference between Substance and Quality in the case of Brahman. So Brahman has only a pure essence or Svarūpa, i. e. Brahman is a pure substance without any attributes whatsoever. Further, qualification implies quantification which means limitation. For if a particular quality be attributed to a thing, it becomes limited thereby, predication being nothing but negation. For example, if it be said "A is B", that automatically implies "A is not non-B". Or, here, A possessing B, is presumed to be not possessing non-B, like C, D, and the rest ad-infinitum. That is why Brahman is above quality and quantity.

Again, Brahman is absolutely Niskriya or devoid of all actions. This characteristic, also, follows from the Nirviśesatva of Brahman. If Brahman be above all differences, no actions also, are possible on Brahman's part, or, actions involve numerous differences between the subject who acts, the objects on which or with which he acts, the goal, the means, and the results and the like. Further, from the normal stand point, no motive for creation can be attributed to Brahman the eternally full, pure and perfect Being, without any unfulfilled desires, unattained ends or unredeemed sins.

Brahman is also Nirvikāra or absolutely devoid of changes, or transformations. For changes must be changes either for the better, or for the worse both of which are inconceivable in the case of Brahman. There cannot be changes for the better, as Brahman is eternally the Best, eternally an all-perfect Being. And, evidently, no changes for the worse are ever possible here. But Rāmānuja vehemently criticises Śamkara, point by point, regarding his conception of Brahman.

Thus, according to Rāmānuja Brahman is, undoubtedly, "Ekamevādviṭiyam : One only, without a second. But that by no means implies that He is the One and the Only Reality, so that Jiva-Jagat, the universe of souls and matter must be simultaneously taken to be false, as held by Śamkara.

In fact, Brahman is not Nirviśesa but Saviśesa, having, of course no Sajātiya or Vijātiya Bhedas, but only Svagata Bhedas. Now, what is the special nature of Svagata Bhedas, as distinguished from the first two ones. It is this that the first two kinds of Bhedas imply differences amongst independent wholes, outside one another; but Svagata Bhedas mean differences amongst the parts of one

and the same whole, so that here there is really only one object present and the internal parts, which are wholly dependent on the whole, are not so many different objects, though not false or non-existent, for that reason. The fact is that, parts, though quantitatively less than the whole, are, nonetheless, qualitatively as real as the whole. In this sense, Jiva and Jagat, the Svagata Bhedas of Brahman, are by no means second to Brahman or second and third objects besides Brahman. But they are also not false or devoid of reality for that. On the contrary, as parts and parcels of Brahman, they are as real as Brahman Himself. Hence, there is no contradiction in saying that Brahman is "Ekamevādviṭiyam", yet "Saviśesa" or "Svagata-bhedavān". For, Jiva and Jagat though equally real like Brahman, cannot be taken to be "Dvitiya" to Him, just as a branch, Svagata-bheda of tree, though as real as the tree, is not a "second" tree besides it.

According to Rāmānuja, Brahman is also not Nirguṇa, but He is Saguṇa as possessing numerous auspicious and good qualities. In fact, we view Brahman under two name, aspects, as God, the Sublime and God, the Sweet, in accordance with the stress laid on His multifarious qualities. From the first stand point, Brahman is far above us, transcendent, creator, destroyer,

controller, dispenser of justice. From the second, Brahman is nearest to us, innocent, guide, friend, helper, and dearest object of love and reverence. He is, thus, Nirguṇa only in the sense of being devoid of all inauspicious and bad qualities. Further, Brahman is not Niskriya, but Sakriya. His two main functions are Sṛiṣṭi and Mukti : Creation and Salvation. That is, He creates the Jivas according to their past Karmas as required by that great and fundamental Indian doctrine of Karma. Then, again, being pleased with the Sādhanas or spiritual strivings of the Jivas, He enables them to attain Salvation.

But though creator of the universe according to Rāmānuja also, Brahman is absolutely Nirvikāra or devoid of change. As mentioned above, no changes are possible in the case of an ever-full, ever-blissful, ever-perfect being. Hence, though the universe is a Parināma, a transformation, a manifestation of Brahman, yet Brahman Himself does not undergo any changes, as the universe but a Śakti-Vikṣepa, a wielding of His Śakti or Power which creates an effect without creating any changes in the cause.

Thus, these two conceptions of Brahman appear to be, not only entirely different from, but also absolutely opposed to each other. But

the question may legitimately be asked as to how the One and the Eternal Truth be possessed of different characteristics in this way.

The answer has been provided for our philosophers themselves. Hence arises the famous Jaina Doctrine of "Syādvāda". According to this very scientific doctrine human beings being finite and limited in nature naturally view things from their own stand points, under their own circumstances, on their own grounds. Hence, these views are true of those things from those standpoints, under those circumstances, on those grounds alone. For this reason, these may come into conflicts with those from other stand points, under other circumstances, on other grounds. But that does not make these different views either self-contradictory or false. For, though apparently self-contradictory, each is as real as the other, of course, from its own standpoint, under its own circumstances, on its own grounds.

In this manner, the dual conceptions of Brahman as Nirguṇa and Saguṇa are, by no means, mutually inconsistent. The question is only how one views Brahman from one's own standpoint. From the stand point of ordinary, actual, practical, every day life, everything has powers, qualities, manifestations; everything

is a cause and an effect. So, from this stand point, God, too, is conceived as the First Cause, with His innumerable qualities and powers, manifesting two of them: Cit and Act, in the forms of Souls and Matters, respectively. But from the supra-mundane standpoint, the Absolute has no qualities, powers, and manifestations; there is no creating cause, creation and created effect. For, why should an All-perfect, All-full being act at all, not to speak of creating a universe out of Himself? The dynamic conception of God as "Becoming", the joyous conception of creation as "Līlā" or Divine sport, have no place here.

But, then, arises the more difficult question: which conception is higher and which is lower? But really, this question is not all legitimate. For, this would be nothing but a question of the mutual superiority of Svarūpa, Nature and Guṇa, Attribute. Those who take Brahman to be Nirguṇa, hold that Svarūpa is the only thing here, and not Guṇa. But there who take Brahman to be Saguṇa, hold that over and above the Svarūpa, there are numerous Guṇas, as manifestations of the Svarūpa. Here, really Svarūpa and Guṇas are nothing different, but are one and the same. So, whether we take only the Svarūpa or Svarūpa as manifested in the Guṇas, does not matter very much. After all, the



Svarūpa is the main thing here. That is why, whether we take the unmanifested Svarūpa, or manifested Svarūpa cannot matter much.

Thus, the Svarūpa of Brahman viewed from different standpoints: mundane or supra-mundane, and taken in different forms: manifest or unmanifest—is essentially the same, according to all the schools of the Vedānta. It is thus that Brahman is Sat, Cit and Ānanda. That Brahman is Eternal Existence, Perfect Knowledge

and Fullest Bliss, is the unanimous view of all the Vedantists, and it is here that we find the full justification of the fundamental Indian belief that Truth is one and Invariable, though its manifestations may be many and variable. For this reason, though apparently we have a dual conception of Brahman in the Vedānta; really there is no Dualism, but only Duality; no self-inconsistency, but only Self-difference; no Supplanting, but only Supplementing.

---