

**THE
DADA MOVEMENT**

Atulananda Chakrabarti

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Atulananda Chakrabarti, 1899—

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Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe,
O liquid and free and tender !
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer !
You only I hear—yet the star holds me,

(but will soon depart,)

Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

—When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.

WALT WHITMAN

Very many thanks for your
comments enclosed on the
DADA movement. Wish-
ing all success to your
book.

—C. N. PARKINSON

India will somehow master
the overwhelming problems
and emerge as the greatest
spiritual leader in the world
which is crying for leadership.

—CHESTER BOWLES

A God-man is so illusive and impalpable. This is about all that can be said : something is known, and something remains unknowable. Any attempt as such is likely to leave much that is elusive and inexplicable. Many love him, a good few adore him, and no fewer abjure him. A veil of mist keeps on. In Dadaji we have such a God-man, around whom delightful sunbeams glow and delusive bubbles play. So, his great goodness happens to be as well greatly doubted. All that makes him at once a tower of light and a target of controversy. All the while, his love and compassion for man continues to be in action. However, a saint in service of modern man has to meet all the needs of his complex times. Man today lives in a one world while inheriting his local tradition. This book, therefore, has to take a world view of religious quests, in which ancient religions and modern philosophies compare notes and exchange inquiries.

Notes on Transliteration of Sanskrit words :

a	as in	call
ā	as in	far
e	as in	bed
i	as in	bit
ī	as in	meet
u	as in	bull
ū	as in	too
c	as in	=ch, in 'chart'.
d	as in	durbar
ḍ	as in	dolt
r	as in	rob
ṛ	as in	=wri, in 'writ'.
s	as in	sun
ś	as in	clash
ṣ	as in	„ ष
t	as in	„ त
ṭ	as in	top
n	as in	„ न
ṇ	as in	„ ण

Preface

Life is movement. The world strides forward and bends backward. Thus man goes on building and breaking. His civilization is every now and then on the swing. All the time human values undergo renewal.

Diverse is the motion and varied is its behaviour. When, however, the move is inward, when life looks at itself and turns its insight on the indwelling spirit, then religion is on way. The quest, then, is of the finite for the Infinite.

And why is this quest? The finite finds its own power little and limited; its own conquests short-lived and insecure. All that it has is fleeting, nothing is final. Comparably, man finds that the Power that runs the universe is solemn and sublime. To be secure and fortified, then, man yearns after an understandable relation with the Infinite. Impelled by doubt and discontent about his own limitations, man throws himself prostrate before the Supreme power. Submission from fear and friction is gloomy; there is a glow of joy only when the heart puts in faith and pours out love. This is just how religion of love is grown and goes to work on sweetening life.

Indeed, knowledge of God is no more than a means; the end is love, while the beginning is awe. When forms multiply and hypocrisy manipulates, religion gives way; when grace and goodness prevails religion comes into vigour.

The great religion of Christianity as well as Islam arose at a definite period of history. Likewise, each had its Divine Founder: the Son of God and the Messenger of God. And fixed at this foundation, each has remained the sole and invariable inspiration all along for millions of its followers. Of course, complexities arose in the course of time. Schoolmen appeared to answer doubts and resolve disputes. Nevertheless, each has remained the one unfailing light for the faithful, linking the whole past and the future of the given values.

Not quite so with the Chinese and the Indian religions. In both countries religion appeared at no known point of time. And no single human authority promulgated a particular faith that held sway over the whole country, nor had any human-divine arisen right at the very beginning. In that shadowy era, various priests and literati, sages and wise men laid the foundation of the varied and variegated beliefs in India, as in China. The earliest seers of the Veda sang hymns as it were in a chorus. Thus Hindu religion came into existence at a dim indefinite past and happened to grow up as a big banyan tree, with ever-renewing roots and over-spreading branches.

No divine definer of faith had sprung up here before Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā. And it was He who introduced Himself as the incarnation of God, even as God Himself. Incarnations have followed since.

Visions alter at varying angles, as age after age religious outlook changes scales to find new view-points, new objectives. So, now comes Dada. He comes in response to the unspoken wishes of an otherwise noisy time.

There has been no thinker nor any thought that has no challenge to face. Having had this in view, each of our Six Schools of Philosophy, with its ancient tools of reasoning, laid down : what it was for and what it stood against. Impelled by a fine sense of intellectual trial, each framed its point of view : "Now the critique on Yoga", "Now the enquiry into righteousness", "Now, then, there is the enquiry into Brahma". With this traditional guide-board, I may have leave to begin : Now an enquiry about Dada. Here is, accordingly, an attempt to analyse : how the stage has been set for Dadaji, how he means to lead men out of the jungle of dogmas and how does he lay out the way to happiness that does not wane.

An ardent enquiry has been at the back of each School in its own way. Indeed, passion for proof that may take one beyond doubt has ever been the very soul of mental activity.

As Whitehead in his profound way affirms: "All earnest inquiry is a movement of thought."

Men feel uneasy when taken along an altogether unacquainted path. They like to get on from the partly known to the partly unknown. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa chose to take up some familiar old foundations: Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Vedānta and moved out to the new goal of the Gitā, that has nevertheless been hailed as a charmingly original lead by men of all ages. In much the same manner, Dadaji talks of the old Indian disciplines as of well as of fairly familiar western philosophies and recent sciences. Thus he squarely meets the modern man's queries, and all the same he strikes as distinctly original.

Dadaji comes right along the line of Kṛṣṇa, and like Him he radically remoulds the old into new values. And, a god-man that he is, the light that he holds naturally turns Godward.

When he first met Dadaji, Radhakrishnan exclaimed in delight: "My eyes are awakened." There can possibly be no more telling tribute, coming as it does from none less than Radhakrishnan himself. Indeed, Dadaji is, to borrow a revealing word from John Dewey, a "Director of soul-life." Verily he is a supreme master who sets the mind and the soul of man in meaningful movement. The chariot of the Sun-god is nowise at rest and always in motion. Its wheels are ever on the move, all the while throwing out energy, light and vision, laying out for man his approach to a radiant end.

A movement of the kind made by Dadaji is one of remaking the mind, of moulding the inner man. As such, any account of it can hardly be exact and accurate. An enlightenment made of mingled shadow and sunshine is bound to be imprecise and pretty impalpable. The worst of it: no such narrative can cater to sensation. Yet, search for sensation has been a modern craze. Therefore, men nowadays are so much attracted by miracles. Dadaji has quite a lot of that too, and of unusually astonishing quality. But he calls these just casual.

A miracle is a play of power and as such a big value. However, it is really good in so far as it is benign and benevolent, above any showmanship or selfishness. An estimable miracle may well be comparable to gold. Even then, sunnier and sweeter than mere power is love and bliss, compassion and succour. However much precious, gold is after all a metal imbedded in the womb of the earth, while, with all their homely quality, water and crop, flower and fruit make the honey and beauty of life, as they sprout with an innate force from the heart of the mother earth for her dear children. Power is of great consequence but love wields a holier glory and a greater majesty.

The unbodied God is the same as a bodied god. But it is only in the matter of redeeming man that the one acts through the other. In so acting, however, the deputed god-man, identical with God, dives into the mystic retreat of man's indwelling spirit and gently awakens it. Here, then, is a movement to bring life into bloom, to open the petals of man's lotus-heart at the dewy touch of the dawning twilight, to unfurl the flag of love and belief on man's long march to perpetual bliss. The creative urge does not end here and now. It moves on from age to age in ever new manifestations to meet the varying faiths of the altering times.

And in this performance it is better not to seek sensation. This is a work that calls for an environment of serenity and stillness. This is a work that goes on only deep at the root. Unseen in its underground workshop, the root runs the machinery to produce life force. Only in our outer region the result is visible. There we see the splendour of sprouting, the glory of foliage, the marvel of the flower and the wholesomeness of the fruit. Just so, in the tranquility of the soul the music of the union of God and man keeps delicately ringing. Our ear of the inner mind has to be tuned to this inarticulate melody, audible at rare moments of inward communion.

March 27, 1975.

Atulananda Chakrabarti

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1

Now About Dada

TIMES are crammed with tumult and terror. All the while men now live in misery or in fear of it. Our days quiver with nervous hopes and nights lour with bad dreams.

We are too often at cross with our fellowmen. We complain of our neighbour's heartlessness. We are alarmed at the intelligence of our colleagues. Often we are agreeable to go wrong ; at the same time, we feel annoyed that others are not good. Yet we are all, more or less equally, too impatient to wait for reward in heaven.

We are frightened by galloping markets as much as by multiple corruption. State-craft is daily becoming more malign and menacing. We swear against atomic war and prepare for it nervously, while the worst fear is : who may be the first to begin and befool the rest.

Our modern world is war-conditioned. Class war, racial war, national war, diplomatic war—all varieties of it are rumbling around. Even while little is seen on the surface, cold war is creeping all along. Peace appears to be uneasily seated on a smoky pike of multiplying arms.

Religion may halt the growth of evil and the race for killing. But it does not. For, we are either shy or cynic.

Religion is a matter of the spirit. It is a relation between man and his Maker, through whom all men have a common origin. Cordiality should spring from the sense of this oneness. But we are too quick to discover manyness. We raise walls and partition soul. The correct outlook should be : when all are one, who hates whom ? But we love to hate. We forget the love of God. If we can gain the vision of God as the source of abiding good, all would come out well. It is a big 'if'. Even so, religion remains the one power that can resolve conflicts.

And strangest of all, there are conflicts over religion itself. And these have been often mortal. This is the greatest irony : religion which unveils the meaning of man has made mortal ~~fun~~ of life. This has been a most cruel calamity, a most ill-fated failure, a most fatal fall from grace.

But how and why ? A plain answer has been plainly put :

It is sometimes urged that while psychological experiences rationalised by science are more or less uniform for all observers, the data for philosophy of religion are diverse and discordant. ~~Stones are hard and the sky is blue for all.~~ But God is Buddha to some and Christ to some others.

-- Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*.

So, religion has largely failed to deliver peace and union. It has retired, leaving the arena to politics. But with politics, peace has been only an interlude between wars. For, as it works, there is more rhetorics than science in political deals.

Politics, however, made a good beginning. It appeared with a programme of giving individuals, in a tribal community, a sense of unity. In the beginning, people lived together without a sense of togetherness. They battled among themselves. As desire for peace grew, they formed society, whose conduct was guided by an unwritten contract. Then, as the State grew up, it formed government, framed laws, and raised army to coerce people to behave.

Politics applies force to secure order. But when force cannot control itself, it breeds chaos. Vast dissolutions of ancient beliefs marked the rise of power politics. Religion was rejected with a cynic admiration that it was a golden legend.

Soon war became the character, even virtue, of the State. A king (or government) would go to war with another, breaking at will the bond of man as easily as we break eggs on our breakfast table. Then States forged alliances, with a view to wage collective wars.

Seldom we unite *for* a harmless or harmonious action. More readily we unite *against* others, for the sake of enlarging

power. A political unity is only a facade, behind which is massed the army. Politics draws up diplomatic alliances, often as a threat to the non-allied. Power engineering has its fatal fascination.

Collective selfishness does not serve the society any more than individual selfishness. It takes pretty short time to vitiate a good motive. Take, for example, man's love of freedom. One view of it is freedom from want. Sense of want is elastic. Quite soon it outsteps its normal or moral bounds. An irony trails behind the sensation of amassing more money than others have. That way, wealth is embroidered with blood.

At last came in science, with its wonder and radiance, to recover the majesty of truth. It set out to find facts about the natural and physical construction of the world. Anyway, it has made the modern world that captivates us and fills us with reasonable pride. It is concerned with mysteries of the created universe, not of the Creator.

Matter and motion have been studied along a wide range—from Newtonian physics to the theories of Relativity and of Quantum Mechanics. Yet the high ones among scientists have refused to be blind materialists. They recognise the element of the unknown behind matter. Commenting on the mystery of the electron, Sir Arthur Eddington has the awareness: "Something unknown is doing what we don't know what."

Generally speaking, science leaves God alone. It is we ordinary folk who, in the name of science, take pleasure to dethrone God. Also, the master minds in theology, of East and West, do not quarrel. Eckhart and Aquinas largely agree with Āruṇi and Yājñavalkya. Only we vain moderns look at faith with a wide smile, while Buddhism and Taoism were friendly.

Science has been the symbol of free thinking. It has no regret when a new theory replaces an old one, for it does not regard any finding as infallible. A scientist goes ahead; he

looks forward. The Veda and the Upaniṣad long maintained this love for new ideas and ideals.

When brahminic priesthood was consolidated, it came to be considered profane to doubt or discount an old text, which was held as invariable (sanātana). Firm belief is good ; not so, when it has become invalid. This was also the case with the Bible.

In science, right from the start till today, the search for truth goes on freely. And science has no sect. It is accepted by and acceptable to all who care to enquire. Comparably, religion guards its frontiers.

In spite of all that sweet liberality and freedom of thought, scientists do sell themselves to politicians or to the State. Openheimer might have burst into a spiritual ecstasy over the first test of his atom bomb, but it is the Pentagon that controls nuclear experiments and issues directives. Obviously, scientific experiments are not self-supporting. So, when science has to sell itself, it loses character. The pathos is that science makes itself available for releasing horror and hysteria of destruction. Politics and science work upon man's mind with the fear of their power. The fear of God may be the only antidote ; but their glamour makes religion no more respectable. Yogic rites have recently gained prestige. That is only because pleasure-hunters and drug-addicts, weary without sleep, have found relief.

On the whole, science is honoured as the source and symbol of power. Industry and technology have opened out vast opportunities for material comfort and delight. Even that is a minor issue. The initial attraction is that science creates the impression of omnipotence. This command makes science adorable. It rules the earth and the sky, it moulds man's life and leisure. Man, tempted by its omnipotence, takes it to be an attribute of God. Temptation is punishable. It has been at the root of man's first fall. So, progress through science has been perverted. What, however, is indeed progressive is grief and greed, malice and mischief, hatred and hypocrisy.

All promises are drowned in the torrents of bitter tears. Clouds of chaos have overcast the whole horizon.

The stifled cry of the misled humanity is becoming louder and more audible. The main, major and masterly lead should be the lead back to faith and reverence for the divine. A calm, clean and kindly view of man and his inner life will show man's truth about his "coming from God who is our home", and that in turn will unfold human oneness. The law of union is the call of the spirit. This sense of union is the only force that can halt men from going to war with one another, partly by the logic of this relation and largely by the perception that God is. Mere inference gives no assurance. The vision of God is obscure when forms spread wide. And then, evil overtakes society.

Whenever evil mounts up too high, God has no other way than to come among men for their rescue. Even His creation, it seems, has to be repaired from time to time. He then revives the force of life, the value of virtue and the vision of bliss. This is the Hindu belief, set forth by Lord Kṛṣṇa :

I come to birth by my own power (māyā). Whenever the law fails and lawlessness uprises, then do I bring myself, O Bharata, to bodied birth. For the protection of the pious, for the destruction of the impious, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

—Gitā, IV, 6-8.

The doctrine of Incarnation is also there in the New Testament (St. Paul and St. John). Ancient Hebrew belief has no trace of it. Jesus was full of compassion. "The Lord God of Israel," on the other hand, was "a jealous God." God of the New Testament was moved by love to become a man in the person of Nazareth. His incarnation, however, was "the only one". Christ was the "only begotten son of God". Jesus's declaration is the foundation of the Christian faith :

"As he came up out of the river he saweth heavens parted above him and the spirit descending like a

dove towards him ; and he heard a voice saying—
Thou art my beloved Son, I have chosen thee."

Also—and that is noteworthy—Jesus is a historic person.

The Hindu belief makes room for numerous incarnations (Śrīmadbhāgvat). Periodical incarnation, however, admits of a clause that every incarnation (Avatāra) is "the only one" of his age (Yuga). But even this is not strictly observed. Rāma and Paraśurāma appeared in a same cycle. And what is even more confounding is that the two divine beings held a duel. In Homeric poems, it is amusing to note, Apollo nearly came to blows with Athena, and they were first class Greek deities !

Be that as it may, evil survives well enough. Jesus could not bring the kingdom of heaven on earth. Buddha did not succeed in annihilating sorrows. Rāma courted a dismal end. And Kṛṣṇa, the main Avatāra and the author of the incarnation thesis, in a way failed to "establish righteousness". After the Kurukshetra war, no kingdom of any substance was set up. A blank darkness followed for a few centuries.

In spite of all that, descent of god-man on earth has a good logic, and a great moral. It has been a moving idea and a rousing ideal. In fine, the belief that grows behind this is : Divine love all the time flows for man.

In any case, the thought is heartening that Man and God get together. It gives an ever new tone to our life and an ever new life to our faith.

There is little sense in saying that God is not real because our eyes do not see Him. Who among men of science has seen the electron and who will not admit that it does its work really ? As Radhakrishnan observes : "The God of our imagination may be as real as the electron but it is not necessarily the reality which we immediately apprehend." God does not live in a mythical heaven. Into His Kingdom man can enter, and in His presence he can stand. By "interior illumination" He is seen ; that happens, when He gives us the eye.

Body and mind make one whole. Eye and mind see together. But mind is largely based on the activity of the brain ; if and when mind transcends body it is distilled into spirit, which sees what mind does not or cannot see. Something psychological and something metaphysical combine to make a larger vision. When mind is refined and empowered to reflect on the object to be seen or known, the vision is amplified and clarified. Even then a large tract of consciousness lies along the vague borderland of perception.

An embodied God is rare, not unreal. God becomes one of His creatures, for love of His creation compels Him to be with us and for us. For what else did He create ?

“My child, the King loves you, he is coming himself.”

—Tagore, *Post Office*.

An embodied God is here and now again among us, to meet us and our need. Our cause has moved Him to come to us. It is He who wants us. The relation is one of love and affection, with no formal obligation on our part. And he can render service who only loves to serve, knows what is to be done and how it can be done. The call is to affection from above and faith from below.

The one who has now come names himself : DADA—an elder brother, fatherly as an elder, friendly as a brother, in all, closely communicable. All that makes us more fellow-men than followers. That makes him an eager companion of his fellow-travellers.

The relation between God and man, in the Vedic belief, is that of father and sons : you are our father—*pitā noḥsi* ; give us the sense that you are our father—*pitā no bodhi*. Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* reduces this relation from love and awe to love and liberty, as when he holds Arjuna as his dear friend : *sakhā*, as sharing a common mind. To this cordiality another fine twist, a feeling of family tie, is added, as when the relation is between a Dada and his younger brethren—verily, a shared

family fraternity that brethren do have with the brother and among themselves.

His name is Sri Amiya Roy Chowdhury. He lives a homely life, in a rather modest house in Calcutta. He asks nothing, takes nothing, even so, he gives nothing—no promise to anyone for prosperity, far less, salvation; he runs no business of saving soul, which is no medium of merchandise.

You do not need, Dada says, a middle-man to take you to God. In His own way, God is waiting for you, eager to bide His tryst with you. You have only to have a yearning after Him, to feel a nearness to Him. All that is by no means that easy. Yet, an elaborate worship is impossible in these times of stress and strain. Cut down forms. Simply take God's name, as often as you may and listen to the rhythm of the name in your heart. Only do not deceive yourself: that is easier than deceiving others. And in good faith carry on your worldly work. As Carlyle puts it: "The universe is an infinite conjugation of the verb to do."

Dada warns not to go in for Guru. To warn an orthodox to do without a Guru and a Guru to wind up his trade is as offensive as it is explosive. He has thrown a stone at the bee-hive. And thus he has raised bouts of unclean cliques against himself. However, he leaves detractors to God's mercy while in tranquility he prays. Prayer, he says, should be without noise.

Dada asks his brethren to keep away from Guru, the minister who appoints himself to conduct services of worship on behalf of devotees. As such, a devotee ought to feel free to personally worship his deity. Accordingly, an initial work for him has been to release the great god Nārāyaṇa from the grip of the high priest and instal him as the divinity with whom direct communion of heart must be made. The god of the people must come out for the people and be with the people, in order that the priestly intermediary may be dispensed with.

Men interested in religious commerce have been up and doing to misinterpret this message of freedom. The manufacturers of fetters go about accusing Dada of his free performance of Satya-Nārāyaṇa pūjā. No wonder. No one can get away who tells a challenging truth. Be he Kṛṣṇa or Christ, Socrates or Galileo. Truth is exacting and expensive. Its price has to be paid in full. No great one can escape false accusation. A saintly person is rather known by the infamy hurled against him. Detractors, in a way, reveal the divine man. History's high souls have ever been slandered. As Emerson has noted :

Pythagoras was misunderstood, Socrates was misunderstood, Jesus was misunderstood. To be misunderstood is to be great.

So, conspiracy against goodness is common. In our country, this ungracious art has been unfailingly at work, particularly inspired by priest craft that has cast a wide enough net over the simple folk. That is easy, for the unknowing men are apt to take bondage for bliss. The irony is that it chokes the very springs of true faith. Thus life goes out of religion. And dead forms with their deadly stink keep the social air foul. From time to time reformers arise : Raja Rammohun Roy, Pandit Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekananda—in recent times, and there have been tearing priestly campaigns against them. The guardians of the misguided are ever in form.

Nor are detractors of virtue inactive today. They are up against Dadaji. He has appeared at the call of divine life to blow fresh air into faith. They are too eager to distort the mystic method of his novel worship of the Supreme Spirit—Sri Sri SatyaNārāyaṇa. While they slander there are others who cannot resist his call ; for, the good men and true, the intelligent and the inspired find their heart's delight in the new free worship. The Hon. Mr. R. M. Kantawala, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, is only one among the good many

who have received refreshing enlightenment from Dadaji. I may here recount the report of Shrimati Sumati Morarji, of the Scindia Steam Navigation, in her own words that have a ring of rare perception :

Dadaji was gracious enough to oblige me by his sacred visit to my residence at Juhu on 11th Dec. '72. He was to perform Sri Sri Satyanarayana on this occasion, a phenomenon that is commonly termed as puja, though in reality, it is something above and beyond the realm of the rationalist world.

Dadaji on the very introduction asserted that no mortal can be a Guru. The Guru is the Supreme Lord or Sri Sri Satyanarayana Himself—Omnipotent, Omniscient, All-pervading and Eternal. Every human being is potently divine.

Only wearing a saree of mine round his waist, Dadaji went inside the next room and confined himself there for half an hour. There was just a photograph of Sri Sri Satyanarayana and a vessel filled with cocoanut water in that room. When Dadaji came out, the room became choked with the fumes of strong divine perfume ; fragrant water was sprinkled all over the dry floor from nowhere ; thick drops of honey covered the glass of the photograph ; and, last of all, the cocoanut water had been transformed into condensed ksheer Charanamrita

Ever since he graced me, I have been seeing him in person, blessing me at dead of night at my residence, while from our so-called realistic point of view, he is in deep slumber at Mr. Abhi Bhattacharya's residence. Is it an illusion, or a magic or miracle ? Is it also extraneous ?

Dadaji has no math or asrama ; for, he scoffs at it. To him the human body is the asrama and Nature is its mohant. Countless offers of money in lakhs for erecting asramas have been spurned by him with genial grace and equanimity—possibly the greatest miracle in the modern corruption-ridden world.

— *The Call Divine*, 1.12.73.

Shrimati Morarji here points to the finest fact about Dada : his perfect detachment. Again, miracles or revelations of

supernatural phenomena, as quoted above, are but "extra-neous", as Dada himself gives them no seriousness. Her statement is borne out by philosophy, ancient and modern. That every being is divine is comparable to the saying of Rāmānuja that man is a part of God : *tadamsa jivasamjnaka*.

Particularly, her observation about miracle has a formidable philosophical background ; science as well lends support to it. The Upanisad and Śamkara (Commentator) are not alone in saying that an illusion is behind reality. The Gītā (VII, 14) also says : "It is by My power of divine illusion" that I bring forth the creation. Sir James Jeans affirms ; "The stuff of the world is mind stuff." In trying "to reach a bough in the forest," Eddington says, "one's hand closed on nothingness." Philosopher F. H Bradley, who goes a long way with Śamkara, says : "There is no reality at all anywhere except in appearance, and in our appearance we can discover the main nature of reality". (*Appearance And Reality*, p. 487).

By itself, a miracle is neither fun nor fancy, if it springs from a pure motive. The great schoolman, St. Thomas Aquinas is of opinion that a miracle does not violate nature. It is a cause of nature in supernatural way through a special act of creative power. If the fate of the finite being is to be dependent on God's will, miraculous acts, he argues, are no less natural than non-miraculous ones.

Can fact displace or replace faith ? And is reason the last word ? Have not the learned, by the weapon of reason, cut through one another's conclusions ? Anyway, is reason everything all the time ? All questions considered, we may for a while listen to Pascal : "You lose nothing by belief in God." (*Thoughts*) As spiritual science cannot be mathematically exact it is bound to be a string of ambiguous yes and no.

There always and everywhere are critics who refuse to be chastened. Dada has to have his share of injustice at their hands. They complain that his motive is to collect followers. Grant it. But he employs no spiritual stunts ; on the contrary,

he is opposed to these. Anyway, to gain followers for a good cause in a clean way has the sanction of the Gitā : Carry on your work of service to the people—lokasaṅgraham. (III,20) This service is an act of friendliness for all—sarvabhūta suhṛdānām (V, 29). Cleverer critics pose as wishing Dada well and pretend to lament that he has been wasting his power of the spirit—*bibhuti*—by attracting people with show of miracles. They may well do without this anxiety, for he runs no such risk, for Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna : a doer of real good to others has no reason to undergo ruin of any kind : *na hi kalyānakṛt kascid durgatim tāta gacchet.* (VI, 40)

Ruin cannot touch a God-man until and unless he himself chooses to bring it about as a plot of mystery closing his own drama. We have no eyes to see that far. As far as the view is open, his path is strewn with goodness to his brethren. Directly along the lineage of Kṛṣṇa, the descent of Dada comes about. It is the pressure of the human need of today that has thrown him up here. That is Kṛṣṇa's scheme of appearing at certain eras of impending human urgency.

In his boyhood, Dada used to be Kṛṣṇa-intoxicated. A song or even a strain of it on Kṛṣṇa (Hari) would enrapture him, keeping him forgetful of everything at the time. He was a mystic from the beginning, in the sense Dr. W. R. Inge held that "Mysticism is pure religion." It is pure inasmuch as it is free from forms, obeys no sacrament and is absorbed in direct communion with the Spirit or God.

A God-man is born with his full gifts. He has not to prepare lessons. At an age of about ten, Dada went out roaming in the Himalaya that abounds in ascetics of great merit. They dwell in its far away recesses. There, among others, he met Santdas, the renowned pupil of the famed yogi, Ramdas Kathia Baba. Dada himself has never been a furious practitioner of austerities.

To propitiate deity by self-torture makes no sense. By total unconcern about creature comforts the grace of deity may be earned for fulfilment only of material ambitions. But illumination of self can come only through absorbed

meditation. Unearthly bliss results from spiritual contemplation. The Chândogya Upaniṣad says : *tapasā brahma vijijnāsyā*, enquire after Self by *tapasyā* (concentration). It is a process of getting an answer to an intellectual question, a spiritual problem. *Tapa* is intense contemplation, which, when highly strung, generates a certain heat in the temple of the head. Not by self-torture, but by self-culture an answer for a baffling question is found.

Nor is Dada at any time pouring over the *śāstras* day and night. But he has a strange access to them. At any time of disputation with the mighties, he picks up these from nowhere, it seems ; Torrents of scriptural texts flow from him while disputants gladly submit in profound reverence. The other day, in Madras, the citadel of Sanskrit learning, he confronted that monument of ancient erudition, the venerable Mahamahopadhyaya Srinivasan. It was then reported in the press : Srinivasan saw in the person of Dada the image of Viṣṇu, and in rhapsody he recited hymns presently made, by way of offering his submission. As Swami Vivekananda has said, 'We can see God only as we see His special incarnations—*avatārs*—who bear human appearance, who are human divines.'

Srinivasan's mind at the moment and in that high-strung perception resembled that of Arjuna who, troubled by the Lord's world-image—*viśvarūpam* (in Jean Paul Richter's phrase, "persecution of the infinite")—appealed that Kṛṣṇa might now graciously appear in his original form of Viṣṇu :

I wish to see Thee even as before with thy crown, and
mace and disc in Thy hand, Assume Thy four armed
shape, O Thou of a thousand arms and of universal
form.

—Gitā, XI, 46.

A particular individual, screened for a special view, may gain the sight of Dadaji in his divine form. Even a vast crowd, as it happened at a rally in Bombay where saints like Sachcha-

baba and his colleagues paid homage to Dadaji, visioned him in his divinely hightened stature, bathed in a refulgent splendour of holiness.

Usually Dadaji does not sit high in glory. He is a man of plain manner with a noble bearing. Indeed, his amiable ordinariness makes him so extraordinary.

No wonder that Dada wins. The real wonder is that he leaves the conquered great ones fully free, claiming no loyalty. The dividends of his triumphs he leaves wholly to his community of brethren. His sole interest is : May the misery of the mind lessen and the good of men augment.

I might have leave to recount my own experience. The far-famed scientist, Prof. S.N. Bose one day asked me : "There is a Tathagata somewhere in your locality. Do you know him or have you seen him ?" I said : "I had heard of him ; some time ago I had been to him." I looked up to the professor, but spoke no more, finding him in a meditative spell, brief though. Religion has problems ; science too has not a few. The desire to know, however much different may be the process, is shared between science and religion, and at certain still hours they exchange questions and compare answers.

When Dickens wrote : "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," he had little fear that the near end of the 20th century would be packed with far worse paradoxes.

Now we have Whitmans, Sartres and Rutherfords. Innumerable masters have illumined our world with sublime lights. Yet forces of evil furiously prevail. All glory is nearly eclipsed, all moral magnificence has been overshadowed. Dark and desolate power-politics grip mankind today. Human refinement had never before been so lamentably cast into the shade. Now is the time for god-men to appear and radiate.

Whoever has attended Dada's *darbar* at his Calcutta residence in recent months have often heard his prophetic warnings of the coming catastrophe. His words burn with base



truth, his eyes glisten with tearful compassion for humanity, and while his voice quavers with loving kindness, he entreats: "Do not act as your own enemy."

Noted scientists at home and from abroad visit Dada. They come for enquiry as well as from curiosity. He has tender interest in science and men of science whom he holds as votaries of truth; also, he believes, science has its full share in mysteries, much as religion has.

Science seeks to "explain" the laws of Nature. It persuades the world of matter to give out its secrets. Often the revelation is that matter is but finely spun mysteries: the mysteries of the electron, for example; or that, this space is not real but imaginary. What seems to be physical realities are found to have no such material content; and under the impact of such surprises, man has now radically revised his sense of "the world of fact". Solid matter has in a way vanished, inasmuch as it is less directly tangible. What exists is only energy. Electron Field quanta have energy and also other attributes including mass. Mathematical physics has no business with concrete things; it deals with ideas.

The concept of matter is generalized; it is no longer limited in use to describe lumps one can see and touch, though such lumps still remain one aspect of matter. In this context, materialism would mean the possibility (or hope) of constructing more and more far-reaching models to describe all the observed phenomena without invoking divine intervention to supplement, from time to time, a system of well-established laws. That such laws or concepts may appear to be highly complex and abstract is not an obstacle. The mathematical formulation of the models is not in conflict with a "materialistic" point of view. From such a point of view the postulate of an all-powerful creator, which "explains" absolutely everything at once is not false but simply devoid of content, just because it is not falsifiable. The strictly materialistic point of view is, of course, not imposed by science and is not obligatory for a scientist. Indeed, many of

the most eminent scientists feel the necessity of one type or another of fundamental faith.

Atom, originally in Greek, meant an "indivisible" thing. Now, it is known to be divisible into particles of electricity. Electrons and protons, for example, of course, have electromagnetic interactions, as also other interactions. Electromagnetic properties are only one of their properties. To bombard an atom is only to destroy its electrical balance. The process shows : a fair number of electrons (negative electricity) whirls around a few protons (positive electricity) which supply nuclear focus. "The real atom", says Eddington, "contains something which has not entered into the mind of man to conceive". It is, in terms of the Upaniṣad, ultra-minute, finer than the finest atom : aṅoraṅiyān.

Vedānta and nuclear physics talk much alike. Take, for example, Heisenberg's observation :

Light and matter are both single entities, and the apparent duality arises in the limitations of our language Furthermore, it is very difficult to modify our language so that it will be able to describe these atomic processes, for words can only describe things of which we can form mental pictures, and this ability, too, is a result of daily experience. Fortunately, mathematics is not subject to this limitation.

Ages ago, the Upaniṣad was aware of the incompetence of word : "Whence words return along with the mind, not attaining It ; he who knows that bliss of Brahman fears not from anything at all." (Tait. Up., II, iv, 1) Here, however, the point clearly is that—as Dada often emphasises—words do not find God ; nevertheless, God's bliss is gained ; that is the significance of the text of the Upaniṣad just quoted.

The advantage of mathematics is that it talks in symbols, not in words. However, that science cannot still definitely answer all its questions is not its limitation ; that only proves that science does not deal in finality but all the while is ready for a new vision, an ever new vision, of truth.

Modern science has taken the lead to a journey without an end. When Newton's Law of Gravitation was backdated by Einstein's Law of Relativity, no one felt that one defeated another; the feeling that prevailed was that all were glad that here was a new conquest of truth. The new law is built on the startling foundation that time and space are relative, that matter, time and space make a unified factor. And ether has been dematerialized.

The latest so far is Max Planck's Quantum Theory. The older notion that electron in motion starts in an unbroken wave is rejected on the evidence that the behaviour of motion is "determined by no laws". Nature acts naturally, so to say, inasmuch as it is not obliged to obey any "causal certainty", since atoms of energy are released in a 'quantum' i.e. in a tiny 'pulse' of radiation or 'jerk' of energy.

Science cannot say what is the nature of matter, which is yet unknowable. All that it studies is the structure of nature. Newton's apple still falls to the ground, while Einstein's four-dimensional universe runs its course. However, it is physics, concerned with physical universe, that has undertaken to teach us that our dear world is not a solid, sombre, substantial physical fact, such as had been hitherto taken for granted. But then, the great beauty is that science takes nothing for granted.

Engaged in religious search for truth, science has nothing to do with the religion of faith. But, now understandably, the old non-alignment between materialism and spiritualism, between physics and metaphysics, has given way to an amiable tolerance. As Sartre observes: "The philosopher in quest of thought must question the established sciences in order to derive it from them as the condition of their possibility". (*Being And Nothingness*, p. xxxiii)

God-seekers and atom-breakers now go a parallel way, it appears. No less than religion, science is full of mysteries, though the concept of a creator is not the official concern of science, which rests on proof. The substance of our world is

unseeable, but we cannot say that time-space continuum is an illusion. Heisenberg again :

To mold our thoughts and language to agree with the observed facts of atomic physics is a very difficult task, as it was in the case of the relativity theory. In the case of the latter, it proved advantageous to return to the older philosophical discussions of the problems of space and time. In the same way it is now profitable to review the fundamental discussions, so important for epistemology, of the difficulty of separating the subjective and objective aspects of the world. Many of the abstractions that are characteristic of modern theoretical physics are to be found discussed in the philosophy of past centuries.

Thinking activity rests on or springs from freedom. No wonder that men of science are free to be drawn by the beauty of the impalpable. Answers to questions about Nature open up wings to suggestions about Spirit :

The cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest mainspring of scientific research. My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit, who reveals Himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.

—*The Universe and Dr. Einstein*,
by Lincoln Barnett, p. 95.

The superior spirit is revealed to seekers of truth. It may be interesting to compare here that Kant rejected all proofs provided by "speculative reason", while he firmly believed and asserted that "practical reason" should compel us to postulate the existence of God. Indeed, the natural and the supernatural have a way of getting blended.

There should be no reason to mix up the Dada movement of India with "Dadaism" or "Dadaist movement", of the West. Beyond just having a one name or word 'Dada', there is little in common between the two ; for the meaning is al-

together different. Here 'Dada' means 'elder brother'; there it is a French word for 'a wooden horse'. In despair over World War I, a group of intellectuals planned anti-aesthetic activities against all existing ethical and artistic standards. They seized upon a "nonsense-sounding" French word for 'hobby-horse' to symbolize a nihilistic variety of revolt against the established order.

Their protest derived inspiration in artistic novelties from Tristan Tzara and in poetics from Rimbaud, while taking its slogan "destruction is also construction" from Baudelaire. Their influence—very short-lived: 1915-'22—swept across the world from Harvard to Bonn.

Dadaji's message has been gaining sway over all India and a good many centres of the world. In one aspect only—his protest against priestly religion—his doctrine may be considered to have a kind of faint likeness with the Zurich thesis. But what is decidedly an antithesis of the frothy impiety of the Zurich movement is Dadaji's solemn lead to creating a sober, sensitive will to a spiritual reconstruction of our times. He is wholly against any unbelief in the glory of the Spirit. In this regard his true likeness is with Emerson who holds: "Essence, or God, is not a relation or a part, but the whole." (*Essays*, I, 116) God not only exists, He is all that exists. Forgetful of this, a devastating shallowness has been gaining a renewed lease of life. It is a menace from which only god-men can deliver humanity.

From Plato onward, all philosophers with a religious inclination, have accepted the knowledge of the ultimate Reality or divine presence. Schiller has put it very finely: "Religious agnosticism is not a psychological fact, but a self-deception." He affirms that belief in God is natural, and that what, however, needs to be questioned is unbelief. In a different style, the same conviction has been unflinchingly expressed in the Katha Upaniṣad (VI, 12): The Superior Spirit or Ultimate Reality is well beyond "the reach of words, mind and eyes," but then, It is expressly felt and clearly

"seen in the inner mind, unclouded by doubt." The emotional conviction, as admitted by Einstein, is obviously common to saints as well as scientists.

The existence or non-existence of an all powerful creator, producing the universe by mere wish or resolve, can neither be proved nor disproved. Dada says : why not accept the saying of the Śruti : *sāṅkalpena asrijat lokān* - God in His supreme playfulness, by mere resolve, has been inclined to create the worlds, and they were created forthwith. Science seeks laws ; its search goes on ; it may well be an endless search, but it is a search with an open mind. Religion takes up from where reason stops. And man is at peace within himself when he grows "conscious of his oneness with God's Being." That consciousness, Dada says, is to be cultivated, but it is also inset in man so that the cultivation, if earnest, is a silent success. Intense and austere cultivation of pure thought is the genuine 'tapasyā', which is not a physical severity or torture of the body. God is bliss. Be sure of this, Dada asks everyone of his numerous visitors.

Afflicted by the thought that "atheism has made greater progress than before", Berkeley was eager to convey "unanswerable proof of the existence and immediate operation of God." (*Philosophical Commentaries*, Vol. I, p. 251).

Things are not any better today. In reply to a question from the press (15.10.74) at a Calcutta reception, the Lord of Kamakotipitha, Jagatguru Samkaracharya Jayendra Saraswati observed that to the lack of self-knowledge is to be traced the reason for so much suffering of men of this era. Another question : 'There is a lot too much of religious instruction nowadays and too many gurus have got busy : is that the reason of rising miseries of men ?' The Jagatguru replied : Most gurus are no gurus in the strict spiritual context. Only such gurus as inherit the hoary traditions have got holy merit. The right gurus were Śaṅkara, Rāmaṅja, Ballabha and Chaitanya. Perfectly true. But one may have leave to say : the founder of a heritage was new at his time. Possibly

anticipating such a query, he added : Of course, new gurus do come forth, such as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Then again, it may be further pointed out that traditions lose their original quality in the course of time. Indeed, Kālidāsa himself has put it in his inimitable way — *purāṇamityeva na sādhu sarvam* — all is not good for the mere reason that it is old.

So then, it may be appropriate to dive at the bottom of the fact. It is that gurus, hereditary or self-made, neither help nor are they wanted, if the task is to communicate knowledge of the self. If we may follow the first Śaṅkara's view : *jīva brahmaiva nāpara*, that man is no other than God, we may well accept that the self by its own divinity is good enough ; it has no valid necessity to be guided by any outsider, in the garb of a guru. Self-knowledge is to be had by one's own power of self-recognition. The proper valuation of the self has been most forcefully stated by Śaṅkara himself in a commentary on a text of the Īśa Upaniṣad, which delivers the message : "That Puruṣa and I are one." Śaṅkara comments : "I do not beg favour like a servant ; for, I am that Puruṣa, encircled in *Aum* in the orbit of the Sun."

That proud demand must have to be made articulate now again with a full vigour of conviction. It is to do just this that Dada has appeared at this age in our country, bristling with gurus, and to urge us on to a rediscovery of the Self.

Ours is a country where many good old strains of mystery and metaphysics are mingled :

He has come into this land of an hundred cross-roads.

—Tagore, *Crescent Moon*.

And to these cross-roads have been added, during the last two centuries of contact with the West, its numerous sensitive insights and lively thrills of thought.

A human-divine is never partitioned. So his background in its proper relationship with the environments has to be mapped out to harmonize ancient Indian spiritual with modern Western philosophical values, connecting all that, again, with

brief references to science as a study of the drama of life through the veil of matter.

To understand and be understood, in such a complex correlation, is by no means too easy. Therefore, any account of Dada has to have a background, however sketchy, of the broad meeting points of the classical thoughts of religions and philosophies of the East and West, and their impact on our science-illuminated modern world.

I have an uneasy consciousness of my incompetence to interpret such a complex message. Yet I have undertaken to do it, simply because I feel like doing it; also because I hope that a religious belief is, after all, received by a kind of transmission rather than of information. This book is submitted with no doubt that better minds will make out the meanings where I have failed to express them.

2

The Vedic Gods

ALL religions in India are rooted in the Vedic lores. They are either allied or opposed to the Vedic heritage. For instance, in evaluating any religious tenet, the Brahmasūtra (III, 2, 38) gives the directive that its authority lies in the Śruti; on the other hand, this authority is a bit belittled by the Gitā (II, 53) as when it refers to such believers as are confounded by the Śruti (*Śrutibipratipannā*).

Generally speaking, all Indian religions, one way or another, have a Vedic reference, often origin. It is peculiar that Buddha, who in many ways felt akin to the Upaniṣad, was averse to the Veda. Medieval and modern masters—Kabir, Nanak, Raja Rammohan, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda,—all have their new faiths either founded on or estranged from the Śruti. Even Śaiva and Śākta ways of worship are remotely related to the Veda, though they strike out strange paths, more or less.

So then, a proper study of the Dada movement has to have some link, however remote, with the Vedic structure. It is with this recognition of heritage that we begin here with an outline of the Vedic scripture—the origin as a rule of all religious prescriptions and speculations in India.

The first troop of Aryan exodus* (in 2000 B. C. or thereabout) was captained by Manu. He was the grand patriarch of Vedic polity. It was from his name that the word *mānava* was derived; then meaning children of Manu, not mankind.

* All previous estimates of the antiquity of the Vedic period have been outdone by the present theory of prof. Jacobi of Bonn, who supposes that period goes back to at least 4900 B. C....The Vedic literature in any case is of considerably higher antiquity than that of Greece.

Faithful to the founding father, his retinue resolved to remain ever true to his principle :

Ye Gods, may we not go astray from the path laid
out by father Manu. —RV. VIII, 30, 3.

This path comprised of the twin rule of life : *sam* (śānti) and *yo* (yoga)—peace and union. The new-comers not only found a new homeland in a kindly climate : they as well founded a sound law of life.

Be it noted here that the law-giver Manu was quite another person who belonged to the late epic age, around 600 B.C. He compiled what is known as the Code of Manu, which held authority in the upper India of his time, which he had named Āryāvarta.

In contrast to *mānava*, another category was named *deva*. Both belonged to the human species. At that remote age a *deva* was no unbodied being. He was as good a flesh and blood being as was *mānava*. The only difference was that *mānava* represented a division of man who left West Asian home and became domiciled in India, while *deva* was one who retained that trans-Indian home and only paid flying visits to India to look after the adventurous colonisers out of fatherly or friendly feeling. The native or original homeland west of India was called *div*, the dweller of which was called *deva*.

In the course of centuries the primitive home and the old connexions were not exactly remembered by the migrators. As the tradition grew dim and recollections faded away, and as physical contact was long lost and the remote generations remembered relationships only very vaguely, *deva* was supposed to be an airy being. But as always, for fatherland an attachment, however vague, remains. So, it continued to be remembered with poetic fancy. Thus the transmontane fatherland was fondly fancied to be transmundane ; and, invested with mystery, it was called heaven, located above the skies. To put it in the poet's words : "The sky remains infinitely vacant for earth there to build its heaven with dreams." (Tagore, *Fireflies*).

In the early Vedic literature, *devas* were no figures of fiction, no figments of imagination. They were the leaders and patrons of the immigrants, who held sacrificial festivities in honour of the benevolent guardians, much as nowadays huge parties are thrown to welcome eminent guests and superiors and regents. The Ṛgveda (1, 22, 13) speaks of *mahi dyauh*, earth and heaven, as spacious tracts. The Atharvaveda recalls the birthplace of our fathers: *dyau* is the birthplace where 'our fathers' were born—*dyaurṇah pitā janitā nābhiratra*. The Ṛgveda (III, 54, 9), pointedly informs: *sarvam ekasmāt jātam*—all (*mānava* and *deva*) were born of one and the same stock. Viśvāmitra (RV. III, 39, 2) refers to the heritage of thought: 'This in us is the ancient thought of the fathers'—*sayam sanaja pitryā dhih*. The Ṛgveda states: 'They established friendship with the gods.—*tatpratnam sakhyam* (VI, 18, 5) And, it is clearly stated: our fathers were humans: *pitāro manuśyāh*. (RV. IV, 1, 13; VIII, 38, 3; VIII, 72, 8 & II; VIII, 10, 27; VIII, 7, 72.)

It may be relevant to note that the Chinese had similar beliefs in regard to their religious life.

Yet in spite of this wealth of material the exact form of their religious rites is not known, nor can the Shang pantheon be enumerated. However, the deities seem to have been somewhat intimate ones, chiefly ancestors who lived in "heaven" but who would participate in human actions, helping or hindering according to whether they received the proper sacrifices. A god who is familiarly termed "Emperor" and seems to be a sort of First Ancestor of the race is frequently mentioned on the shell and bone inscriptions: every kind of trouble, great or small, private disasters and fortunes of war, are all brought before him. In addition there are gods of agriculture, mountains, and rivers, and natural elements, though it is likely that these too were identified with ancestors, for we read one interesting record which says, "Pray for rain from Grandmother Yi."

— Tsui Chi, *A Short History of the Chinese Civilization*, p. 29.

Vedic man and god were near relations ; fathers, sons, ancestors, issues. The R̥gveda (1, 2, 11) alludes to a goddess wife of a *nara* (man) *devan̄r̥patni*. It comes out even clearer when a sage says : we know the age of our gods – *devānām nu vayam jānā* (RV. ; 1, 72). One who has a certain age must have been born, and he who is born as well dies. The idea of immortal gods came along the trend of theological tenets of later times, when fathers, having been forgotten, were deified.

A brahman and a deva were relations. The psalmists of the Veda generally addressed a god as father. The Yajurveda (XXXII, 14) puts gods and fathers together : *devagaṇāḥ pitarsca*. They are recognised as kith and kin : *svajāti* (RV, VII, 8-10 ; X, 27, 8) ; as well-willers (RV. I, 11, 2), as brothers (RV. VIII, 72, 8) ; as friends, *sakhā* (RV. VIII, 100 ; X, 31, 1). In a hymn to Viṣṇu, the ṛṣi (seer and singer) enquires :

What hath become of those our ancient friendships,
when without enmity we walked together ? – RV.
VII, 88, 5.

A prayer to Viṣṇu remembers the old attachment : “Such is our kinship.” (RV. 1, 154, 5)

The language of the *deva* and *mānava* was the same *deva bhāṣā* : *devīm vācam ajanaynta devāḥ* (RV ; VIII, 89, II) – the devas brought with them the divine language, their language in the home before migration. It was called, later, Sanskrit i.e. reformed and refined, as the language – for the matter of that, any language – underwent continual revision, reconstruction, refinement, all throughout the Vedic and the classical period from the Veda to the Gītā. The first script was Brāhmī, derived from Brahma, which at the time meant the Veda.

Brahmans (Brahmins) were the bards of the Vedic psalms. A great deal of scholarship has been spent on the word Brahman (Brahmin) :

The word *brahmin* which is considered by Scradler to have originally meant a magician in the R̥gveda, denotes at first “poet” “sage” and then “officiating priest”

or still later "a special class of priests" and this is not questioned by Sanskrit scholars. The authors of the *Vedic Index* think that the word does not mean merely "poet" or "sage" but can in the Rigveda almost always be translated by the word "priest", "since the priest was of course the singer": but they do not say that the original meaning was a priest, and that it came to mean a "poet" or "sage" later on.

—Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, p. 58.

The core of the Veda is neither magic nor ritualism. It has many surprising flights of high philosophy, underneath and over above the liturgical exercises. Nor even is it a string of pastoral lyrics, as these have many subtle turns that soar into the sublime.

The Aryan migrators came in successive batches to meet their increasing need of 'new abode': *nutanena*. . . *śarmaṇa* (RV. VII, 51, 1). While on the move, immigrants possibly carried with them some bits of rudimentary songs. Immense impetus to their talent and taste was given by the encouraging environment of their splendid settlements in India. For quite long a live as well as imaginative contact with their former habitat and habit seems to have been maintained. "A longing lingering look behind" must have been going on for a good while. Memory of the older home used to emit sparks of thought, as when a sage called out :

Harken ye. sons of the immortals who in the earlier times used to stay in divine dwellings.

—Śvetāśvatara Up.

Thus the sages in India reminded their folk of their forsaken residence, which by that time was shrouded in mystery and conceived in a mythical glare, in the metaphor of the heaven.

And the early sages from India undertook physical journey to heaven. So then, heaven had a geographical location. The young sage Naciketas travelled on foot to the land ruled by Yama, the King of Death, and he returned home having

acquired instructions regarding death and the hereafter. Yama applauds Naciketas : "May we have always an inquirer like thee". And then he informs him :

The knowing (self) is not born, it dies not ; it sprang from nothing, nothing sprang from it. The Ancient is unborn, eternal, everlasting ; he is not killed, though the body is killed.

If the killer thinks that he kills, if the killed thinks that he is killed, they do not understand ; for this one does not kill, nor is that one killed.

The self, smaller than small, greater than great, is hidden in the heart of that creature. A man who is free from desires and free from grief, sees the majesty of the self by the grace of the Creator.

Though sitting still he walks far ; though lying down, he goes everywhere. Who, save myself, is able to know that God who rejoices and rejoices not.

The Mahābhārata narrates that king Yudhisthira, with his wife and brothers, started for heaven on foot, not by any medium of *yoga* ; and he at last reached heaven in his physical form. At least till that time heaven was not an airy or fairy land. Arjuna went to Indra's capital in heaven as well as to Śiva's heavenly seat at Kailāś for winning and learning divine weapons.

The guardian gods of the Vedic Aryan: Indra, Agni, Soma, Viṣṇu and Varuṇa from time to time loved to come to India to attend sacrificial ceremonies or parties, performed by their Indian protege. Goddess Saraswati was requested, in a hymn, to hasten to the sacrificial altar on horse-back.

These personal contacts gradually lessened and were finally lost, as centuries rolled away, though meanwhile new Indras and other gods for some time appeared. Meanwhile successive offsprings and offshoots of clans entered the changing scene. Thus, with the passage of time, the father figures grew unfamiliar and faded away from memory. More than a thousand hymns had been composed and the composition went through a thousand years. Meanwhile, characteristics of ancient patron deities, across the centuries, changed ; equally

changed the devotees through numerous generations; forms of worship too responded to shifting scenes and altering traditions. In the confounding environment, a sage of a later generation simply wondered :

What God with our oblations shall we worship ?

—RV. : X, 121.

Such confusion is in great contrast to the previous generations whose relation was fresh and familiar. These earlier hymns to Agni and Indra rang with fresh vision and vigour. The ideal god was Indra :

The strong who listens, who gives aid in battles, who slays the Vritra, wins and gathers riches.

—RV. : X, 89, 18.

His prowess is immeasurable :

Vaster than days and nights, giver of increase, vaster than firmament and flood of ocean ; Vaster than bounds of earth and wind's extension, vaster than rivers and our lands is Indra.

—RV. : X, 89, 11.

Quite as great and gracious is Agni :

His flames are fierce, never ageing are the flames of him who is beautiful to behold, Whose face is beautiful, whose splendour is beautiful.

—RV. : I, 143, 3.

But to newer generations of sages the gods of old were not as much manifest and familiar. A new worshipper, stricken with doubt, fashioned his hymn in uncertain submission :

Striving for strength bring forth a laud to Indra, a truthful hymn if he in truth existeth. One and another say, There is no Indra. Who hath beheld him ? Whom then shall we honour ?

—RV. : VIII, 89 (Griffith)

Another, failing to identify Indra, prays :

Ye who desire for war, if it be true, Indra exists there,
in his name offer hymn. The sage Nema says that
there is no one named Indra. Who has seen him ?
Whom shall we worship ?

—RV. : VIII, 100, 3.

Doubts had been growing about the power of gods :

Where, Indra-Varuṇa, is now that glory wherewith ye
brought us support to those who loved you ?

—RV. III, 62, 1.

Meanwhile many generations of sages had come and gone :

Rishis of old,
in numerous troops, as singers,
Who in the distant, near, and lower region...

—RV. X, 82, 4.

In the fleeting current of times, very long indeed, the
gods of the early Vedic era lost ground, as they became
unremembered. Feelings for the past were roused and attempts
were made to keep tradition going, so that good old faith
might revive and remain fresh.

Let us with tuneful skill proclaim, these generations
of the gods, That one may see them when these hymns
are chanted in a future age.

—RV. X, 72.

As the father figures grew shadowy, myths were spun to
cover the vacuum with fineries of fancy. Thus came in heaven
and heavenly beings, when live ones had long taken leave.
This is done now as well : We send the dear dead to heaven
and foul ones to hell.

3

The Vedic Life

IN his hall of audience, where Dada meets his brethren, they are all pleasantly surprised at his genial versatility. He keeps an open mind on all subjects of human interest. He listens to all topics and responds to all queries with the same sweet eagerness.

His own teachings, however, are not elaborate. He chooses to concentrate on a few cardinal values. They are : God is one ; religion is one ; mankind is one ; language is one.

He says : God, in philosophical term, is all-inclusiveness or fullness (pūrṇa); in mathematical symbol, He is zero (śūnya). Both are mystic readings. But issues that emerge from this simple premise are manifold and have profound implications.

If God is everything and nothing at the same time, the worship of Him must be such as may have appeal to everyone and hurt no one. As such, remembrance (*jap*) and penance (*tap*) are not likely to help one reach His presence. The right road to meet Him is to know individual self as manifestation of the universal Self. To run away from the world is not the way to win union with God. To get unmindful of the work that has fallen to one's lot is false indifference. To do one's allotted work with unconcern about gain is the art of gaining God's grace. To work without attachment is the true kind of detachment. With such a turn of mind, to work is to pray, as duty then becomes devotion, work becomes worship.

The injunction of the *Gitā* rings clear : *nityam kuru karma tvam*—daily do your work. Non-attachment, Dada warns, must not be any encouragement to escapism. Accept fate, without the fear of it. Have tolerance for the trials of life and carry on with cheerful patience. His idea is that destiny

(*prārabdha*) is just what cannot be resisted ; but you can lessen a little or somewhat shorten its duration, if you bear it with cool judgment and quiet resignation. There is no dribbling to avoid what has been ordained. What is providence is your own making, the result of your deed. It is a cycle of action and reaction.

To abide by fate, one may argue, is to accept the position that man is unfree. To say so is to admit that human being is subject to the effects of deeds in their last life (*Nyāyasūtra*, IV, i, 19). If so, it renders hollow the high sermon of the *Vedānta* (IV, i, 3) that one's soul is no other than God. Dadaji's simple answer is that if you heartily believe in the triumphant nature of the soul as indivisible from God (*Vedānta* IV, iv, 2), you may, then, very well believe that the effect—be it pain or pleasure—cannot touch and tarnish you ; and with that belief in the supremacy of the over-soul, you should be able to treat fate with sublime serenity.

The grand doctrine of *Ekamevādvitīyam*—God as one without a second—has now been, Dadaji fears, a mere phrase, a comfortable theory. In practice, sectarian worship prevails, and wrangling in the name of God has been a show of piety. Unseemly conflicts on the plea of faith has been in vogue all over the world. Though religious wars of old have been replaced by political wars, smaller but mortal feuds over faith go on everywhere.

Cleavage over religion is a great woe. Wrangling takes away peace of mind which, in Dada's opinion, is the initial value of religion. The test of a true religious life is, in *Gītā*'s words, cheerfulness of spirit (II, 65) and glow of inner light (V, 24). And why should you quarrel when God is as much yours as mine, when he is flawlessly equal (V, 19) and 'absolutely homogeneous' in relation to all ? God is equally present in all beings (IX, 29). There should, then, be no bad blood for the sake of good God. One may worship the God of one's own ideal and follow its prescriptions without any friction with another. Let one go by one's own mental constitution and habitual affe-

liation, which will decide one's choice and course of worship. When all religions flow from God (Vedānta II, i, 37) one is sure to earn God's blessing and gain blissful life, only if one has real faith in his chosen symbol of God (Vedānta IV, i, 4-5). One can appreciate intellectual dispute, but acrimony over religion is unwholesome and unworthy.

With the change of times, along with other things, logic of religion also changes. The Gītā (VII, 10) has a beautiful simile : God is the seed of all religions. It means : seeds grow into trees and trees in turn offer seeds which again are born into ever new trees. But then, the changing religions should not be viewed as alien to one another. Unity in diversity, Dada often emphasises, is the law of creation. For, religion is not an outer form, even while every faith finds a form of its own. The underlying unity is derived from the fact that religion originates from—as Śvetāśvatara Up. says,—“the inner soul of every being.”

Inasmuch as a religion has its source in the inner being, it is bound to be indefinable. True religion or spiritual experience is too fine for analysis. As Katha Up. (VI, 12) says : ‘The inner being is not expressible by words, nor visible by eyes, nor conceivable by mind.’ Even then, a vision of the holy life is quite possible when we have acquired the knowledge of the fundamentals. As the Śruti informs : *Eka jñānena sarvam vijñātam bhavati*—by the knowledge of the One all else becomes known. This is the gist of Dada's message.

In so far as God is one, mankind is one. God is the source of birth—*janmādyasya yatah*—and this is the conclusion of the Vedānta that has been stated right at its beginning (I, i, 2). Differences are only matters of appellations and appearances. (see, Cowell, *Sarvadarśan Saṅgraha*) The whole thesis is obvious, not at all far-fetched. As Max Muller observes : “The true Self, according to the Vedānta, is all the time free from all conditions, free from names and forms”. (*Indian Philosophy*, p. 207) Behind the veil of names and forms shines the soul—call it over-soul or super-soul : “When a man feels the rhy-

firmic throb of the soul-life of the whole world in his own soul, then he is free."—Tagore, *Sādhanā*.

As men have grown in numbers and spread out on many lands of different climate and habits of living, languages have grown many as they have been used by men of various regions. It is said : "Bible is the word of God." As God is one and the common source, language used by all is likely to be alike. And, without any such inference, when word was not yet vocal and men used to give out their mind by a sign of hands or eyes or of the head all would mean or understand in the same way. When words replaced signs, these universal mute notes have not altogether come into disuse. Prof. Northcote Parkinson (*The Fur-lined Mousetrap*) in a most brilliant thesis, transformed the familiar phrase "from hand to mouth" to indicate the transit of utterance from signals to words, from gesture to language.

When expressions ceased to be inarticulate, spoken words took on different turns and moulds according to forms of languages. It may be interesting to note that Yaska, the oldest author of Vedic philology (*Nighantu and Nirukta*) says: "Words are used to designate objects with regard to everyday affairs in the world, on account of their comprehensiveness and minuteness." Yaska's commentator, Durgā observes : "The movements of hands and the winking of eyes, etc., are also comprehensive ; they will express the meaning and in this manner we will be saved the trouble of studying grammar and the bulky vedic literature." Yaska's preference for word to gesture, "on account of the economy of effort," approaches a Parkinsonian twist.

However, language as an art of expressing thought had its course of evolution. Muir (*Sanskrit Text Book*, vol. II, p. 275) says : "It is true that more may be said in favour of the hypothesis that Zend is derived from Sanskrit." Max Muller observes : "I shall be able to prove that the Greek is derived from the Sanskrit." (*Science of Language*, p. 185). Earlier, in the same book (p. 3 & p. 29) he expresses : "We cannot tell as

yet what language is." He traces its evolution: "Not as a production of nature, but simply as a work of human art." The point here is not which language is the oldest. Our concern here is that human oneness is reflected in the growth of human language. And what little has been noted herein very well endorses Dadji's creed that 'language is one' by virtue of the common human art.

Anyway, Dada's fundamental tenet is human harmony. Here he takes up from where Sri Chaitanya left, who had discovered Brindāban, the seat of Kṛṣṇalīlā. It was not a mere topographical discovery. It was a spiritual recovery. Brindāban is a composition of two words: Brinda (chorus) & Bañ (prayer). Sri Chaitanya initiated communal worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa in company with cowherd boys and girls. Dada now resets the old human harmony to the new tunes. Brindāban-īlā, in its idyllic temper, is in a way a distant echo of the solemn Vedic congregational worship (Rg. X, 191): May we go together, speak together, and all be of one mind.

Religion today has lost its ancient direction and the ideal of human union has been wiped away. Religion that sprang from elevated emotion has been continually contaminated by crude customs, paving the path to ruin. Yet, today, religious bigotry and biliousness is not the only menace, the only curse. Whatever rejects fellowship, glorifies conflicts, throws away the union of man, puts out the holy light and darkens the soul, is a grim threat to mankind. It spreads out a horrid shadow across the splendour of love, brings about a painful perversion of the divinity of the inner being. What follows, then, is pernicious distortion of the image of God that is man.

Thus, our precious modern times are under woeful stress and storm. All our philosophy and science are of no avail. So, religion is not the only villain of the piece; science is in its company. Indeed, all that is high has been laid low. Politics that initiated the 'pursuit of happiness', economics that evolved the law of equality, industry that shaped the production of goods for good life, in short, all the instruments for the joy of living,

all that ennoble the animal life—has been damaged, deranged and defiled. A progressive decay and devastation of all cherished values goes on irresistibly. An endless engineering is at work on polluting the roots of humanity. This maddening melody of destruction is due to directing progress towards merely physical prosperity at the cost of spiritual poverty. And the mingled cries of all the tragic developments have called for a timely reincarnation of the redeemer. I feel he is Dada ; and you as well may feel so, I hope.

These brief notes only reveal the broad agreement of the Dada movement with the ancient foundations. A better understanding of what these were may here require a general review of the Vedic life. An attempt at this is a delicate job for one of my little ability, and may as such be looked upon with a kindly indulgence.

Round about two thousand years before Christ, a people were out in quest of a new homeland, large and liberal. They came across the Hindu Kush hills and halted, first, on the bank of Kubha (Kabul). By and by, in succeeding waves of migration, they entered India and built their habitations on the banks of the five streams of the Indus. Maybe, Vedic hymns were beginning to be done at home already on the eve of the first exodus. Maybe the earliest colonisers came singing a few home-made strains on their march route. That was likely to inject enthusiasm on the move.

The immigrants were grateful that Nature was gracious, that hardship of livelihood was over. In profound faith they asked :

Grant us great riches, fair in form, of all good things,
wealth which light labour may attain.

—RV. I, 48, 13.

Gratified with earthly prosperity, the Aryan settlers earned leisure to yearn after the higher values of the mind.

Gods, may we with our ears listen to what is good,
and with our eyes see what is good, ye Holy Ones.—

—RV. : I, 89, 8.

Fortune smiled on these ancient colonisers. A land of beauty and bounty lay before them. Plenty, power, pleasure: all was at hand. Their thankful hearts streamed out in rosy ecstasy, as they put forth prayer to Uṣas (Dawn). :

So grant thou us a dwelling wide and free
from foes, O Goddess, give us food with kine.

—RV. I, 48, 15.

To Soma (celestial nectar) votaries asked for the boon so that they might be presently placed :

Wherein the light of heaven is set, and ever-lasting
lustre shines Where lucid worlds are full of light...
Where food and full delight are found Where happi-
ness and transports... Joys and felicities combine, and
longing wishes are fulfilled.

—RV. IX, 113, 7-11.

The colonization spread over pretty long time. It seems, preceding batches used to welcome following ones. An enquiry after the well-being of new arrivals is indicated :

Ye most high leaders, who you are and how have
you reached here, group after group... where you had
your horses from ; how is their strength, marks of
severe whipping are seen, .. You appear to be good-
fellows.

—RV. V, 61-1-4.

The first settlement in the interior tracts across the Indus was around the holy land named Brahmāvarta, bounded by Saraswati and Dṛśadvati, whose musical streams mingled with Vedic hymns. In that remote age Saraswati was a broad and copiously flowing river. It was from its mellifluous notes that Goddess of Speech was named Saraswati.

As the population increased there was periodical move farther east. And now arose problems of conquest which led to development of kingship and the crafts of war. Also the art of hymn-making took finer turns and firmer roots. The centre of the advanced learning was now Brahmarsīdeśa—the land between the Ganga and Yamuna. It was here that the three principal Vedas—*Trayi* : Ṛg, Sām and Yaju—were completed.

The Aryan polity, in this spate of expansion, grew more conquest-minded. A warlike ring formed around Kuru-Pāncāla, somewhere within the modern Delhi-Lucknow zone. It was here that was waged the first all-Aryan war. King Sudāsa led the conquering army. He and his opponents had secured allies from the natives, called *Dāsas* or *Dasyus*. This first big battle among the Aryans themselves was fought probably because all Aryan emigrants did not belong to the same clan or stock. It was, however, the one language, Sanskrit, that gave them all a common name or bond.

Enmity was for a while with *dasyu* or *dāsa*, originally meaning 'a native' inasmuch as they were opposed to their expulsion and subjugation. The new arrivals started rivalry. The fair-skinned, Sanskrit-speaking conquerors with prominent nose complained that the natives were black-skinned, their flat noses were odd-looking while their language to them was an unintelligible jargon. But time came when intermarriage as well as interchange of gods became a practice. An agreeable move of reconciliation steadily began. Feuds were tiring and sex-needs were tempting.

So the new-comers looked out for understanding with the natives. The term *dāsa* or *dasyu* was derived from *deśa* i. e. the country of their origin. There were systematic attempts at converting *durhids* (foes) into *surhids* (friends). Yearning for peace prevailed on the whole. Viśnu, in leading the Aryan migrators on the line of march, came singing a song, the burden of which was : "Who shall fight against us, them only we shall slay." (Yajurveda, I, 25) Not very long afterwards, peace became a felt necessity. In sonorous music the song of universal peace was chanted :

Aum, peace be in the heavenly regions, peace in the middle spaces, peace on earth, peace in the waters, peace in the plants, peace in the woods ; the gods all have peace, God of gods have peace, all creatures have peace ; peace, living peace, reign all around. This all-embracing peace come within me.

—Yajurveda, XXXVI, 17

This superb cadence calls to mind the Prophet's message :
 "Let there be no violence in religion." (Sale, *Al Qur'an*,
 p. 503).

Our modern world with its pride in advancement has been
 torn with far devastating wars and atrocities. Its horror and
 hideousness is incomparable. The poet in great pain appealed :

In this galloping competition of hurtfulness, on the
 slope of a bottomless pit, no nation dares to stop or
 slow down. Today, more than ever before in history,
 the aid of spiritual power is needed. The God of hu-
 manity has arrived at the gates of the ruined temples
 of the tribe. Though he has not yet found his altar, I
 ask the men of simple faith, wherever they may be,
 to believe that it is far better to be wise and worship-
 ful than to be clever and supercilious.

—Tagore, *Religion of Man*.

However, good sense dawned on the scene of strife in an-
 cient India, and people chose to be "wise and worshipful". The
 message of the Veda went ringing to all without distinction of
 caste and creed and communities :

Yathemām vāca kalyānim avadāni janebhyoh brahma
 rājanyabhyām śurdrāya ca āryāya ca svayacārnāya
 —Yajurveda, XXVI, 2.

The vedic message of goodwill I proclaim to all men,
 and you also proclaim it to Brahmana and Kshatriya,
 Śudra and Vaiśya, relations and non-relations.

But who can hold the reins of war? However, one political
 improvement was at work. Both Aryans and non-Aryans
 from now, took sides, and as such Aryan camps on both sides,
 could count on non-Aryan allies. (RV. X, 154, 3 ; cf.
 Medhātithi's Commentary on Manu : VII, 59.)

The two main settlements together had been named
 Ṣaptasindhu, watered by seven rivers : Kubha on the west
 and Saraswati in the east, with the five Indus rivers in
 between.

Expansion continued. The next sweep of settlement

extended to what was then called Madhyadeśa, in between Dṛśadvati and Yamuna, and it lay on the north of the Vindhya hills. A farther spread out covered the area between Saraju and Gandak rivers, and this division was named Kośala and Videha. It was in the reign of king Janaka that the great sage Yājñavalkya held conversations that are reported in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.

The whole area was now renamed Bhārata. This name still holds good (in a way, for it is only spoken aside), while mainly and for all practical purposes the name that is current is 'India'. It seems that we do not have a national name for our country. Hindustan has been cancelled and Bhārata is old fashioned.

As the gospel of the Veda gained influence, professional expertise grew up. To teach the Veda was looked upon as a need for the maintenance of society and continuance of culture. Textbooks on Vedic rites, appended to the Vedas, called Brāhmaṇas, were designed to give directives of sacrifices, by which believers were assured life in heaven after death, in addition to felicities desired in this mortal life.

In addition to rules and procedures, stories were got up to illustrate the lessons and the value of performances as well as to moralise on the services of the priests. These stories in the Brāhmaṇas were used as models for the later popular Purāṇas, eighteen in number, following the two great epics: the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The latter epic was begun later but completed earlier, while the *Mahābhārata*—regarded as the fifth Veda—continued to be written over a much longer period. This is the view held by Winternitz.

In between the Vedic Brāhmaṇas and the Epics, the metaphysical musings of the Upaniṣad kept humming in ample rhythm and sonorous vibrations. A most noticeable social feature of the age of the Upaniṣad is that both Brahmins and Kshatriyas figured as seers of the Supreme. Castes were yet nebulous. A Kshatriya, as king, as also the martial representative of the community, was the patron of the

society. As such, he held a position not at all inferior to Brahmins.

In the course of time, Brahmins claimed superiority over Kshatriyas and built up a vast legend to prove their supremacy. The central story was the one that related how Brahmin sage Vaśiṣṭha overpowered the Kshatriya sage Viśwāmitra. But in the Veda, the Brahmin hero Vaśiṣṭha had a comparatively minor role, while Viśwāmitra ranked as the maker of the most celebrated hymn, the one that was regarded as the core and kernel of brahminic worship—the Sāvitrī mantra sung in Gāyatri metre. More. Viśwāmitra's son, Madhuchhandā was the maker of the hymn to god Agni, with which the Ṛgveda opens. Indeed, he founded the school of "new" hymn-makers.

The Rāmāyaṇa mentions both Viśwāmitra and Vaśiṣṭha, but does not spin any legend of rivalry between the two. Viśwāmitra had the honour of preparing the "charu" (celestial paste) to be eaten by the queens of Daśaratha, who had arranged sacrificial ceremony for the birth of son. And then, it was Viśwāmitra who led Rāma to the task of bending the big bow of Śiva as the credential to marry Sitā. It was in the Mahābhārata that the legend of dispute between Vaśiṣṭha and Viśwāmitra was mentioned. Obviously this part of the Mahābhārata was an interpolation of the later times when Brahminic authority was in full swing. The same legend was also related in a Brāhmaṇa—which is a later annotation of the Veda; this too belonged to a later period. In the Upaniṣad there is no quarrel between Brahmin and Kshatriya.

A new vision of spiritual life was opened as the Veda was complete, and the sages swung over to a more finely sensitive and indefinable idealism. Epochal change in values had set in. Handsome gifts from gods were no more satisfying. The old live gods retired, more or less, in favour of the one abstract God—variously named: Ultimate Reality, Infinite Self, Super Ātman, and generally mentioned as Brahman.

It was here in the Upaniṣad that the term Brahma began

to be used for God. In the Veda, as far as nearly the end of it, Brahma meant Veda. Brahma meaning God is found only at the very extreme end of the Veda, which meaning was adopted in the Upaniṣad. Brahma in the sense of the Veda has been mentioned occasionally in later literature, for example, in the Gitā. The original meaning has been distinctly noted by Sāyana in a commentary on Atharvaveda (XI, iii, 26) : *brahma vedah tadvaditum śilam eṣām iti brahmavādinah* : they are brahmins whose profession is to give instruction on *Brahma* i.e. Veda.

The seers of the Upaniṣad do not hold uniform or similar ideas in all respects, and they revel in amazing freedom of thought, having right to hold independent inquiries. Whatever that may be, the Upaniṣad remains the most glorious heritage of Hindu spiritual thought. There are many volumes, while only thirteen of them are considered classical, as these only have been particularly commented upon by Śaṅkara, who appeared in the 9th century A. D.

The Upaniṣad did not commend neglect of the material world but it resolutely denied the value of attachment to it. This life and the other life were to be in perfect accord, and yet it warned against relying on earthly opulence and felicity as any aim of happiness. The abiding truth is straightaway told in profound simplicity :

“Maitreyi” : said Yājñavalkya, “lo, verily, I am about to go forth from this state. Behold ; let me make a final settlement for you and that Kātyāyani.”

Then said Maitreyi : “If now, sir, the whole earth filled with wealth were mine, would I be immortal thereby ?”

“No,” said Yājñavalkya. “As the life of the rich, even so would your life be. Of immortality, however, there is no hope through wealth.”

Then said Maitreyi : “What would I do with that through which I may not be immortal ? What you know, sir—that, indeed, tell me.”

Then said Yājñavalkya : “Ah, lo, dear as you are to us,

dear is what you say : Come, sit down, I shall explain to you. But while I am expounding, do you seek to ponder thereon."

The sage gave a long lesson, and concluded :

"This great Being, infinite, limitless, is just a mass of knowledge. After dissolution into the elements i.e. death, there is no consciousness."

Then spake Maitreyi : "Herein, indeed, you have bewildered me, sir."

Then spake Yajnavalkya : "lo, verily, I speak not bewilderment (moha). Sufficient, lo, verily is this for understanding."

Then he explained the inherent contradiction in the task of understanding :

"Then whereby and whom would one understand? Whereby one would understand him by whom one understands this all? lo, whereby would one understand the understander?"
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up., II, iv, 1-14.

Is the quest to be given up? Despair is not the ring of the Upaniṣad. The sage only said that the vision of the One cannot be gained by intellect; it is obtainable by perception. It is knowable, after all :

By knowing Him as Lord (Īśa) men become immortal. I know this mighty Person of the colour of the sun, beyond darkness. Only by knowing Him does one pass over death. There is no other path for going there. God who is without beginning and without end, in the midst of confusion, The Creator of all, of manifold form, The One embracer of the universe—By knowing Him one is released from all fetters.

—Svetāśvatara Up., III, 8 & V, 13.

The Vedic vision of one God for the whole universe is a bit different from that of the Old Testament : "The God of the ancient Israel is the God of the land of Israel."

When man took up thinking, at the earliest dawn of his mental awakening, his first thought turned on himself. What is this life that beats in him? How has it come about? Has it just happened? Or, has some power—to him unknown—

taken a fancy to bring forth life ? But then, why the drama of life is to have a tragic end in death ? Or, is death only a change, no end ? Is soul as unreal as body or is it linked with the reality of God ? And, if there be a God, has He created simply out of fun ? Or, has He a plan about it ? Finally, what that creator is to me ? Amused by life while afraid of death, man has been moving in a twilight between doubt and beyond doubt. A sense of assurance about the cosmic power and his relation to it he so much wants and does not have enough of it. As John Dewy writes : "insecurity generates the quest for certainty." (*The Quest for Certainty*).

It is this primary question that the Upaniṣad offers to answer. This is what the sage Āruni tells his son, Śvetaketu :

As the bees, my dear, prepare honey by collecting the essences of different flowers and reducing the essence to a unity, as they are not able to discriminate 'I am the essence of this tree', 'I am the essence of that tree' —even so, indeed, my dear, all creatures here, though they reach Being, know not "We have reached Being." That which is the finest essence —this whole world has that as its self. That is the Reality. That is Ātman. That art thou (*tat tvam asi*), Śvetaketu.

—Chāndogya Up., VI, ix, 1-4.

The view that man and God are one, that self and the super-self are indivisible, is held by the Upaniṣad, which is supported in Śāṅkara commentary of the Vedānta. But Rāmānuja, the other commentator, opposes the Śāṅkara point. Max Muller (*Indian Philosophy*) also supports division : "The human spirit is distinct from the Divine spirit."

However, philosopher F. H. Bradley holds : "There is a notion, that sameness implies the denial of difference, while difference is, of course, a palpable fact. But really, sameness, while in one respect is exclusive of difference, in another respect most essentially implies it. And these two 'respects' are indivisible, even in idea. There would be no meaning in sameness, unless it were the identity of differences, the unity of elements which it holds together but must not

confound. And, in the same way, difference, while it denies, presupposes identity."—*Appearance and Reality*, p. 308.

Our ancient flights of abstract thinking were a matter not of a decade, nor even a century. These heights were pursued, scaled and maintained at various noble levels for more than ten centuries till the notes were taken up in the Vedānta, which partly synthesised the confusing and confounding messages of the inspired seers who took up the challenge to define the undefinable. And the beauty is that their communion with the divine has touched the mind of the most modern enquirers and drawn their admiration and regard. The musings of the Upaniṣad as also a good many hymns of the Veda are a bold attempt to say, in Max Muller's phrase, "the first word spoken by the Aryan man." There is wonder, there is meditation, there is mystery, there is the majestic faith in man as the fact behind God's creation.

At frequent intervals the seers of the Veda and the Upaniṣad rose to great altitudes. Visions of the Spirit, mystic in its quality, cannot be clear-cut. It cannot be as exact as logic and science. This is agreed in Western metaphysics. As John Wilde says: "There exists an infinite, perfect, first cause of all being—God."

These soaring hymns to the Spirit, however inexact, touch the area of the unknowable. As such they are marvels of speculation, especially when it is remembered that they were composed round about four thousand years before our modern experiments :

These Brahmanaspati (Lord of prayer) produced
 with blast and smelting, like a smith,
 Existence in an earlier age of gods, from
 non-existence sprang.
 Existence in the earliest age of gods,
 from non-existence sprang.
 Thereafter were the regions born. This sprang
 from the productive power.

—RV. X, 72 (Griffith)

Modern ideas do not altogether reject these deep speculations. It is agreed: "Every existence is an event." (Dewey, *Experience And Nature*, p. 71.) A nearly similar view is held by Bergson: "The essence of reality is becoming, that is, a continual and active process, a creative evolution."

The Veda muses on Creation, with no final belief to teach. It is only a profound inquiry :

Nonbeing then existed not nor being : There was no air, nor sky that is beyond it. What was concealed ? Wherein ? In whose protection ? And was there deep unfathomable water ?

Death then existed not nor life immortal ; of neither night nor day was any token. By its inherent force the one breathed windless : No other thing than that beyond existed.

Who knows for certain ? Who shall here declare it ? Whence was it born, and whence came this creation ? The gods were born after this world's creation : Then who can know from whence it has arisen ? None knoweth whence creation has arisen : And whether he has or has not produced it : He who surveys it in the highest heaven, He only knows or haply he may know not.

—RV. X, 129. (Macdonell)

Definite knowledge is not the sensible demand. The power of knowing is in the search. Not is a peaceful belief a supreme want. Often belief may be a fair risk. On meagre evidence one may believe only to come to grief. But that is a matter of worldly wisdom. A higher wisdom is that you have a freedom to believe, and then you do not abuse the freedom. Reason is a high quality, but not the highest. Intellect is bound to break down at some point of exertion :

A really naked spirit cannot assume that the world is thoroughly intelligible. There may be surds there may be hard facts, there may be dark abysses before which intelligence must be silent, for fear of going mad. And in the second place, even if to the intellect all things should prove perspicuous,

the intellect is not the whole human nature, not even the whole of pure spirit in man.

—Santayana, *Ultimate Reason*

Maybe belief in God is not scientific, but if your heart rings true you do not lose a value of life. Anyway, there is no proof that God does not exist. On the other hand, a visible or verifiable fact does not take us very far :

Whether a God exists, or whether no God exists, in yon blue heaven above us bent, we form at any rate an ethical republic here below. And the first reflection which this leads to is that ethics have as genuine and real a foothold in a universe where the highest consciousness is human, as in a universe there is a God as well.

—William James,

*The Moral Philosopher
And The Moral Life*

So, speculations of poetic and philosophical frenzy are good for all times. The Upanisad moved farther up and held firmly that God is to be seen, and communion with Him is permissible. Our early seers did not toy with the idea of God. They were terribly earnest. And in passionate earnestness a sage prays :

With a golden vessel The Real's face is covered over. That do thou, O Puśan, uncover for one whose law is the Real to see.

—Iśa Up., XV.

Western thought does not at all cancel all that cannot be known or told. Philosophers there got tired of doubt. Disbelief may be honest; it may as well be a pose. Likewise, belief may be honest, even if it be incredible. Anyway, exaggerated faith in facts to be proved has been a

modern misfortune. A sensible view of faith is not ruled out :

If now I turn my face in the other direction and consider the prospect open to animal faith, I see that all this insecurity and inadequacy of alleged knowledge are almost irrelevant to the natural effort of the mind to describe natural things. The discouragement we may feel in science does not come from failure ; it comes from a false conception of what would be success. Our worst difficulties arise from the assumption that knowledge of existences ought to be literal, whereas knowledge of existences has no need, no propensity, and no fitness to be literal. It is symbolic initially, when a sound, a smell, an indescribable feeling are signals to the animal of his dangers or chances ; and it fulfils its function perfectly—I mean its moral function of enlightening us about our natural good—if it remains symbolic to the end. Can anything be more evident than that religion, language, patriotism, love, science itself speak in symbols ?

—Santayana, *Scepticism And Animal Faith*.

The meaning and manner of creation troubled the first thinkers right from the day they learnt the art of using their brain. Put in between world and God, man wanted to learn the meaning of life and solve the riddle of creation. In search of the answers to the temporal pleasures of the world the early man was led to religion. That way came the Vedic sacrifices to gods to ensure a passage to the heavens and escape the agonies, afflictions and ambiguities of earthly life.

The Christian idea of salvation underwent certain variations from Catholic to Protestant outlooks. "These varied from performance of the sacraments, the mediation of the clergy, austerity and finally to grace of God." Max Weber (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 154.) notes the changes from the asceticism "of fleeing from the world into solitude" to belief in "inner worldly asceticism," having "slammed the door of the monastery behind it."

Then there was a higher revelation that warned man of the short-lived joys of heaven and the consequent return to

earth. The yearning grew for a joy that knows no end. The Upaniṣad brought the message of union of man and God, of realising the finite self in the infinite Self. Buddha taught the negative way to obtaining release from the wheel of rebirth.

With the Upaniṣad, gods take leave in favour of God. Composed some three thousand years from now, its message of bliss that is serene and unruffled continues to echo in the mind of modern man. It is the finale of the Veda. The distinction between the two is clear :

There are two knowledges to be known—as indeed the knowers of Brahman are wont to say : a higher (parā) and also a lower (aparā).
Of these, the lower is the Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmveda and Atharvaveda.
Now, the higher is that whereby that Imperishable is apprehended. —Munḍaka Up.

But a harmony of view was aimed at : All gods are manifestations of the One :

He is Brahman ; he is Indra ; he is Prajāpati ; he is all these gods. —Aitareya Up., III. 46.

This echoes the Veda :

Ekam sat (The One is true). —RV., I, 164.

The vision of the One has been the main theme, which the sages do not demur to repeat :

That which is invisible, ungraspable, without family, without caste—
without sight or hearing is It, without hand or foot,
Eternal, all-pervading, omnipresent, exceedingly
subtile ;
That is the Imperishable, which the wise perceive as
the source of beings.

... ..
Heavenly, formless is the Person.
He is without and within, unborn,
Breathless, mindless, pure,
Higher than the high : Imperishable.

—Manḍuka Up.

The revelation is by no means vague. One can perceive the invisible. Eye is not the only instrument of seeing. Besides, enquiry by means of reason is at times short-sighted. A fact may be such, even when the power of reason fails to prove. The duel between science and religion must somewhere and sometime hold truce :

We should wait ; but we should not wait passively, or in despair. The clash is a sign that there are wider truths and finer perspectives within which a reconciliation of a deeper religion and a more subtle science will be found...On the one side there is the law of gravitation, and on the other the contemplation of the beauty of holiness.

—A. N. Whitehead, *Religion*.

The Ultimate can only be seen with the mystic mind and communicated in indefinite terms. Yet it may be by no means unclear. Indeed, it is clear just as much as definition of doubts can be. The thoughts of the Upanisad are far from systematic products. But they possess an enchantment for the soul. Modern philosophies, even sciences at their supreme heights, leave quite a lot that is undefined or undefinable.

He by whom It is conceived of, knows It not.
It is not understood by those who,
say they, understood It.
It is understood by those who,
say they, understand It not.

—Kena Up., II, 3.

Indeed, understanding has its limits :

What that is, know as
Being and Non-Being,
All the object of desire,
higher than understanding.

—Mundaka Up., I, ii, 1.

Negative characteristics must not mislead us into thinking that Brahman is a nonentity. Wisemen even with clear conception fail to fully express, for such is the nature of spiritual truth :

One may think of it as the mother
of all things under heaven,
Its true name we do not know ;
Tao is the by-name we give it.

— Tao Te Ching, XXV.

Modern philosophies, even most sciences, at their supreme heights, leave quite a lot undefined :

The fact is, any branch of knowledge, whether it be study of rocks and minerals, or the study of cosmic rays, strikes mysticism as soon as it reaches any depth. Witness Dr. Alex Carrel and A. S. Eddington. The nineteenth century shallow rationalism naively believed that the question "What is a blade of grass?" could be answered adequately by considering the blade of grass as a purely mechanical phenomenon. The contemporary scientific attitude is that it cannot. Since Walt Whitman asked that question with his profound mysticism no one has been able to answer it and no scientist will presume to answer it today...It is my conviction that the progress of contemporary sciences is forcing modern thought to develop it in the direction of depth, and of a new synthesis of the mechanical and the spiritual, of matter and spirit.

—Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of China*

That will be something of newer application and finer phase of co-existence. And facts are fast revealing that co-existence is not just a poetical fiction.

By the way, Whitman's grass reminds of Tagore's couplet:

I have thanked the trees that have made my life
fruitful,
but have failed to remember the grass that has ever
kept it green.

—*Fireflies*

In furnishing the earth, in providing for its evolution, in giving a pervasive compactness to dust, in fitting out the ground work for the growth of vegetable life, grass has done the hearty job of laying out the verdured velvet to receive the Creator on the earth's courtyard.

The Upanisad represented a period when Aryan life in India was redolent with youthfulness and fulfilment of life. The entire environment was drizzled by ceaseless spray of happiness. The Vedic hymn put the feeling to a lovely tune :

May the wind blow for sweetness of existence, may rivers flow with honey-wine, may plants yield delight of being, may our nights and dawns, our colonies and colonnaded forests glow with ample liveliness.

—RV., I, 90, 6-8.

It was the life that wholly agreed with Browning's faith :

Oh, how happy is man's life, the mere living itself ;
How fit to employ all the heart and the soul and the
senses for ever in joy.

And the Upanisad lifted joy to a level of inward life. It transcended material joys of physical living. It raised the mind and the heart and the soul to the realm of supreme goodness. The springs of life lie in bliss :

Verily what that well-made is—that verily, is the essence of existence. (*raso vai sah*) For, truly, on getting the essence, one becomes blissful. For who, indeed, could live, who breathe, if there were not this bliss in space ?

—Taittiriya Up., II, 7, 1.

(Translation by Radhakrishnan)

Our material world blends with the heavenly order. That is how duality is resolved. The self of man and the supremacy of God move in one and the same direction, the direction of the divine in man. As Sri Aurobindo says : "Life exists in Brahma in order to discover Brahma in itself". (*The Life Divine*) The discovery is signalled inwardly by the felt power of joy in God, for God is joy—bliss :

The Brahman is bliss. For truly, beings here are born from bliss, when born, they live by bliss, when departing, they enter bliss.

—Taittiriya Up., III, 6, 1

This agrees with Bishop Berkeley's thesis :

"In Him we live, and have our being."

—*The Works of George Berkeley*, Vol. I, p. 248.

From "earth-life" the transit to divine life lies through the sense of gaining bliss. Life ceases to frown with any look of fear when bliss of the Spirit is sensed in the mind and the soul, though man in the act of enjoying the bliss has no power of words to express it.

The same note of peaceful courage rings in a saying of Tao :

We have fears because we have a self.
When we do not regard that self as self,
What have we to fear ?

—Tao Te Ching, XIII.

The fear of the world is severe. Men take flight from it and counter it by practice of austerities to get qualified for a life in heaven. The paradise that is lost is thus followed by endeavour to regain it. The Upaniṣad follows a mystic route of awareness of the bliss of God : *vijnānam ānandam brahma* (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up., III, 9, 28.).

Attainment of knowledge comes of the Supreme Spirit. When bliss is attained, the vision grows : *neha nānāsti kincana*—there is no manyness, no diversity here. A sense of finding the One in all beings, of universal love, then becomes a perceptible fact.

One is free to doubt it. That freedom is a part of knowledge. "Scepticism is the chastity of intellect". So says Santayana. Also Bradley leaves "due space for exercise of doubt and wonder....We justify the natural wonder which delights to stay beyond our daylight world, and to follow paths that lead to half-known half-knowable regions....And to suit the divergent aspects of our inconsistent finite lives, a variety of error in the shape of diverse partial truths is required".

4

Sorrow and Suffering

THE world is a court of trial. From birth to death all along there is misery of one kind or another. It is so for most men for most of the time. Meanwhile, all struggle, more or less, to lessen or shorten sorrow. None succeed ; few only hope to.

The ancient remedy was religion and prayer. Modern remedy is science and technology, which are to an extent allied with politics and economics and a host of other grim and grand mechanisms. Yet our modern world has been swinging to more and more misadventure and misfortune.

Ancient India readily set out on a bold adventure of the spirit. The Veda and the Upanisad led the way. Rosy belief prevailed. When life is in bloom it is naturally gay and gracious. Springs of joy, then, keep playing. Sorrow is simply laughed at. Indian soul at the time was in a flowering festivity. The Upanisad pulsed with joy of life.

Bright new idea is a gift of youth. Bold belief belongs to daring youth. The Upanisad was the musing of a spring time of budding youth. As the first flames of fresh life were about to fade away, the vision of joy grew pale. Dim shadows of sorrow eclipsed life. The movement of higher mind began to go under and fall off. In fact, man cannot remain too long on too high a plane. A coming down is only a matter of time. At such a time of torpor, philosophies wearily wheel around the corners of doubt, decay and disintegration. By now, the era of the first twelve great Upanisads was over. Then a deflowering of quality set in. Original thinking was replaced by combative commentaries.

As life force was enfeebled, men fell into moody meditation. From now and for long, as Max Muller observes : "The principal systems of philosophy in India...start from the

conviction that the world is full of suffering and that this suffering should be accounted for and removed."

The credit was that the philosophers had the firmness to keep the field. Before them the Buddha had led the way to attack the problem of pain and peril of life. And though he adopted a little of the Upanisad, he gave an entirely new orientation of the problem and lifted thought to another level, high enough.

Buddha had little interest in God and in speculation about the world and the self. His one absorbing thought was given to conquest of sorrow and account for the misery of man. Neither a life of physical pleasure and worldly possessions could assure happiness nor self-torture would lead to any positive value. In his view, the right way is to behave with the knowledge that self is the source of suffering. That way is to practise negation of self, to discipline it by the process of *nirvāna*, to annul self altogether. Buddha's main point of difference with the Upanisad was his doctrine of 'no self': *nairātma-vāda*.

The road to it was laborious: to pursue Four Noble Truths:

That there is suffering,
that it has a cause,
that it can be abolished,
and that it is practicable.

The cause of suffering is ignorance (*avidyā*) and desire (*tanna*). The accomplishment is *nirvāna*, as a result of wisdom (*prajñā*) and grace (*karuṇā*).

The four Truths are supplemented by Eightfold Path:

What, O monks, is the Middle Way, which gives sight? It is the noble Eightfold Path, namely:

right faith,
right intention,
right speech,
right action,
right livelihood,
right effort,

right mindfulness,
right concentration.

This, O monks, is the Middle Way. —The First Sermon. The Buddha's prescription of the measures for the cessation of sorrow was given without doubt. For, he had Enlightenment, and he had come (Tathāgata) to unclouded enlightenment.

His next sermon rang with confidence :

Thus have I heard. Once when the Lord was staying at Benares in the Isipatana deerpark, he addressed the almsmen as follows :

It is here in this very deerpark at Benares that the Truth-finder, Arhat, all-enlightened, set a-rolling the supreme Wheel of the Doctrine—which shall not be turned back from its onward course by recluse or Brahmin, god or Māra or Brahma or by any one in the universe, —the announcement of the Four Noble Truths, the teaching, the declaration, and establishment of those Four Truths, with their unfolding exposition and manifestation.

The logic of the Buddha's message is thorough attack on sorrow as the only path to salvation :

Birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, sickness is sorrow,
clinging to earthly things is sorrow.

Birth and rebirth, the chain of reincarnations, result from the thirst for life together with passion and desire.

The only escape from this thirst is the annihilation of desire.

—E.W.Hopkins, *The Religion of India*.

Like Jainism, Buddhism was a faith propounded by a Kshatriya prince. In this connexion, it may be noted that Kapila was a Kshatriya (Bhāgvat Purāṇa, III, xxi, 26). Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (II, 1, 1) and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad (IV, 1) refer to the influence of the Kshatriya. Gārgya, a brahman sage was taught by king Ajātaśatru of Kashi, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (II, 1). Regard for the Kshatriya is given at length in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (I, 4) :

Verily in the beginning this was Brāhman, one only. That being one, was not strong enough. It created still further the most excellent Kshatra (power), viz. those kshatras (powers) among the Devas—Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrityu, Īsāna. Therefore there is nothing beyond the Kshatra, and therefore at the Rājasūya sacrifice the Brāhman sit down below the Kshatriya. He confers that glory on Kshatra alone.

...Law is the Kshatra (power) of the Kshatra, therefore there is nothing higher than the Law.

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (1, 8, 1 & V, 3) it is reported that Kshatriya king Jāvāli taught Brahman Gautama. The same Upaniṣad (V, II) Kshatriya king Aśvapati is giving lessons. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (VIII, 1, 4, 10), on the contrary, contemptuously says : "the words of a Kshatriya !" No wonder that the Buddha welcomed aristocrats in his order :

The Buddhist theory acknowledged the equal right of all persons without distinction to be received into the order...Buddha speaks of the highest consummation of religious aspirations, for the sake of which "the sons of noble families (kulaputta) leave their homes and go into homelessness."...We find young Brahmins like Sariputta, Moggallana, Kaccana, nobles like Ananda, Ruhula, Anuruddha, sons of the great merchants...invariably men and youths of the most respectable classes of society...

— H. Oldenberg, *Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, translated by William Hoey.

Particularly, in the eras when civilization was in the making, the task of construction was naturally left to the higher classes. In ancient Palestine, at the time of the early prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah something like this obtained. The plight of the poor and the oppressed moved the heart of Jeremiah. But not knowing enough of the society and social problems, Jeremiah preferred to leave it to the judgment of the upper class :

"But these are poor," I said, Mere ignorant folk,

who never learned the rules of the Eternal,
of the religion of their God,
I will turn to the upper classes,
I will talk to them ; for they have learned the rules
of the Eternal, and the religion of their God."

—Jeremiah, V. 5. (Quoted from Donn
Martinadale, *Social Life & Cultural Change*, p. 276.

The Buddha was a master of logic, and he adopted what is now well-known as Socratic method, or rather a sort of dialectical thinking. He was learned too, though he did not use his learning for display. He was earnest, as was Socrates. And he was opposed to the Vedic rites and rituals. In fact, he shared the outlook of his age that was inclined to rebel against respect for abstract knowledge, orthodox regard for rituals and a genuine compassion for man in misery. A dialogue of the Buddha will illustrate his keen logical bent of mind. This refers to his discussion with two sages :

Well then, Vasettha, those ancient Rishis of the
Brahmans, versed in the three Vedas, the authors of
the verse, to wit, Vamadeva, Vessamittha, Jamadaggi,
Angirasa, Bharadaja, Vasettha, Kassapa and Bhagu—
did even they speak thus, saying, "We know it, we
have seen it, where Brahma is, whence Brahma is,
whither Brahma is ?
"Not so, Gautama."

—*Tevijja Sutta, Digha Nikaya*

And thus in a short time he nonplussed the two Brahman who submitted to the Buddha.

The master's technique was neatly followed by his able disciples. A book of Buddhist tales, named *Milinda-parha*, quotes a dialogue between the Greek King Menander (Milinda) and the monk Nagasena. (The Greek king was defeated by Pushyamitra—2nd century B. C.—who was a fanatic follower of Brahmanism.):

Nagasena : Your majesty, you are a delicate prince, an exceedingly delicate prince...Pray, did you come on foot, or riding ?

Milinda : Brante (revered sire), I do not go on foot. I come in a chariot.

N : Your majesty, if you came in a chariot, declare to me your chariot. Pray, your majesty, is the pole the chariot ?

M : Nay, verily, Bhante.

N : Is the axle the chariot ?

M : Nay, verily, Bhante.

N : Are the wheels the chariot ?

M : Nay, verily, Bhante.

N : Is the banner staff the chariot ?

M : Nay, verily, Bhante.

This way all the parts of the chariot are mentioned,

N : Is it, then, your majesty, something else besides pole, axle, wheels, chariot-body, banner-staff, yoke, reins, and goad which is the chariot ?

M : Nay, verily, Bhante.

N : Your majesty, although I question you very closely, I fail to discover any chariot. Verily now, your majesty, the word chariot is a mere empty sound. What chariot is there here ? your majesty, you speak a falsehood, a lie : there is no chariot. ...

Now your majesty answer, if you can.

M : Bhante Nagasena, I spoke no lie. The word chariot is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, and name. ...

N : Thoroughly well, your majesty, do you understand a chariot. In exactly the same way, your majesty, in respect of me, Nagasena is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, mere name for the hair of my head...brain of the head, form, sensation, perception, the predispositions and consciousness. But in the absolute sense there is no ego here to be found.

The king profusely admired the monk. The monk had paid the king in the same coin. For, the king, at the beginning of the conversation, had charged the monk in nearly the same strain. Though all this dialogue may not have been at all held, the suggestion of this report is eloquent. At least, it shows the highly metaphysical style of religious disputations, to prove that neither soul nor matter has any real existence, but it is only a name by which it is comprehended.

As a rule, Buddha did not take interest in dogma. As such, he used to keep silent over debates on the existence of God or

Soul. He liked the Upaniṣad, and under its influence he loved to remain mystic, and only say : "The eye goes not thither nor speech nor mind" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up., III, 8, 8). Or, as the Kena Upaniṣad says : "It is other than the known and above the unknown." (I, 3) As Lao Tze expresses it, at the beginning of his Lao Teh King : "The Tao which can be expressed is not the unchanging Tao; the Name which can be named is not the unchanging Name."

In the sphere of culture the Brahmaṇs and Buddhists had close rivalry. Competition in cultural activities and educational pursuits gave impetus to building Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries. The monastery of Nalanda is an inspiring instance. The site was purchased by a number of merchants at a cost of ten crores of gold coins, and then kings in succession constructed the massive educational institution that accommodated 10,000 students and more than a thousand teachers, in addition to guest houses for visiting scholars. The construction of the Jetavana Park in Sravasti reads like a myth of mighty attraction :

When the Buddha accepted Anathpindaka's invitation to visit Sravasti, the latter, seeking a suitable place for the Buddha's residence, discovered this park belonging to Jetakumara. When he asked to be allowed to buy it, Jeta's reply was : 'Not even if you could cover the whole place with money. Anathpinda had gold brought down in carts and covered Jetavana with pieces laid side by side.

Emperor Asoka proclaimed Buddhism as State religion, and gifts continued to be poured into monasteries. King Kanishka appeared as the last great patron. Likewise, huge Hindu temples were built by devout donations of Kings.

However, both the Vedic and the Buddhist religions were the outcomes of the great visions of sages. Naturally two systems will differ, yet great minds work at many times on similar lines. The main conflict was that Buddha was disinclined to bother much about Self. Yet there were important meeting points. For instance, the Pali scripture teaches : "Be such as

have the self as your lamp, self as only refuge." (*Atta-deepa viharatha atta-sarana*. — *Digha Nikaya*, ii, 101) Buddhist doctrine of no-self—*anāttā*—is in fact the denial that the Self is individual, belonging to a particular individual.*

The essential point of difference did not lie so much in the general doctrine of no-self, but in Buddha's refusal to make this the pivot of religious faith. In his view the vital matter of religion was that man was a prey to misery and the tears of man mainly worried him. In his view, religion's primary task was to wipe out man's tears. Buddha as Lord of compassion (*karuṇā*) reminds one of Jesus Christ. The one difference was that Buddha was not condemned by any court to be killed, and he escaped anything like crucifixion, because India had tolerance as a habit of religion. What was odd about religion in India was the conduct of disputation. A supporter of a view at the very start imagines the presence of an opposer (*pūrvapaksha*). He begins with positing the opposition points and then he proceeds to smash the objections and establishes his thesis (*siddhānta*). This process hardens rivalry.

Human sorrow and suffering took the Christ on the Cross. With the Buddha this human tragedy weighed most, though he was spared from solving it in his own person. Soul untouched by sorrow seemed to him to be a fine-spun mysticism. The situation may be clarified by an extract from Radhakrishnan who thinks that salvation is not to be limited to a few. The ordeal of redeeming is endless, as every individual is to be redeemed:

The Hindus assert different degrees of liberation, but the complete and final release of all is the ultimate one. Mahayana Buddhism declares that the Buddha ascending on the threshold of nirvāṇa took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single undelivered being on earth. The Bhagvata Purāṇa records the following prayer: "I

* This base of agreement is finely discussed by Ananda Coomarsawmi (*Hinduism and Buddhism*) as well as by Rhys-Davids (*Outlines of Buddhism*).

desire not the supreme state with all its eight perfections nor the release from rebirth ; may I assume the sorrow of all creatures who suffer and enter into them so that they may be made free from grief." The self-fulfilment which they aspire to is inconsistent with the failure to achieve similar results in others.

—Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*.

Buddha was modest about his unbelief in God, but quite outspoken in his disregard for the Veda and the Vedic rituals. A furious and forthright denunciation of God as well as the Veda came from Cārvāka. He was spiteful against religion of any kind. In ancient usage, the word *nāstika* meant an unbeliever in the Veda ; only later, it meant defamation of God. Cārvāka was a total *nāstika*. His doctrine is called *Lokāyata*. It meant belief in the material world, that this world is all and that there is nothing beyond this. God, soul and all abstract things like that he frankly rejected. What he vehemently recommended was : enjoy heartily and unhesitatingly all that this world offers. *Lokāyata* may also mean what the people prefer, when they are free from the priestly control. His doctrine may have been originally formulated by Bṛhaspati, who has been mentioned by Buddha.

Cārvāka is a very popular name in our philosophy. His extreme godlessness and absolute abandonment to love of life must have been some honest sage's holy anger at hypocrisy preached in the name of religion. A few of his refrains are well worth knowing. They are given below :

While life is yours, live joyously ;
None can escape Death's searching eye ;
When once this frame of ours they burn,
How shall it ever again return ?

Here is a precept quoted from the first teacher of this school of chivalrous materialism :

The Agnihotra, the three Vedas, the ascetic's three staves,
And smearing oneself with ashes,—
Bṛhaspati says these are but means of livelihood for those who have no manliness or sense.

Sarvasiddhānta Saṁgraha carries this instruction :

There is no world other than this ; there is no heaven and no hell. The realm of Siva and like regions are invented by stupid impostors of other schools of thought.

To denounce the Veda as humbug, the priest as a professional mountebank, god as a queer fiction, was probably a demand of the time. Certainly, Cārvāka must have possessed sharp intellect and a righteous passion for telling the truth against a whole existing order that was yet in its indisputable power.

One issue emerges clearly. It is that Cārvāka as a philosopher had created an orbit of his influence. At least, he had made an impression on some reformers who rebelled against Brahmanic formulas. For instance, the Jain school did not subscribe to the belief in God and Vedic sacrifices. Of course, the Jain creed is sober and sweeter, and unlike the Lokāyata, it holds that the essence of soul is imperishable and that spirit has its reality.

5 Removal of Misery

THE revolt of Buddhism served Hinduism as a sort of shock therapy. An immediate need was felt to answer the challenge in the current modes of thought. The logic of Buddha was met by the logic of the Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy.

The earlier Hindu way was largely mystic. Now it must forge the sort of weapons with which it had been attacked. Hindu sages now prepared what Buddha had developed and used with great effect. Thus Hinduism hammered out the analytical implements to meet the masterful attacks of Buddhism and Jainism.

It was this pressure that produced the six schools of philosophy—an opus magnum of Hindu metaphysics. Among these, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika turned their theses in severe scholastic style. The same critical approach largely characterised the four other schools. They all accepted the Veda as their foundation. But they differed in their ingenuity in drawing conclusions for their respective standpoints. That did not impair the argumentative character of their work. Also, they were not always exact in their rendering of the Vedas, for these were by now too remote and some conceptions too hazy and unfamiliar. The last of the six schools, the Vedānta was closer to the Upaniṣads; in fact, it systematized them.

A philosophy, as Russell defines, is criticism. But the critic does not go very far. At least, it cannot reach the extreme ends. So, a stage is reached when truth awaits intuition. Natural methods should surely prevail; yet supernatural revelation remains a need in the last resort. A full view of life and reality, in their complex and subtle aspects, cannot possibly be gained except by a final submission to mystic meanings. There are many things that well transcend the limit

of logical reason. Reason cannot penetrate into the ultimate truths. It becomes really wise of reason to withdraw from where its jurisdiction ends. An abstract fact cannot be fathomed without enlightened faith. The real danger is where faith is blind. Even then, at some heights, enquiry has to rely on God-vision. Indeed, reason has to take leave when encountering things beyond reasoning. Reason, then, is coupled with inward consciousness, a mystic conversion of mind. As a great American philosopher says :

The overcoming of all the usual barriers between the individual and the Absolute is the great mystic achievement. In mystic states we become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness...In Hinduism, in Neoplatonism, in Sufism, in Christian mysticism, in Whitmanism, we have the same recurring note, so that there is about mystical utterance an eternal unanimity which ought to make a critic stop and think, and which brings it about, that the mystic classics have, as has been said, neither birthday nor native land. Perpetually feeling of the unity of man and God, their speech antedates language, nor do they grow old.

—William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Philosophy, of course, is a search for knowledge by reason. The Sanskrit word for it is *darśana*, vision. But truth is obtained not so much by physical eye as by mind's eye. So then, the sight at a certain extremity is a matter of insight. It is reached by logic that is only refined by contemplation. Intellect does most of the task ; yet quite a little is left over to intuition. There are points where science halts. The truth of spiritual quest is then seen by an eye that is in touch with the spirit.

By the way, each of the six systems was expounded by means of *sūtra*, that is concise in expression. In those ancient days there was no printed book. To help memory, then, it was necessary to express ideas with most careful economy of words, so that it would be easier to commit to memory.

Discussion of the nature of the world and creation is, of

course, the central subject of each system. But what is common to all and inherent in every inquiry is the essential need to attack the problem of man's misery—of body and mind.

Nyāya philosophy, for example, right at its beginning, lays down the rule that by "true knowledge" is to be overcome "wrong notions" so that the "highest good" may be reached; and this follows the proposition:

When there is birth, there is pain. To remove pain is the primary concern.

The idea is developed:

Every action leads to pleasure and pain. Pain has the characteristic of causing uneasiness. Everything (i.e. body etc., and also pleasure and pain), being intermingled with i.e., invariably accompanied by, never existing apart from, pain, is inseparable from pain; and as such is regarded as pain itself. Finding everything to be intermingled with pain, when one wishes to get rid of pain, he finds that birth (or life) is nothing but pain; and thus he becomes disgusted (with life); and being disgusted, he loses all attachment; and being free from attachment, he becomes released.

The above comment leads to the next Sūtra:

Release is the absolute deliverance from pain. This "final release"—so the comment makes out, "is the condition of immortality, free from fear, imperishable (unchanging), consisting in the attainment of bliss, is called "Brahman".

All this brooding on the problem of pain is not mere indulgence in melancholy. It is everyman's lot, and out of the desire to relieve man of his burden that the philosophies take troubled interest in his elemental misfortune. The introductory note on *Padārthadharmā Samgraha* in the Vaiśeṣika philosophy dwells on this vital topic:

Having bowed to Īswara, the Cause, and then to the sage Kanāda, I am going to describe the nature of things leading to the best of results.

Question: Well, what is this highest result?

Reply: ... the highest result is the absolute cessation of pain.

Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, older than Nyāya, is silent and unconcerned about God. It is mainly a system of physics (much akin to the laws of motion) and explains the composition of the objects of experience (*padārtha*) as built in by atoms. But, in view of the difficulty of explaining the behaviour of the world only by the movements of atoms, the later interpreters of the school introduced the idea of God, which was available from the Nyāya school.

The Yoga philosophy accepts God not as an absolute necessity for salvation or release from the bondage of body or life. According to this school, the principal means of release is control of mind : *cittavritti nirodhah* ; only an alternative may be : contemplation on God—*Iśwara—pranidhānādvā*. Yoga is a practice of expulsion and retention of breath, whereby concentration is attained. It is also constitutional exercise for maintaining energy, but its main job is to secure mental serenity. That is all right. But the need of relief from human pain is certainly not omitted : Or, the state of painless lucidity—*Sūtra 36*

The commentary on this crucial *sūtra* runs concisely but convincingly :

“Or, the state of painless lucidity” appearing as a higher activity, causes the steadiness of the mind.

This two-fold higher activity, the painless sensuous and the purely egoistic, is called lucidity. By this the yogi’s mind reaches the state of steadiness.*

The Sāṃkhya philosophy is most thoughtful about the need of mastering misery. This school is not in any search of God. In fact, it asserts that God is not proved. He may exist, but for want of logical proof of it, He is outside the focus of discussion.

Sāṃkhya is perhaps the oldest of the six schools. It has its own theory of evolution. The title is derived from *sāmkhyā* or number (of categories). It recognises only two fundamental

* Maharshi Maheshī Yogi has built up his jargon of “God consciousness” on his own construction or reconstruction of Patanjali’s Yoga Sūtra.

categories : *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. Kapila, the founder of the school, is not worried at all about salvation. In his view, *puruṣa*—the true self—is always free. It feels fettered only as long as it is under the illusion or the shadow of *prakṛti*. Come out of shadow and you are free in fact, not merely in theory.

The very first *sūtra* is eloquent of Kapila's compassion for the suffering humanity :

From torment by three-fold misery arises the enquiry into the means of terminating it ; if it be said that it is fruitless, the means being obvious, no (we reply), since in them there is no certainty or finality.

He argues at length on the remedies of bodily and mental pain. Physicians are there of excellent skill. Their diagnosis and prescription of medicines help in many cases. Mental diseases are also treated by experts. For other pains, there are politicians and economists trying their remedies. Yet with all that available aid, advice and wisdom the "absolute and final removal of pain" has not been effected. Then he frankly notices that "The scriptural means of terminating misery" is equally futile. The host of Vedic sacrifices have been "equally inefficient in the absolute and final removal of the three kinds of pain".

Kapila disapproves Vedic rituals e.g. *Jyotistoma* and *Vāja-peya*, as these are calculated to raise the performer to heavenly sovereignty, but this, according to him, "constitutes inequality. The greatness or the magnificence of one man is a source of pain to another of lesser magnificence". This view is taken up by *Sāṃkhyakārikā* which comments :

The means of removing pain, consisting in the direct discriminative knowledge of the spirit (*puruṣa*) as apart from matter, is contrary to Vedic means, and hence is better. The Vedic remedy is good inasmuch as it is authorised by the Veda and as such capable of removing pain to a certain extent ; the discriminative knowledge of the spirit as distinct from matter is also good ; and, of these two, the latter is better, superior.

Sāṃkhya has candidly criticised God's motive of creation :

Further, God, being the Lord of the Universe, has all that He requires and, as such, in the creating of the world He can have no selfish motive ; nor can His action be said to be due solely to benevolence or pity ; for pity consists in a desire for the removal of others' pains ; but before creation, the spirits would be without bodies, organs, and objects as such, without pain ; for the removal of what then would God's compassion be roused : And if the pain subsequent to the creation be held to be the cause of creation, then we should be in the inextricable noose of "interdependence" : creation due to pity, and pity due to creation : and, again, if God were moved to creation by pity, then He would create only happy mortals, not mortals with variegated experiences. And if the diversity of men's experiences be attributed to their past deeds, then what is the necessity of postulating an intelligent controller of such deeds ?

This objection has been met by Bādarāyaṇa in Vedānta :

(II, i, 32.) On account of having a motive (necessity).

On this Śaṅkara comments :

Another objection is raised against the doctrine of an intelligent cause of the world. The intelligent highest Self cannot be the creator of the sphere of this world, "on account of actions having a purpose". We know from ordinary experience that man, who is an intelligent being, begins to act after due consideration only, and does not engage even in an unimportant undertaking unless it serves some purpose of his own; much less so in important business. There is also a scriptural passage confirming this result of common experience : "Verily everything is not dear that you may love everything ; but that you may love the Self therefore everything is dear." Now the undertaking of creating the sphere of this world, with all its various contents, is certainly a weighty one. If, then, on the other hand, you assume it to serve some purpose of the intelligent highest Self, you thereby sublimate its self-sufficiency vouched for by scripture ; if, on the other hand, you affirm absence of motive on its part, you must affirm activity also.

: The answer is followed up in the next Vedāntasūtra (II, i, 33):

But in mere sport, such as we see in ordinary life.

Śaṅkara comments:

The word "but" discards the objection raised—We see in everyday life that certain doings of princes or other men of high position who have no unfulfilled desires left have no reference to any extraneous purpose, but proceed from mere sportfulness, as, for instance, their recreations in places of amusement. We further see that the process of inhalation and exhalation is going on without reference to any purpose, merely following the law of its own nature. Analogously, the activity of the Lord also may be supposed to be mere sport, proceeding from His own nature, without reference to any purpose. For on the ground neither of reason nor of scripture can we construe any other purpose of the Lord. Nor can His nature be questioned.

The Vedānta, founded on and inspired by the Upaniṣad, has been the only one of the six schools that has bright belief in God. Though it has been named after the Veda, the virtues of Vedic sacrifices and the material values derived thereof are not its subject of enquiry. Its other name, *Brahmasūtra*, indicates the scope and character of its spiritual musings.

The Upaniṣads were inspired, and their sages revelled in the truths that were revealed to them. The Vedānta was not a revelation. It was a hard argument. It was out to prove a thesis, which it proved by force of logic, a long and arduous logic that was built bit by bit, raised section by section, all the while firmly encountering adversaries and fully answering their objections. It was a mighty brain work. In a way, it made the Gītā's work easy.

The evaluation of the Vedic rites in honour of their presiding deities, is treated in Pūrva Mimāṃsā, in contra-distinction to which Vedānta is called Uttara (i.e. later or final) Mimāṃsā. But simply Mimāṃsā means Pūrva Mimāṃsā, which explains the purposes and benefits of sacrifices, and the particular fruit is life in heaven, not release from life and return to the

Supreme God or to non-existence (*abhāva*). The author of the *Mīmāṃsā*, is not much mindful of God. He is frank about fruit :

IV, iii, 15—That one result would be heaven, as that is equally desirable for all. But why so? Because heaven is happiness and everyone seeks for happiness.

This is about all that he says of *dharma*. Only one commentator, Kumārila Bhatta understands *dharma* as attaining the "state of the self free from pain". *Mīmāṃsā*kas do not have much interest in God.

In the very remote age, in between 2500 and 600 B.C., a heroic vision of man and his Maker enlightened the land watered by the Indus. The light flickered haltingly at times, and gradually flames shot up high and white. Not that all was good, but quite much was indeed majestic.

Massive power of ideas and words grew and gained ground. The production as a whole is still regarded as a wonder of the human mind. As musings on God, man and the world, the *Veda* and the *Upaniṣad* marked the dawn, while its meridian glory circled around the Six Schools of philosophy, with the *Vedānta* as its finale. These philosophies, with their noble commentaries are still regarded as marvels of mental exercises. To man's treasure of truth they are all precious gems. Thinkers of the modern world look back at them with joyous admiration and genuine thankfulness.

The commentators of the *Vedānta* or *Brahmasūtra* are highly original thinkers. In fact, each of them carries a light of his own. Of them, Śaṅkara is revered as a great luminary. He maintains: God is one, man is one with God, Who expresses Himself through the world. The world is real in so far as man perceives it; but it is in a way unreal, in the sense that it is not an ultimate reality. The Ultimate Reality is *Brahma*, the world is its form and factor.

Rāmānuja holds that man (self) has a separate existence, but is made of the same divine substance. Man worships, and God is worshipped. Self gains release from its individual bond

by its act of devotion to God. A third great commentator, Mādhava goes farther in his view of duality of God and man. Man is different from and dependent on God, and this dependence he uses for enjoying intense love of God ; for, love requires two ; one is the lover and the other is the beloved. Rāmānuja and Mādhava are exponents of love and devotion (bhakti) cult, while Śaṅkara is the great prophet of pure knowledge : 'Self (God) is to be known by the self (man).' Śaṅkara is hailed in some ways as an equal and an opponent of Buddha.

By none of these means or by any other means man has been enabled to gain abiding happiness. As Sri Aurobindo observes : "Altruism, philanthropy and service, Christian love or Buddhism has not made the world a whit happier."

There is a bit of a wrong view going that Śaṅkara holds that the world is unreal, an illusion, a māyā. He says so in a qualified way. But the popular version of his view is :

Brahma satya Jagannithyā (God is true, world is false.)

That this view is not correct is evident from Śaṅkara's own commentary on Vedānta (II, i, 5 & III, ii, 3). Radhakrishnan has set the Śaṅkara view in its proper perspective. He interprets : māyā does not mean that the world is an illusion or unreal ; only this much, it is not ultimate reality. So, it is neither real nor unreal. In Sri Aurobindo's words, it is "real-unreal universe" or in Herbert Spencer's words ; "Transfigured Realism." Śaṅkara's tenet is : God is real ; then, anything made of or by God cannot be unreal.

It is only man's failure—in spite of all efforts—that seems to have been at the root of the rejection of the world as meaningless : māyā.

The Upaniṣad is clear on this issue : "The world is His ; indeed, He is the world itself." (Bṛhad. Up, XIII) The world is made of the substance of God—as Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad says —"much as a spider emits and draws in its thread." When the Ṛgveda has, much earlier, assured : "The world which thou hast made is real indeed, for it is not empty." (RV. X, 55, 6).

So, māyā is power of God to form myriads of finite things out of His infinite being. God who has no limitation plays with the finite, and this play is māyā. The Infinite, for His love of the finite, fills the finite with His own splendour. The world is real to the extent the finite appearances are related to the Infinite Reality. By themselves the finite forms are not real ; they are changing, while the Infinite is unchanging. From the outward appearances when man is able to turn the eye inward he sees the Spirit within. This ability to turn inward is the first requisite "for transformation of nature and for the divine life." (Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, pp. 910-11).

"God is the conviction fundamental to all spiritual wisdom. It is not a matter of inference only." This belief of Radhakrishnan has been inspired by the Upaniṣad, which assures that God can be directly seen. The great text (*mahāvākya*): *Tat tvam asi* (That art thou), told by Āruṇi to his son Śvetaketu, is no *anumāna* (inference) but *pratyakṣa* (perception, a matter of direct vision). Likewise, the saying of Jesus: "I and my Father are one." is a seen fact reported in faith.

Even then, cognition of God is not any of the common method of knowledge. Āruṇi asks his son Śvetaketu : "Have you ever asked for that instruction by which that which is not heard becomes heard ; that which is not perceived, perceived, that which is not known, known ?" (Chāndogya Upaniṣad, VI, i, 3). So then, it became an ancient style of thinking : "This Self is to be described by no, no." (Br. Up. III, ix, 26). But to the inward knower He becomes known as a positive truth. *Yama* (Death) instructs Nachiketas :

Not by speech, not by mind,
Not by sight can He be apprehended.
How can He be comprehended
Otherwise than by one's saying "He is" ?
He can indeed be comprehended by the thought
"He is"

And by (admitting) the real nature of both
(his comprehensibility and his
incomprehensibility).

When He has been comprehended by the thought
His real nature manifests itself. “He is”
—Katha Up., VI, i, 12-13.

And when He is thus known, the knower becomes fearless.
The sage Yājñavalkya instructs King Janaka: “O Janaka, you
have indeed reached fearlessness” (Br. Up., IV, ii, 4).

6

Kṛṣṇa : God born to befriend Man

THE second great war of the ancient Aryans was waged between Kuru and Pāṇḍava Brothers. Non-Aryan allies were on both sides. The Purāṇa places the war about the period when *Brāhmaṇas* (rules of Vedic rituals and legends) were being written. That was around, say, 1000 B. C. Radhakrishnan (*Indian Philosophy*) thinks, it was an event of the 12th century B.C. Anyway, by this time was over the royal regime of Bharata ; but the same lineal course continues, for the heroes of Kurukshetra are often addressed as "O Bhārata." Even then, Kuru was a rather new dynasty, though the Kurukshetra war was an echo of the Vedic Kuru-Pāncāla war.

The Mahābhārata war was a lineal feud among the rivals to the throne of Hastināpur. Its leadership was taken by Kṛṣṇa. A minor king though, he was the domineering diplomat. Above all, he was the founder of the most popular Hindu philosophy, a fine synthesis of older views, while all that was impregnated with a new and original vision of the divine.

And it was a strange compound of incitement to fighting and an insight into the soul that is untouched by desire. The intriguing call of the Gītā is to go in for a double-edged ideal : fulfilment of desire accompanied with a resolute refusal to be distorted by desire :

Either slain shalt thou go to heaven ; or victorious
thou shalt enjoy the earth ;

Therefore arise, O son of Kunti, resolve on battle.

— II, 37.

To action alone thou hast a right and never at all to its
fruit :

Let not the fruits of action be thy motive ; neither let
there be in thee any attachment to inaction.

— II, 47.

It turned out to be a grim battle that ended in a horrid devastation. For some six centuries the kingly order (Kshatriya) remained quelled and crippled. When the curtain rises, the centre of political gravity had shifted from north (Hastinapur-Delhi) to east (Magadha-Pataliputra) under a non-Kshatriya adventurer, Chandragupta (321 B. C.) who had a wonderful genius of carving an empire, after the retreat of the Greek invader, Alexander the Great.

Even in the Vedic age, mixture of races and mingling of cultures took its natural course. New castes and clans arose, who would say : "We know not whether we are brahmins or non-brahmins". (*Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, V., 21). This was not bad. But what followed the Kurukshetra war was a terrible socio-political turmoil. Religious guardians attempted to prevent social dismemberment. They appealed: "Strengthen the priest, strengthen the Kshatriya". (*Vājasenīya Saṁhitā*, V., 27 ; also cf. Manu).

Kings and priests failed to strengthen one another. The highest class was the Kshatriya, as the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* indicates. (A. B. Keith, Vedic Index, vol. II). This class supported the priestly class and granted them gifts to pursue the social ends. But good relations began to be dissipated. The rise of kingdoms in a way helped intellectual flowerage. But the rise was not steady nor organized with any large vision. The political breakdown could not be resisted.

The big puzzle is the one question : was the Kurukshetra war wholly a political operation or did religious motif play any vital part in it ? And, if it did, how much and in what way ? The epic war admitted a countless interludes of religious topics and tenets. All that sets the modern student groping for the initial objective and the real outcome.

Evidently, Kṛṣṇa was at once the teacher of religion and the charioteer of a war, of which he was the primemover, but which he argued in religious dialectics. And he argued on his own authority, and into its peculiar treatment he had so adroitly woven the *Upaniṣad*, The *Vedānta*, the *Sāṁkhya* and the

Yoga. And the whole complex was charged with his graphic vision, moving logic and magnificent poetry.

The central doctrine of his Bhāgavadgītā was his bold and brilliant novelty : the theme of personal God. The Veda was peopled with personal gods ; but they were many. The Upaniṣad had one God, but there He is impersonal. Herein lay Kṛṣṅa's art and originality. He brought about a lovely new combination : One God, and that a personal God.

I am the origin of All ; from Me all proceeds.

—G., X, 8.

For I am the foundation of Brahma, of changeless immortality, of the ever lasting law, and of absolute joy.

—G., XIV, 27.

And the meaning and method of taking a personal form was too fine for ordinary comprehension.

Verily by My creative power I am not revealed to all. This bewildered world knows Me not, the unborn, the unchanging.

—G., VII, 25.

The trial to overcome evil is certainly a central theme of the Gītā. To this end many mental tools have been forged and many moral outlooks have been clarified. To chastise the evildoer and to found the virtuous order is the aim of the new teaching. The victory of the war will go to the righteous, and it is forcefully added : "righteousness is where Kṛṣṅa is". Evidently, the struggle for the empire and the struggle for illumination were about equally involved in the war. Not only the Gītā but also the innumerable religious allusions in the Mahābhārata obviously suggest the religious motif. To establish Pāṇḍava princes appears to be the means of promulgating the cult of the Gītā.

Political solidarity was no matter of thought in the era of the Mahābhārata. In fact, it was no concern as well of the founders of the Christian faith, which struggled at least for three centuries till Constantine (311 A.D.) made it a State religion. When the Christian faith had dawned the political sky of the West was dark with all kinds of clouds. Gone was

the radiance of the Greek culture and the glory of the Roman peace. And the priest-rule had crushed the Hebraic belief, which persecuted Christian preachers. What finally stimulated the reception of the words of Jesus Christ, the carpenter of Nazareth? The one hope. The hope for the hopeless of Redemption, the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven—no other kingdom. St. Paul might have borrowed much from Greek philosophy, but his clarion call was the Master's word: "By faith ye are saved" Political safety at that age had not anywhere triggered thought or action. Kṛṣṇa's one and only concern was to stimulate "human goodness". So it was in the age of Confucian China. To restore righteousness was the paramount value throughout the world before the industrial revolution that underlined the supremacy of the matter-of-fact world.

But what was the political outcome of it all? What the men of the time gained and what they lost? Whatever might have been the other benefits, the Aryan population fell to pieces as a consequence of the Kurukshetra war. The ancient prayer of peace and union, sung in the Veda, was either neatly silenced or absent-mindedly uttered. A grim legacy of dismemberment was left. Kingdoms were as quickly formed but little endeavour was made to consolidate them. Perhaps, they split much sooner than they should.

The Mahābhārata recounts a significant tale. After the great victory, when king Yudhisthira appeared in state, the gathering included Cārvāka, the leading atheist. He addressed the victor in caustic words: "This assembly of the brahmins are cursing you, for you have killed your kins. What have you gained by destroying your own people and murdering your elders". (Śāntiparva) Yudhisthira was nonplussed and, in remorse, he thought of giving up his life. The orthodox brahmins assembled dissuaded the king. And then they killed Cārvāka with the fire of their eyes, having accused him as a demon.

The emergence of Kṛṣṇa to the fore is a most signifi-

cant social feature. Here arises a kshatriya king as a religious leader. It is right in the tradition of the Upaniṣad, which accords a great eminence to the kshatriya class. The Gītā chose to be mildly critical about the Veda (Gītā : II-42, 45 & 53) : but there was no intention to denounce the traditional scripture. Likewise, the supremacy of brahmins was slightly disputed. But these little flings at the Veda, that was the badge of the brahmins, had a large import.

An event connected with the prelude to the Rājasūya ceremony, performed by Yudhisthira, may clear up that import. The customary rule was that on the eve of the ceremony payment of homage was to be made to the best of brahmins assembled on invitation. An unusual departure from the precedent occurred. Grandfather Bhiṣma proposed that the ceremony should open with paying obeisance to Kṛṣṅa. It may be noted in this connexion that Bhiṣma was not an orthodox believer in the Veda. Once he had frankly observed :

Some say, the Veda represents religion, some say, no. We do not decry the Veda ; at the same time, we hold the view that whatever is enjoined in the Veda may not be altogether valid.

—Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, 109, 14.

Here was the first religio-social move to introduce Kṛṣṅa at the supreme spiritual leader. Besides, the religion he promulgated was equally accessible to all. Non-brahmins, in his view, had all the rights of doing religious services directly, without the mediation of the priests. Priestly order was not denounced outright, while votaries of any caste had leave to seek direct communion with God.

It is an irony that Kṛṣṅa, having quite a large following among notable brahmins, was in a later age entrapped in a brahminic finesse. It was simply an act of revivalism, in the first instance, to submerge Kṛṣṅa in the Vedic deity, Viṣṅu. So far, it was imaginative. Generally speaking, the ancient deities, including Indra, had faded away. Their place was filled up by paurānic divinities. As the *Cambridge History of*

India points out, the Mahābhārata mentions Śiva as *jeṣṭhya* (eldest) and Kṛṣṇa as *śreṣṭha* (best).

The Vedic god Viṣṇu was revived with a *tour de force*. Out of 1,017 hymns of the Ṛgveda only 5 or 6 were offered to Viṣṇu, and that too not independently, but in company with other gods. Only about 100 times in all Viṣṇu's name was mentioned in the vast body Vedic texts. He was reported to be living in the company of Indra (Upendra: *upa* means near); mainly he was regarded as an aspect of Āditya (Sungod). Nonetheless, Viṣṇu was an especial celebrity by virtue of one little bit of a great hymn that was of vast significance. This hymn used to be daily rehearsed by all brahmins in profound solemnity.

Tad Viṣṇoh paramaṁ padaṁ
sadā paśyanti sūrayah,
diviva cakṣhurātataṁ. (RV :/I, 22, 20)

That most high position of Viṣṇu
the learned always see,
verily as they see the sun with their eyes.

This universally popular refrain might well have very much to do with reviving Viṣṇu as the supreme post-vedic divinity, at a time when Indra, Agni, Varuṇa had become backdated or could not be recalled to mind. By force of this potent little couplet, Viṣṇu not only maintained his currency but acquired exceptional supremacy. Naturally it was he who was thought most agreeable to undergo birth for the liberation of man.

There are three religious modes: *jnāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action) and *bhakti* (devotion). This *bhakti* mode was developed, in a large way in the interest of the majority of common devotees who felt that knowledge was a bit too trying course of religious discipline. Commentators of the Vedānta were divided. Śaṅkara stood wholly for the path of knowledge. Rāmānuja and Mādhava advocated devotion or love; and as love goes on between the lover and the beloved, they stood out for quality of god and man,

while Śaṁkara remained firm on his principle of non-duality i.e. god and man are one without difference in essence. Worship by way of love was facilitated by Śaṁḍilya and Nārada—the earlier sages who had already propounded the *bhakti* cult.

Kṛṣṅa in the *Gītā* promoted a synthesis of the three paths, with special emphasis on knowledge, while “loving faith” was crystalised in the course of transition from *Bhāgvadgītā* to *Śrīmadbhāgvat*.

Now came the play of brahmanic finesse mentioned before. Priestly talent made an influential innovation in managing to submerge Kṛṣṅa, even Viṣṅu, in Nārāyaṅa, a good new god ; but the motive was to retain priestly hold on worship.

The *Gītā* takes up the theory of Incarnation. Kṛṣṅa says, he is Viṣṅu's *avatara*, embodiment, for the mission of relieving men from the sway of evil. Nārāyaṅa is not at all mentioned in the *Gītā*.

A story of Nārāyaṅa is put in somewhere in the twelfth canto of the *Mahābhārata*, not earlier. Even then, Nārāyaṅa has no image of his own. When his appearance is to be conceived, he appears in the form of Viṣṅu.

Nārāyaṅa has been used as the epithet of Viṣṅu in *Maitrāyāṅi Saṁhitā* of the Black Yaju, and of *Puruṣa* in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṅa*. Both are works of the post-vedic period. In a commentary on *Vedānta* (IV, iv, 17), Rāmānuja refers to Nārāyaṅa who, at the time he began creation, was “all alone ; neither there was *Brahmā* nor *Īśāna*, nor the universe nor stars nor water nor fire nor the sun”. The allusion to *Brahmā* and *Śiva* shows that this Nārāyaṅa has no Vedic origin. Creation, in the Vedic version was taken up by *Hiraṅyagarbha* (X, 121). Such difference is understandable. What, however, is utterly confusing, is : how he could be given the appellation, Nārāyaṅa, when there was no water, while the word Nārāyaṅa literally meant : ‘one afloat on water’, derived from ‘*nāra*’ (water) and ‘*ayana*’ (dwelling). This derivation is mentioned in *Kurma Purāṅa*. In the *Caṁḍī*, which is a part of *Mārkaṁḍeya Purāṅa*, is given a full description of Nārāyaṅa lying on a bed of water, as at that time of starting creation, the whole

world was submerged under water, and this picture of 'water, water, everywhere' was particularly pertinent. Anyway, so overwhelming was the supremacy of Nārāyaṇa that even the mighty power-goddess—Caṇḍi or Kālī—was conceived as having been brought into being as a concentrated form of Nārāyaṇa's energy. The salutation hymn to Goddess Kālī or Durgā states: 'Nārāyaṇi namastute'. So very pervasive had been the Nārāyaṇa cult. Satyanārāyaṇa is mentioned in Markaṇḍeya.

In the R̥gveda (X, 90), we are informed of a certain Nārāyaṇa sage as the maker of the famous hymn dedicated to Puruṣa. This hymn, admittedly, belongs to a later era of the Vedic composition. The name of this sage seems to have been exploited by the revivalist move of brahmanic priesthood at a time when subsidiary groups of the Upaniṣads were promulgated, which included Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad. This Upaniṣad has been only passingly mentioned by Śaṅkara, who was not inclined to give any account of it, far less write a commentary. But Madhavācārya, where he refers to Lord Viṣṇu, right at the beginning, quotes *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* :

He is the embodiment of pure wisdom ; He is consciously active, and is, according to the wise, the one lord of the world.

Also Rāmānuja, in his commentary, refers to "the soul within all beings, untouched by sin and only divinity (without a second) Nārāyaṇa". Amarkoś (lexicon) gives Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa as synonyms of Viṣṇu.

Anyway, priestly craft is perfect. Nārāyaṇa has been thoroughly superimposed on Kṛṣṇa, the popular god for worshippers of all castes. In any Kṛṣṇa worship Nārāyaṇa has to be brought in, and the brahmin *purohita* does the worship on behalf on the house-holder. Again Kṛṣṇa worship of the special occasions—apart from daily prayer—for example, Holi (sprinkling of red powder), Jhulan (swinging in union with Rādhā), Rāsa (dance festival with cowherd damsels all appearing as Rādhā), *Janmāṣṭami* (birth-day festival of Kṛṣṇa) are to be done in accompaniment with the worship of Nārāyaṇa, for

which the priest is to be there. And, Kṛṣṇa or no Kṛṣṇa, for all major daily or routine ceremonies from birth to death such as marriage, funeral, entry into new house, wearing the sacred thread i.e. initiation into Vedic brahminism, and so on, Nārāyaṇa is a indispensable priestly paraphernalia.

It is not clear why the religious engineering of grafting Nārāyaṇa on Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa was considered so very necessary. There may be a reasonable guess. At a time when Brahmins were busy trying to overthrow Buddhism, they made a sort of all-Hindu call ; a strategic need was to bring in a new supreme God, in order to rope in all leading sects or creeds, and all worshippers of personal gods, prominent among them: Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva and Śakti. They might be only remotely related to Vedic gods, but still a Vedic general framework was given a nodding acceptance. The organising brahmin priests offered every sect the prestige of inclusion in the Vedic family and in return these diverse creeds bowed down to the senior Vedic system, though in fact there was little Vedic anywhere and all were products of the Purāṇas. The net strategic gain was that the hegemony of the priests ruled all the sectors of neo-Hinduism.

The call to unite against Buddhism was a misguided zeal. But it was a historic event. Its logic was not good enough, even though it suited well at the time. It may be recollected that Yāska, in his Vedic lexicon alluded to the Buddhist as *anārya*. This allusion is endorsed by Max Weber (*Indische Studies*, vol. I, p. 186). But Yāska and his colleagues were unfair, and a little imprecise. Buddha himself called his doctrine *ārya-satya* the true faith of the Aryan. Buddha did no harm, and it was farthest from his mind to blackmail brahmins. Anyway, Buddha's Middle Way was in no manner inimical to brahminic highway :

The founder of Buddhism did not strike out a new system of morals ; he was not a democrat ; he did not originate a plot to overthrow the Brahmanic priesthood , he did not invent the order of monks. There is

perhaps no person in history in regard to whom have arisen so many opinions that are either wholly false or half false.

— Edward Hopkins, *The Religions of India*.

Kṛṣṇa is half legend and half history. All the same, he had many detractors and not a few enemies, as the Mahābhārata shows. Brahmins were divided on allegiance to him. The orthodox section, as the Mahābhārata informs, disagreed with him. A large number were unable to grapple with first principles and to unravel his transcendental laws ; and unable to understand, they misunderstood him :

The deluded despise Me clad in human body,
not knowing My higher nature
as Lord of all existence.

— G. IX, II.

Nārāyaṇa, as conceived, is a god for awe and reverence. Kṛṣṇa remains the god of love. And those who yearn after divine love they fill their mind with belief in Kṛṣṇa. They reach nearness by the sheer force of belief that He is near. A lover of the divine and a knower vary in their approach :

But the Upaniṣad, though they measured the highest reaches of the philosophical imagination of our people, were yet incomplete in their answer to the complex longing of the human soul. Their emphasis was too intellectual, and did not sufficiently explore the approach to reality through love and devotion . . . This lesson was duly emphasised by the Bhāgavadgītā, which fully expounded the harmony between diverse approaches to the reality that is one through knowledge, through love, through righteousness and helped the individual to rise above the demands of the ego . . .

— Rabindranath

For a short century or so the Gītā lost its full sway while the society was unsure of its destiny and the country was plunged in the turmoil of uncertainties, as the old order was breaking and the new was yet to be born. With the coming in of the modern times, this ancient light returned to full blaze. The Gītā's message of deliverance from spiritual sloth was taken up as the guidebook for the delivery of liberty.

Scholars, politicians and reformers started publishing editions, as Śāṅkara had done in order to make the Gītā good for his own time. Some now turned to it as an education in the art of meditation while others received the Gītā as a gospel of action. Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Annie Besant, K. T. Telang, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Dwijendranath Tagore, Sarvapalli Radhaktishnan—and many others—had joined in a chorus to sing praise on the sonorous 'Song Divine'. Yet it is not quite known who really first composed the song. But who bothers ?

If compared to the Upaniṣad, the Gītā comes nearer to the commoner ; *Śrīmadbhāgvat* moves them even more. Brighter may be Viṣṅu, more priestly backing may be for Nārāyaṇa, but Kṛṣṅa is dearer to those who fail to revel in abstract thinking. In the same way, Kṛṣṅa of the *Śrīmadbhāgvat* has a still sweeter ring and more intimate appeal for the simple folk. Nevertheless, the mystic order was laid by the Upaniṣad. Contemplative worship prescribed by the Upaniṣad was replaced by the ecstatic devotion of the Nārada Bhaktisūtra.

Mādhava in his commentary on the Vedānta (II, 2, 8, 45) states that the four Vedas are not good enough to grant salvation, and in view of this the sage Śāṅdilya promoted the *bhakti śāstra*. Viṣṅu in the person of Vāsudeva was the god to whom devotion was offered. In the grammar of Pāṇiṇi (IV, iii, 75) is found a word : *Vāsudevaka*, meaning devotee or *bhakta* of Vāsudeva. *Bhakti* cult was a Kshatriya cult ; Brahmins revelled in rituals.

Mādhava, in his commentary, laid great stress on bhakti and identified Brahman with Viṣṅu, who in turn was worshipped as Kṛṣṅa. It is by the grace of the highest god Viṣṅu that the devotee gains liberation from bondage of life and death. The idea of grace is as old as the Upaniṣad. Yama instructs Nācīketas :

That Self cannot be gained by the Veda, nor by understanding, nor by much learning.

He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self
can be gained.

—Katha Up. II.

Loving faith was woven in abundant colour and rhythm round the human-god Kṛṣṇa. Both Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa had heroic feats to their credit. The mere boy Kṛṣṇa killed demons, held up a hill on his hand and pressed under his foot the huge serpent in the depth of the black waters of Kālindi. Such mighty exploits still left him ample leisure to keep company with his cowherd chum Subal and make endless amours with the shepherd girl Rādhā. The common devotee pours out his heart to this captivating cowboy god, who opened a new world of self-abandoning devotion.

The Ṛgveda identifies Viṣṇu with sun (Āditya). As a manifestation of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa is director of rays. The bright cowboy, busy grazing the cattle in high heavens, has been beautifully portrayed by Rabindranath :

Lo, here are your cows of rays,
suns and stars in herds ;
Where do you sit and play your lute
And tend the cattle on the lawns along the great
skies.

—Geetavitān, Pujā.

It needs to be noted that symbols change from age to age. In the Vedic age the word *go* meant ray ; so *gopāla* in that context was one who directed the rays. In the Paurāṇic age, 'go' meant simply cow, and the tender word 'gopala' now meant cowherd boy, as the scene changed from the high firmament to the green meadow along the Yamuna, shaded with countless clusters of prolific trees.

The practice of tending cow was to take it out in the cool morning and returning in the mild evening. In such hours, the sun's ray is soft. Chāndogya Upaniṣad observes : "The eastern rays of that sun are its eastern honey cells."

Exalted and charming at the same, Kṛṣṇa inspires awe as well kindles romance. And he belongs most intimately to simple folk and holds them in holy human kinship. And there

he tends his cows on the verdant lawns on the bank of Yamuna, flowing musically and blowing breeze moist with the honey-wine of the black cool waters. The firmament lit up with Viṣṅu's glory and the banks of Yamuna ringing with the strains of Kṛṣṅa's flute and strewn with the pollens of wild flowers : all merge in a wave of romance and weave silky symbols. The Vedic symbol of cow as ray in the heaven and the Bhāgvata symbol of herds of cow tended on the meadows of Brindavan dancing to the tune of Kṛṣṅa's lute and Yamua's cadence are equally true to changing ages of faith. The devotee whose whole heart is moved and lost in the joy of visioning the pastoral deity in his idyllic setting, where the boy-god romps with big girls of the milkmaid clan, holding trysts with bebies of bonny damsels, sparkling with the loveliness of full body, in numerous bowers frilled with colourful flowers and gay with green creepers.

The poets have sung of the union of the *gopi* girls and boy Kṛṣṅa in utter self-abandon, in complete surrender to love. This love has a meaning beyond the behaviour of mind and body. In the words of Sri Aurobindo :

...the Vaisnava poetry of Bengal makes to the devout mind a physical and emotional image or suggestion of the love of the human soul for God, but to the profane it is nothing but a sensuous and passionate love poetry hung conventionally round the traditional human-divine personalities of Krishna and Radha, whose home is above in the infinite but which can be built up here in man's soul and life.

—*Vedic Glossary*, Introduction.

The Gpd-idea that the Vedānta restated in pure logic was exquisitely translated by the Gītā into God in supreme person ; *Puruṣottama*. From the Gītā to Śrīmadbhāgvat there is but one small step, but a meaningful step forward. In the Gītā, the relation is between Kṛṣṅa and his friend Arjuna ; Śrīmadbhāgvat makes a romantic stride. Here the game is between Kṛṣṅa and his beloved Rādhā, and the sensual is

transformed into the spiritual, the gay is transformed into the good, pleasure is transformed into purity.

We must take universal good, not universal power, for the object of our religion. This religion would not need to be more imaginative, more poetical, than that of Spinoza, and the word of God, if we still used it, would have to mean for us not the universe, but the good of the universe. There would not be a universe worshipped, but a universe praying ; and the flame of the whole fire, the whole seminal and germinative movement of nature, would be the love of God. This love would be erotic ; it would be really love and not something wingless called by that name. It would bring celestial glimpses not to be retained, but culminating in moments of unspeakable rapture, in a union with all good, in which the soul would vanish as an object because, as an organ, it had found its perfect employment.

—Santayana, *Ultimate Reason*.

The notion that divine power is on a holy quest for human love is more than a poetic frenzy. It is a truth on trial. The human and the divine look out for each other.

We must conceive the Divine Eros as the active entertainment of all ideals, with the urge to their finite realization, each in its due season. Thus a process must be inherent in God's nature, whereby his infinity is acquiring realization.

—Whitehead, *Civilization*.

Kṛṣṇa-līlā gave a new dimension to reverence for woman. Homage to woman has varied from age to age. In the Vedic age it was high. Georges Clemenceau (*In the Evening of My Thought*) takes this as a testimony of remarkable culture prevailing in that society. He admired the Vedic pantheon for its inclusion of a good many women gods. The most significant note is struck in the R̥gveda (X, 123, 3). where the woman goddess—Bāk or *Bāgāmbhṛni*—asserts “I am the state” ahaṁ rāṣṭri. This grand note of world-queen or world-mother was mildly echoed in the Atharvaveda. Sāyana, the great

commentator, in paying homage to woman, revered her as the leader : nārīmetrya (RV. I, 92, 3).

Umā (or Durgā—wife of Śiva or Iśāna) was possibly first mentioned in Kenā Upaniṣad. In the Mahābhārata, the world-queen is not Durgā but the one born of Yaśodā, the foster-mother of Kṛṣṇa, as told in the Bhāgvat.

The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa have a good many glorious women characters : Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā are treasured names. And the noble Sitā, with her highly selfless love combined gracious self-assertion. When Rāma asked her to go through the fire-ordeal, on her return from captivity in Lankā, she stood with a dignified poise and charged Rāma of 'talking in a language unbecoming of an Aryan'.

The Vedic status of woman was considerably lowered in the Smṛti period, even though Manu had for her a place of honour.

Tantras revived the Vedic role of woman and admitted her into the rights of performing religious rites and pronouncing mantras. But the cult of Bhairava-Bhairavi (Śiva-Kālī) was carried to an odious excess, even if the basic idea was elevating. The Buddhist priests from Nepal took up the world-mother cult and developed it to a rather distasteful horror. This was largely copied by the Bengal Tāntric school. The post-vedic notion of regarding woman (nārī) as a symbol of loose moral (nīṭi) was now in full force.

England of the glorious 16th century was not gallant enough toward woman, whom a poet interpreted as 'woe to man'. A witty story relates : a friend complimented Milton that his third wife Rosalind was indeed a perfect rose : the blind poet retorted : "She must be so, for I feel her thorns daily". Our fine Bengali poet, Bhāratchandra coined a witty couplet :

*nārīr nāi kona bhār,
bhārer madhye vadan bhār.*

A woman has no burden save that she bears
a long face.

This digression to woman may be pardoned ; for, it is intended to convey honour to her, and honour is due.

Kṛṣṇa, it may be recalled, was hailed as more than an incarnation of God, he was acclaimed as God Himself : *Kṛṣṇastu bhagavān swayam.*

This has been a controversial problem of theology. Christianity identifies the Absolute God with a personal God, as father, king and friend. Western philosophies of recent times go a long way with Christian belief in laying emphasis on the personal nature of faith. Karl Barth, Martin Buber, as also existentialists led by Kierkegaard have variously explained distinctions between personal and impersonal god. The same problem has been debated by the Bhāgavadgītā inasmuch as it holds that God is a personal being, while he is the Lord of the universe and worshipped with devotional love (bhakti) that is rewarded with grace (*prasāda*). In revealing his universal image (*viśvarūpa*), Kṛṣṇa informs that he is 'god incarnate' and 'friend' of Arjuna and that, all the same, he is in a way higher than Brahma. (Ch. XI). At this point, Śaṅkara, however, demurs, and even disagrees. An uncompromisingly non-dualistic, he holds that Brahma is Impersonal and Absolute, a view that he has had from the Upanisad, his personal image is only a work of māyā—power of illusion.

Here it is interesting to compare the idealist view of F. H. Bradley, who partly agrees with Hegel and partly with Śaṅkara. As Bradley argues : "Absolute God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him. We may say that God is not God, till he has become all in all, and that a God which is all in all is not the god of religion. God is but an aspect, and that must mean but an appearance, of the Absolute." (*Appearance And Reality*, pp. 396-7).

Devotional religion and impersonal God do not go well together. The whole argument is based on his logic : "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If, again, you separate them, God becomes a finite

factor in the Whole.” (p. 395) Bradley’s idealist concept of Reality spins round this argument :

Reality is spiritual . . . Outside the spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and the more that anything is spiritual, so much more is it veritably real. (p. 487)

However, notwithstanding his full divinity, Kṛṣṇa was not spared opposition and denunciation. In fact, the war at Kurukshetra was a confrontation between Kṛṣṇa’s devotees and his detractors. It was a war to settle the question of overlordship in faith. The Gitā is Kṛṣṇa’s thesis ; the Mahābhārata the history of his epic performance. The Gitā (XI, 37) gains the acknowledgement :

Tvamaṣaram sadasat tatparam yat.
Thou art that which does not lessen, both existent and non-existent, and if there be anything beyond this, that too art thou.

The whole creation is an emanation of God. Indeed, “only the God who reveals Himself is God.” (*Ecclesiastes*, p. 202).

Has anyone seen God ? The question has never been categorically answered. As in the Upaniṣad so in the early Christianity, the answer has been given by saying that He can be known by knowing what He is not : *neti, neti*—not that, not that. As W. B. Yeats asks :

Who can distinguish darkness from the soul ? Nevertheless, revelation is gained, and gained by rare spirits—of the East as well as of the West. The sage of Katha Upaniṣad (III, 12 ; VI, p) assures : ‘By sight cleaned of doubt God is seen’. Likewise, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (III, i, 9) maintains : ‘God is seen by inner awareness’. Objectors there have been. Bācaspati Miśra, in his commentary of Patanjali (I, 29) frankly doubts if God can be seen. Max Muller (*Indian Philosophy*, pp. 424-5) confirms this interpretation of Patanjali. But believers cannot admit such clear negation. St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, 8, 1) has a moving belief : “God is in all things and immediately.” On the other hand,

many treat such assertion as attempt to explain the inexplicable. A safe midway is taken by Plato (*Republic*, p. 597): "He put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, that he might be the creator of a work which was by nature best." A larger assurance comes from Spinoza (*Ethics*, Prop. 33): "All things must have followed of necessity from a given nature of God."

Learned men have a way of reading mysteries; but simple men too have the same report, (though given in a different way) from signs of God through Nature. Prince Andrew, wounded at Austerlitz

opened his eyes, hoping to see how the struggle of the Frenchmen with the gunners ended. But he saw nothing. Above him there was now nothing but the sky—the lofty sky, not clear yet still immeasurably lofty, with grey clouds gliding slowly across it. "How quiet, peaceful and solemn, not at all as I ran", thought Prince Andrew — "not as we ran shouting and fighting.... How was it I did not see that lofty sky before? And how lofty I am to have found it at last. Yes; all is vanity, all falsehood except that infinite sky. There is nothing, nothing but that. But even if it does not exist, there is nothing but quiet and peace. Thank God."

—Tolstoy, *War And Peace*.

So, there are ways to feel the presence of the sublime, the existence of the Supreme.

Anyway, a new idea has to be paid for. Christ paid it on the Cross. Kṛṣṇa paid it in his own way. He threw up a number of radical ideas that challenged old beliefs: beliefs in elaborate rituals, in priestly crafts, in reduction of God to formulas. He raised an alarm and shook religion at its root.

The mission was resumed long afterwards by Sri Chaitanya of Bengal, though it was on a lesser scale. The essence of his teaching was: 'surrender, no spiritual gymnastic, takes one to God. Take His name, say it in silence and remember it as often as you can.' This was a homely move from lifeless forms to lively union, to mystic communion through self-effacing love. But, as it happens

everywhere, the holy light, after a long lapse of time, fades away and shadowed by its own decadence. And again, the call is to a fresh reformer, a timely messenger.

Strange enough, not India alone but the whole world at this time is overcast by lowering clouds. With all the big modern strides of philosophy and science, the proud West wades through a wreckage of the good and the great. An Irish poet recounts the picture of agony of our advanced world :

Things fall apart ; the centre cannot hold ;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned ;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

— W. B. Yeats

And what has a German philosopher to say ? He has a worse tale to tell. And he tells with such a high poetic frenzy as comes only at rare hours of inspiration. The mad modern world, bedimmed by materialistic intellect, speaks through *The Madman* whom Nietzsche introduces with the pangs of false progress :

Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to the marketplace calling unceasingly : "I seek God ! I seek God !" As there were many people standing about who did not believe in God, he caused a great deal of amusement. "Why ! Is he lost ?" said one. "Has he strayed away like a child ?" said another. "Or does he keep himself hidden ? Is he afraid of us ?"—the people cried out laughingly, all in a hubbub. The insane man jumped into their midst and transfixed them with his glances. "Where is God gone?" he called out, "I mean to tell you ! *We have killed him*, you and I !...What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun ?...Does not night come on continually, darker and darker ? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning ? Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God ? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction ?—for even gods putrefy ! God is dead ! God remains dead ! And we have killed him !"

The political horizon today is no clearer. An eclipse of civilization is all the time apprehended. Appeal for restraint alternates with temptations for trials of strength. Locked in envy, we talk of love! Nation is a term of rivalry; their union is no more than a talk of strategy. Nations do not unite; men may, if we mean so. Correlation of national and international interests is only a play on words.

The weakness in this (UNCTAD) and the weakness of every United Nations activity centres upon that fatal letter N. The League of Nations died because it was a league of nations not of peoples. Least of all was it a league of people who had anything in common. The United Nations will die of the same disease—nationalism.

—C. N. Parkinson, *The Fur-lined Mousetrap*, p. 24.

A leading ambassador of cooperative peace, Mr. Henry A. Kissinger speaks with a blend of hope and hesitation: "The frozen international landscape of the past quarter century has begun to thaw, but we have yet to put a durable structure of cooperation in its place." (Address to the Indian Council of World Affairs, Oct. 28, 1974)

The fact is: our natural resistance to ills has become far too weak. We grow warmer about mutual malice, colder when we try goodwill. A fatal fascination for friction seems to be a normal behaviour. We have gone too far. An endeavour must be made, now at least, to halt the course of world peril, to grow human brotherhood. The consequences of failure are too clear to be seen or sensed. Yet almost everyone is preoccupied with making an end of another.

Radhakrishnan pleads: "Life becomes meaningful only when we grasp the character of the age we live in." Our tragedy is that we continue to be studiously absent-minded about the imports of our times and the shadows of the coming events. To make life positively meaningful we have to feel the pulse of our time and grow mindful of the call of the common human cause. It should be obvious: to be happy is to abjure hostility.

The art of good living is the craftsmanship of human oneness. It is to set to tune the human harmony and pave a broad enough path of fellowship for all to get together, go together, grow together, gain productive relationship that Dada appears as a divine messenger of union. The new age must have to be brought about. It does not merely happen. The spark to action is given by a masterly maker of mind. Such a maker is a God-man who is thrown up by the compulsion of the time, is appointed by the genius of the age, much as Kṛṣṇa once was. And the art of his mind-making is artless. A lovely light plays on his face as he talks, and whoever is around to hear gets the feeling of listening to a voice within him.

And his message has a broad sweep, combining the modes of adoration and knowledge. The sport of *Braja* and the attainment of Buddha mingle in one stream. *Braja*—‘to go’—means the move to meet lord Kṛṣṇa : ‘*cala sakhi kunjam*’—as the Vaiṣṇava poet urges. Now, when you have come where you want to go, literally, you are at the Buddhist stage of Tathāgata or, in the words of the Vedānta (III, i, 28) : you have arrived at your goal : oneness with God (*gantavyamca paramaṁ sāmyam*). Here is the meeting point of movement and fulfilment. The Bhāgavata (VII, i, 29) says : Gopis gained Kṛṣṇa by love (*gopyah kāmād*) ; on the other hand, Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā (VII, 15) : knowledge is the best of all the modes of attainment. Dadaji brings about a blend of the Bhāgavata and the Gītā, of Buddhism and the Vedānta, as when he speaks of ‘*Braja*’ and ‘*Tathāgata*’ in the same strain. All modes are dear to him, if only any is not tainted with trade in religion, if only any has the soul of faith and unites art of understanding with honèyed earnestness.

“If he thinks That is one and I another, he does not know.” This text of Bṛhadāraṇyaka (I, iv, 1) happened to be the keynote of Dadaji’s talk one day.

He says : All division is sorrow. When you like one and dislike another, you sow the seed of friction. Here lies the root of sorrow. If you wall up your happiness, you only have another’s unhappiness assailing your wall. The same wrong occurs when you love your God and get annoyed with another’s God. While thus you think and act, you bring about conflict with him over an imaginary issue that your God and his are opponents. Such partisanship amounts to negation of God. You are in for a fatal melancholy when you have a war over God, for such a war takes away the sense of God in you. One God may well be conceived of having many forms, and you may hold on to your chosen form. But then, you should bear no disregard nor hatred for other forms. The ideal is finely put forth in *Śrīmadbhāgvat* as when the devout Hanumān says : ‘I know well enough that Hari and Rāma are one and the same, different only in name ; yet I wholly belong to Rāma, the lotus-eyed—tathāpi mama sarvasva Rāma rājība locanah.

The way to division is the way to death. As the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. (IV, iv, 19) says : “From death to death he goes who sees here any diversity.” Do not then break your being into fractions. Keep it whole. And that will help you make your relation with other individuals neatly human and wholesome. Split neither your individuality nor the society’s solidarity. Live in the proper human context, and that is the one requisite for profound joy of life. Any sense of void in or around you will render your life void of God.

Do your own thinking on God, and lose no respect for your own thought. Follow not another without giving your thought to what you are told. Do not part with the thinking power that God has planted in you. All that you want is in you ; nothing lies outside. This sense is the sense of living in God, who is at once inside and outside. This is the secret of religion. But you must find out the secret yourself. Íśa Upaniśad says : "That one is all this." Test this truth by your own awakened illumination. Sorrow and fear overcome you when you live in division and darkness.

You may say : You do not have the knowledge of that One. You need an expert's help. That expert, you blindly believe is your Guru. Not trusting to your own judgment, will you want to put all your trust in another ? You hope and believe that he has the power to deliver you the goods or that he himself assures that he alone can help you gain the grace of God ; through his mediation, you hope to know God. He may help himself. But he cannot help you or any other person. The utterly simple thing is that you are to know that you are that One. There is no trick nor trade in imparting this knowledge. You are to see that One in you. No outsider can train you to see your inner being. A doctor can see your brain and your nerve system in your body. That's true. But to see your self you are yourself to exercise that insight ; for, you are that One. And as the Upaniśad (Br. III, vii, 23) says : "There is no other seer but He." That clearly means, you are to see that One by yourself. Your own impassioned anxiety or devout will to see God is all that can help you. There is no division between you and God , as such the job of seeing God cannot be divided between you and your Guru, whoever he may be.

This division looks pious. But at its core it is impious. If you really have belief in God, you must believe that He is in you and for you. So, turn your eyes inward. Only "interiorise" your search. You have to listen to your own words. You are to make your own discovery. Tolstoy held the view

that the main purpose of philosophy is to teach an individual how he may instruct himself; this is the positive way to illumination, the direct way to happiness. This may well be compared to Dadaji's directive to do without a Guru. A Guru is all right as an intellectual trainer; but he badly overacts his role when he is out to trade in religion and runs an agency of taking a man along to meet God and gain His grace.

This Dadaji is never tired of telling his brethren. Almost every day he says that at one or another time, to one or another person, to everyone belonging to the Dada Brotherhood. At Benares, when Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj met Dadaji, he said: "A mortal being can never be a Guru. Guru never dies. The Supreme Being i.e. the Self, dwelling in every heart, is our *parama* Guru—Immortal, Eternal. He has no birth nor death, no bondage even. The question of bondage is our ego only. Limited knowledge cannot lead to perfection and our so-called worldly Guru misguides us. It is much as one blind man leading another—in the words of Munḍaka Upaniṣad (I, ii, 8). The man who has the knowledge of Brahma becomes Brahma. The Upaniṣad says: *Brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati*, it as well says: *Brahma san brahma avaiti*—by becoming *brhma* one knows *brahma*, or as the Bṛhadāraṇyaka says: "Being Brhama he goes to Brahma". (IV, iv, 6) Dadaji's teaching was entirely accepted by Gopinathji, than whom there is no more Śāstra-knowing person among us. Another master of Sanskrit learning is Dr. Gourinath Sastri. He interprets Dada in these words:

The current practice generally followed by religious leaders to initiate a person to the world of Truth, is to whisper a few words in the ears. This exercise of 'mantra dikṣhā' is casually performed by the Gurus. With all the rituals and attendant paraphernalia this exercise becomes meaningless because it does not follow even the Śāstra. And you can never know Him by a study of Śāstras. To initiate a person, one has to identify himself with the Absolute. Now, if that is so, what is mantra? Mantra is something which comes from the Supreme Being. No human Guru

follows this essential pre-requisite in a mantra-dikshā, just because no individual can give the 'dikshā' to another individual. The individual has only to be bathed by the shining rays of Truth which dawns through the medium of Mahanama (great name of the Supreme) with which it is identified... The Supreme Being resides in everybody. The space in between is also covered by the Supreme. ...And whom will you pray to? He is within us.

In fact, Dada says, even worship is a fine division: one worships and the One is worshipped. It is only love, he says, that does not divide but unifies or rather reveals the union.

God is essence of consciousness, joy and love. He is real inasmuch as He is behind all being and yet He is unreal in so far as He is not an objective fact. Here is agreement with Hegel who says: "This pure Being" is "pure abstraction and consequently absolute negation, which taken in its immediate moment is also non-being." (*Logic-Encyclopaedia*). Likewise, Sartre pushes the logic to an area of the Upanisad, when he argues: "Pure being and pure nothingness are then the same thing." Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanisad (III. viii. 8) observes: "It is not thick nor fine, not short nor long." Commenting on this contradictory duality, Śaṅkara also cites Mandūkya (VII): "Not knowledge nor negation of knowledge." The same idea is noted in Vedāntasāra: He is existent as well as non-existent, and indefinable: *sadasadbhyām anirvacantiyaṁ*. Max Muller (*Indian Philosophy*, p. 223) holds: "Having no qualities, the higher Brahman cannot be known by predicates. It is subjective and not liable to any objective attribute." Here we may return to Sartre's conclusion: "But non-being is not the opposite of being; it is contradiction." (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 14) In other words, as he says: "Being is equally beyond negation, as beyond affirmation... Being is what it is." (p. xii)

Returning to Guru cult, as expounded by Dadaji, we may note the observation of a well-known mystic, Krishnamurti. He says:

"You need a mind that is able to stand completely alone,—not burdened by the propaganda of the

experiences of others. Enlightenment does not come through a leader or through a teacher ; it comes through the understanding of what is in yourself—not going away from yourself. The mind has to understand actually what is going on in its own psychological field ; it must be aware of what is going on without any distortion, without any choice, without any resentment, bitterness, explanation or justification – it must be just aware. ...The highest, the immeasurable, is in you, if you know how to look...but you must begin with yourself, where you can discover for yourself how to look.”

—*Beyond Violence*, pp. 89 & 107.

To keep off Guru is a major message that Dada has to give to our convention-ridden religion. But then a historical study of the convention may be relevant. When millions follow a practice it must have been a product of tradition, of history, so to say. Where lies the root of this pernicious tradition, this unwholesome history ? The finding of an eminent scholar is this :

“Theory of efficacy of mantras led to importance of guru about whom extravagant claims were made.”
—P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. V, p. 1454.

Mantra begins with the Ṛgveda. But in the Ṛgveda the word ‘guru’ in the sense of instructor of *mantra* is not found. Yāśka in his vedic lexicon, *Nirukta and Nighantu*, does not cite any such context or meaning. In the Ṛgveda, he says, the word ‘guru’ simply means ‘heavy weight’ (RV. VII, 56, 17).

Guru in the sense of preceptor, teacher, is well used in Upaniṣad. Śaṅkara in a commentary notes that the custom was to learn the Veda from the teacher. But here only academic teaching is indicated. There was then initiation in scholastic education, no esoteric inculcation. Of this academic instruction there is ample mention in Upaniṣads. Katha, for example, informs that Yama advises Naciketas to get hold of an informed instructor. In Patanjali *Yoga* and in Jaimini’s *Pūrvā Mīmāṃsā* mention is made of guru, as an ancient institution ; but he is not yet functioning as whispering mantra

in the ear of a disciple. Extraordinary reverence to guru as teacher is commended by Manu (XII, 83). Also Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra and Yājñavalkya Smṛti have respectful references to 'guru'. But so far, as already stated, 'guru' as a professional redeemer of souls and the only deliverer of his disciples had not yet entered the stage.

Guru was till then a tribe of Socrates and Plato, looking after the enlightenment of the raw young souls brought into the society. His holy function was to build the society, keep flowing its cultural traditions and refining the intellectual abilities of the children and youths of his country. As such it was really and fundamentally a holy job, and one who did it or was commissioned by the society to do it was entitled to highest reverence and truest adoration. A guru of this type is the moral and mental guardian of boys and girls, and he earned the one reward—thankful reverence of his pupils for having given them useful direction for moral, mental and material advancement. It may be remembered that it was, mainly, the school teachers and college professors who modelled the mind of the young and sowed in them the desire for knowledge and the virtue of patriotism in the India of the nineteenth century.

In the dawn of Indian nationalism, at once misty and radiant, schools were the nurseries and colleges the playgrounds of patriotism, of lively instructions outside the textbooks. With the boycott of schools and colleges teachers were thrown out and their patriotic mission was closed. Professional politicians have since been running the machinery of power-engineering. The leader ousted the teacher and evening followed the sunrise.

Tilak, Gokhale, Aurobindo, Surendranath, Aswini Datta were among the noble old order. Even Rabindranath took to teaching, founding a school in a mango-grove where pupils would learn in tune with the festive flowers and would have communion with the rising and setting sun and talk with the twinkling stars. Tagore's Santiniketan took after Plato's

academy in a garden near Athens. Mind-making is a fascinating task. Lenin was enamoured of it: "Give us the child for eight years, and it will be a Bolshevist for ever." But he was not all politics. He wanted the youth—as Subhas of Bengal wanted—to keep life and dream actively related.

Let us return to the noble vocation of teachers in the era of Upanisad. It was not yet probably the time for any organised schools of the sort found now. The teacher was the school, and he was a free man who rarely took any fees except probably what was voluntarily given as a mark of gratitude and reverence. Parents generally left it to the teacher to teach as much as he would think fit and in the way that he would find suitable. In most cases the education received depended on the aptitude of the pupil. And, in order to find this, the teacher was in no hurry; he looked after the pupil (of his residential school) as his own children and gave opportunities to acquire the social acumen of serving the hermitage that was a centre of education for him and for his fellows. Ample time was given to allow the teacher and the taught to understand each other, to love each other, to grow each other's welfare. When the understanding proved to be creative, the teacher gave all that the pupil could appropriately receive. Seldom the pupil or the teacher failed. And at the right time the pupil would return home and do the household duties and also his bit of keeping the society informed.

How this system evolved and how it was tuned to the advancement of the society, it is not possible to say. But, surely it worked long and well enough to develop into a healthy and useful tradition. The syllabus was selective. For a brahmin boy, belonging to the priestly class, his course was packed with Vedic literature. For kshatriya and vaisya boys academic syllabus was lighter while professional training was attentively imparted. When the course of the guru's home university was finished, inquisitive students were encouraged to seek specialist education under especially famed teachers, doing something like our post-graduate and research studies.

Mention may here be made by the way that before caste division had time to grow rigid and inelastic, there was for a good while an attempt at fostering union and understanding between Brahmans and Kshatriyas. To the Vedic deities Varuṇa (representative of the princely order) and Mithra (of the priestly) is ascribed a hymn quoted in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa ; "Turri thou to me that we may unite."

In this realm of intellectual quest there was neither class nor caste restrictions. The brahmin teacher could learn from a kshatriya. The sage Gārgya went to king Ajātaśatru for instruction. The king first asked the sage to give him some new idea. When the sage finished the king said, "Is that all?" The sage replied, "Yes.; that is all." To that the king rejoined, "God is not known by that." Then the sage said ; "Let me, then, be a pupil to you." Ajātaśatru said ; "Verily, it is contrary to the convention that a brahmin should come to a kshatriya for this knowledge. However, I shall enlighten you." Take another example. Śvetaketu went to king Pravāhana Jaibali for the knowledge that even his father, the celebrated Āruṇi would not impart to him. The story of king Janaka of Mithilā is well known. Probably all this refers to extra-curricular pursuits of the truth about Self and God. The last stage that rounded off the schooling period of a brahmin set the serious student in search of 'parā vidyā' (non-worldly knowledge) of the Supreme Reality. Very few sought this abstract knowledge well beyond the horizon of regular and systematic training. Regular studies were based on the Vedas and led to the Vedas. A great teacher whose fame would go before him was invited to the royal courts to take part in the seminars held by assemblies of learned men or something like special endowment of modern times.

Maṇḍuka Upaniṣad prescribes that the teacher should have competence to teach and tranquility of thought and an amiable manner that is likely to win the hearts of pupils :

Let this Indra save me with intelligence, O God,
I could become possessor of immortality !

May my body be very vigorous !
 May my tongue be exceeding sweet !

Such a teacher felt entitled to receive many eager pupils :

As water runs downwards, as months
 Into the year, so O Establisher,
 May students of sacred knowledge
 Run unto me from all sides ! Hail !

The teacher in Taittiriya Upanisad closed his convocation address to successful students on their return to home :

One should not be negligent of truth ; nor of virtue ;
 nor of welfare ; nor of prosperity ; nor of studying
 and teaching ; and one should regard his parents, his
 teacher and his guest as god.

The teacher had a full claim on his pupil's affection and regard. And that claim rested on the quality of teaching and on the earnestness to impart that teaching. The Atharvaveda says : "...the teacher ... bears him (pupil) in his belly three nights ; the gods gather unto him to see the pupil born." (XI, v, 3). These cryptic words mean that the teacher's main work was to make his pupil pass into a new life of enlightenment by virtue of the instruction given. And remember, education, then, was free.

The lovable role of guru lingered on till our childhood. We know of the far-famed Mahamahopadhaya Phani Bhusan Tarkabagish. If at any time he lost temper while teaching, he would at once do an 'acman', i.e. have a little water on the palm and take the name of Viṣṇu and swallow it. Then he resumed teaching with a fresh mind. Such was the teacher's devotion to teaching.

The Buddhist Mahāvagga carried the same tradition. As such it obeyed the wish of Buddha : "I prescribe, O *bhiksus*, that young *bhiksus* choose an *Upajjhyaa* (teacher). The *Upajjhyaa*, O *bhiksus*, ought to regard the *saddhiviharika* (pupil) as a son ; the *saddhiviharika* ought to regard the *Upajjhyaa* as father. Thus these two, united by mutual reverence, confidence and communion, will advance the

knowledge and reach a high degree of attainment in doctrine and discipline." (I, 25)

Recalling this great tradition, Manu lays down the injunction: "The teacher is under obligation to fulfil his duty towards his pupil. Not only is he to love the pupil as his own son, but he is also to give the full course of teaching and withhold no part of it from the pupil."

So much, in brief, about *sikṣā-guru*, the academic teacher, the intellectual guardian of the society, the maker of young minds destined to take up the task of advancing the social cause. Another brand of guru, the *dikṣā-guru*, probably a late development of the Vedic *purohita*, gained celebrity as ministers of religion in the post-Upanisadic period.

Academic teachers held their revered position, because they undertook to promote the intellectual acumen of the budding generation. This ancient tutorial task, in its advanced or final stage, was to stimulate interrogation about the Supreme Spirit—*brahma jijñāsā*. Imagination as well as intelligence grows in an environment of freedom. So, this ancient education relied on aid to asking questions, not providing ready-made answers. The method of the religious guru was to dictate wisdom that was meant to be swallowed.

The academic teacher stirred his pupil's originality, his adventure for thought, and softly led him to flights of abstract truth. Aitareya Upaniṣad raises reason to a level of intuition: "All this is guided by intelligence. The basis is intelligence. Brahma is Intelligence." A modern scholarly mystic, J. Krishnamurti speaks in the same strain: "Intelligence implies freedom; freedom implies cessation of all conflict; intelligence comes into being and conflicts come to an end when the 'observer' is the observed, for then there is no division. After all, when this exists there is love." (*Beyond Violence*, p. 146) He does not follow up to the conclusion of Upaniṣad that the born self and the Unborn Self are one. He whirls round to argue that it "is one of the stupid tricks we play upon ourselves, that we are God, that we are the 'perfect' and all the rest of that childish stuff." (*Beyond Violence*, p. 107) He seems

to be in agreement with the Christian theology: God becomes man, while man cannot become God. Sri Aurobindo, however, agrees with Upanisad in that the human self is the divine Self. (*The Life Divine*, p. 596) We may compare Mundaka Upanisad (III, ii, 9): "He who knows the highest Brahman becomes even Brahman." This is often heard in Dada's talks. Man is God, as when he comes to know this. And he comes to know this only when he has happened to bombard his ego; his finite being only then realises its oneness with the Infinite. The technique of this bombardment is love, the furious ecstasy for wholesale union. No foreign aid is here any real aid. A guru is an outside influence. The one influence that works aright is what has been released by one's own purified passion for the joy of union.

The Vedic teacher left the final course of self-knowledge to the pupil himself. He was given this directive: *tapasā brahma vijijnāsva*: exert for the enquiry about God by means of austere intellectual application. He must undertake to do it by himself. The process is one of being fired by a spirit of adventure, in Sri Aurobindo's phrase—"adventure of consciousness and joy". (his poem on *Savitri*).

But Guru has appeared in response, apparently, to a human need. In fear of his littleness and limitedness, man is gripped by a desire to get rid of fear and enlarge his power. As such he is in search of some one who can magnify his effort to triumph over his littleness, by making God's power and grace available to him. In response to his need there appears the Guru. Man has his own weakness, and the Guru exploits his weakness, his fond expectations. It is like that a consumer feels the need of a commodity and the producer too well advertises it to catch his mind. He believes in advertisement for he must believe. So, the seeker of salvation, of remedy of his troubles and trials of life, is readily entrapped by Guru. On the contrary, Vivekacūḍāmaṇi (VI) is critical about the practice of spreading wide the net of words in such a manner as one loses path in a large forest: *śavdajālam mahāraṅgam*.

Nevertheless, a Guru on his part may be honest, i.e. he may honestly want to assist his disciple. But even an honest Guru may overestimate his capacity while he may as well be incapable of judging that the very principle of his profession is logically wrong and morally unsound. He appropriates the devotion of his disciple, largely out of benefit to himself. Tradition makes his disciple devoted while the transaction turns to his material benefit.

Even if it be said that the Vedic *purohit* was long afterward transformed into the *mantra*-dealer, it must have to be admitted that the professional Guru was the product of the *Tantra* cult that was woven into the desire to grow esoteric power. According to *Tantrasāra*, a Guru is defined as a triple combination as 'giver of success' (*siddhi*), killer of sin and god Śambhu (Śiva). This definition is supported by Yogini Tantra and Rudrajāmāl. Even then, as *Jnānārṇava* laid down, a Guru was required to be a knower of all Śāstras.

Buddha Tantra went to the extreme length of surrender to Guru. Buddhist *Jnānasiddhi* (XIII, 9-12), however, prescribes that a Guru has to have very high qualification as a religious technician. Similarly, the Buddhist *Prajñopāyasiddhi* (III, 9-16), while showering a grand eulogy on the Guru, insists on his acquiring mastery of the religious codes and techniques. It goes, on the contrary, as far as identifying a Guru with Buddha himself. It even calls him omniscient and omnipotent. The *Ādyasiddhi* of Lakṣminkara (who appeared in about 729 A.D.) stated that in a Guru's body resided all the gods and as such his body should be worshipped as wholly divine. This text, which declares that in all the three worlds—the earth, the midspace and the heavens—no one is higher than the Guru.

Hindu Tantras do not lag behind. *Bhaktamāla* enjoins that a Guru is God and must be worshipped as such. *Sāradātilaka*, however, (II, 142-144) puts forward a list of high attainments of a Guru, and along with all eulogies enumerates the rigid conditions of learning and wisdom that he must fulfil. He must know "the essence of all Āgamas and the principles and meanings of Śāstras ; he must be one whose words must come

out true, who has a quiet mind, who has profoundly studied the Veda and its meaning, who follows the path of *yoga* and whose bearing is as beneficent as that of a deity". The disciple is enjoined to place the Guru's feet on his head and surrender his body, wealth and even life to the guru". *Kulārnavā Tantra* (XII, 49) enjoins, even if angry Śiva may be appeased, there is no remedy of guru's anger.

Jñānasiddhi and another notable text, *Kulārnavā* (XIII, 128) (both quoted earlier) sound severe warning against gurus who have lofty pretensions and talk as if they know all the lores and have the habit of giving wrong instructions. This text condemns in no uncertain terms guru's inordinate greed of money. *Śiva-Saṁhitā* (III, 10-19) enunciates the relation of guru and disciple. The *Linga Purāṇa* (I, 85, 164-65) says that guru is identical with Śiva himself and the disciple earns the reward of reverencing Śiva by his submissions to the guru. In the same strain, *Devi Bhāgavata* (XI, i, 49) equalises guru with the Hindu Trinity : Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśwara, and the disciple prostrates before the guru who is the Supreme Brahma.

It became a general belief that the unfailing refuge is the feet of the guru, *Guruḥpadāśraya*. (H. H. Wilson) And though it may be said that guru was modelled after the Vedic teacher, in later eras even ordinary practitioners of religion, who had no literary qualifications, acted as gurus. Though some of them were really pious the majority were mere practitioners of crude mysticism and posed as soul-redeemers. Many of them plied a good religious trade, having gained domination over the mind of the masses.

In the course of time, the Vaiṣṇava religion also took up the Guru's technique. It was Vallabhācārya of Northern India who might be said to have been the founder of the guru cult in Vaiṣṇava worship. As observed by Kane (*History of Dharmasāstra*, vol. V, p. 980) :

Among the followers of Vallabhācārya the guru tells the devotee to look upon him (the guru) as Kṛṣṇa and upon himself or herself as Rādhikā.

It has to be noted here that Śrī Chaitanya did neither organise the Vaiṣṇava cult nor had he set himself up as a guru or wanted his principal lieutenants (the six Gosāins) to run an organization. Here an extract from an address at Bhuvanesswar by Dr. Gourinath Sastri, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Varanasi Sanskrit University may be relevant :

Fortunately, Dadaji is now revealing the truth about Mahāprabhu. Dadaji says that * Mahāprabhu had never clothed himself in saffron robe, had never used chandana or other paste on his body and forehead. Mahāprabhu came to this earth with complete enlightenment, with Truth. How could he ever indulge in these external practices, these meaningless superstitions... He had no guru.

Dadaji also reminds us that Mahāprabhu did not renounce his wife or home. He received obstacles in Bengal, and his message of universal love unnerved the tantric sadhus who carried a campaign and also a good deal of torture against Mahāprabhu. He was advised by his mother and wife to proceed to Jagannāthdham and preach his gospel of love and the Nam. ...To him humanity was one, as Truth is one.

It has to be admitted that his touching manner of mass preaching of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, as he used to lead procession of songs, sung in devotional ardour, along the open streets of Nadia had enthralled the common people. The memory of that magic spell was revived and roused, as the Gosāins preached in the name of Mahāprabhu. And their fine managerial talent was most adroitly employed to swell the emotional wave and keep the rising stream of popular worship flowing in broad sweep all over the whole country.

But before very long, love of God sank into lust for sex. The grand gospel was diverted to crude channels. Guruism grew horrid :

By the act of dedication, a man submits to the pleasure of the Gosain, as God's representative ; not only the

* A painting by Gagan Tagore of Śrī Chaitanya in white dress may here be referred to.

fruits of his wealth but also the virginity of his daughter or of his newly married wife.

—Growse, *Mathura*, p. 266

The *Tāntric*—both Buddhist and Hindu—as well as the *Vaiṣṇava* Gurus preached the old doctrine, while what was new in them was their definitions of religious authority. The new authority appeared as the saviour of the devotees; so having displaced and then impersonated God, he, in effect, became “an object of worship in the form of a dignity-bearing *guru* or *gosain*—be it through the designation of successors, be it hereditary.” (Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, p. 319)

The founders of new religions (round about the fifteenth century) appointed themselves the spiritual monitors of the masses. They—especially, Kabir and Nanak—denounced the Veda, and emphatically rejected corporeal gods. Curiously, Kabir's followers soon formed more than ten divisions—that was how they obeyed their path-finder. The biggest joke was this: “It was not long before he who rejected idolatry became himself a deity. And, in fact, every Teacher, Guru, of the sect was an absolute master of thought, and was revered as a god.” (E. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 511)

One of the staunchest advocate of Guruism was Kabir: “In the midst of the highest heaven there is a shining light; he who has no Guru cannot reach the place; he only reaches who is under the guidance of a true Guru.” But once accepted as a Guru, he cannot be questioned at all. So, once—say after some examination—if you declare one as your Guru, and if thereafter your practical deal with him or experience of him informs that you had made a wrong selection, you cannot retrace, you cannot even repent! “The leading *guru* in a territory”, Weber observes, “is similar to a bishop of a Western church.” (cf. *rāṣṭragopah purohitah*)

All good institutions go wrong in the course of time. The West is no exception. Faith lost its essence and excellence, its true spirit, and in its wake the Church turned out an

instrument of oppression and crushed the "kingdom of human brotherhood".

"The Churches shake a scarecrow at us. Got to change our God, mother. Got to clean Him up too. They've dressed Him up in lies and slander, mutilated the face of Him to kill our souls!"

"The place God holds in the human heart is the sorest spot. But if you cut it out, it'll have a wound this big. Have to think up a new faith; Pavel. Have to create a God who is a friend to man, that's what!"

"God is a flame. And he lives in the heart. All right. Then God is in the heart and in the Reason—but not in the church. The church is the grave of God."

—Gorki, *Mother*, pp. 112-14.

Sikh religion was propounded by Nanak. The office of the Guru "was made hereditary by Arjun, till Govind, the tenth pontiff, who left no successor, declared that after his death the Granth (bible) should be the sole authority of the church." (Hopkins).

Critics of the Guru cult appeared in time. In Bengal some indication may be had from the bantering remarks in such humorous books as *Hutumpyānchār Naksā* (p. 88) and *Alāler Gharer Dulāl* (p. 26).

Guru Nanak used to think that he had sinned. In fact, that was his feeling of compassion for his disciples who sin, and it was really on their behalf that he asked God's mercy.

The True, the Imperishable, the Infinite,
Himself does all.

I am a sinner; Thou art Pardonner.

Sin is a Christian doctrine. Nanak also felt a woman's love for God, which is a main indication of Vaisnava faith.

I have fallen asleep, my Beloved is awake.
She who by the true Guru is united to the Lord
abides in devotion;

Love, O Nanak, is her companion.

The Vedic guru-bhakti is between the student and the teacher, in common search for knowledge. The medieval guru-

bhakti, especially between the devotee and his or her guide to gaining God is of a different order. This latter *bhakti* is not endorsed by Śaṅḍilya who was the innovator of the *bhakti* approach to God. He said, "we cannot know by bhakti, we can only recognize by it" for "bhakti is not knowledge, though it may be the result of knowledge."

Bhakti cult was later exploited by Tāntric Bhairavas and Vaiṣṇava Gosāins. 'Gosāin', in chaste Sanskrit, is 'Goswāmi'— 'go' means 'word' (not cow, here) and 'swāmi' is lord, i.e. master of spiritual words. In fact, it was more a command or felicity over sweet words than any true piety that won the faith of devotees. A very few high class Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Gosāins excepted, the majority were profligate and they won the foolish believers by fine psychopathic phrases,

The pace of demoralization was rapid. The philosophy of Yoga was sublime and treated with rigorous mental discipline. The severe process was to gain control on the nervous system, using it as the spring-board of spiritual uplift. The spinal cord, from its terminal vertebra, through six stations of nervous energy, is gradually linked up with brain-centre with its countless cells. The whole system is imagined as a serpent which, decoiled at its base, step by step uncoils itself till it shoots up to the seventh culminating point (sahaśrāra) and liberates supreme creative power, establishing relation with the Creator. This machinery of creative energy was turned to polluting a source of spiritual realization.

The abiding truth is that not man, but God alone, is Guru in the real and right sense, "I want to tell you," Dada told Mr. A. D. Mani, M.P. (Hitavada, 30.7.72), "do not accept me as your guru. God is in you and you will have to find Him yourself. Do not seek instrument for it." The Gītā (XV, 15) is very clear on this question. Śrīdhara, in his commentary, notices the word 'vedāntakṛt' and explains that Lord Kṛṣṇa, Absolute Brahma, here says that He is the author of the Vedānta and by giving him knowledge about it, He Himself is his guru— *jñānādo gururāham ityarthak*. Here, not academic but spiritual

teaching is definitely meant. Kṛṣṇa himself has said : “know me as the ācārya, guru. (Śrīmadbhāgvat, XI, 17, 26) The very common need of academic teaching is emphasised in Chāndogya Upaniṣad, XIV.

After having had his vision of Kṛṣṇa’s world-image, Arjuna acknowledges him as the supreme guru—*gururgariān* (XI, 43). Here the Gītā took up the law laid down in the Yogasūtra (I, 25-26) : No man, no angel nor any god is guru. The guru in truth is God, who is the seed of infinite knowledge, who is without beginning, without end, who is verily well beyond all barriers of time.

In olden times, guru was the interpreter and instructor of religious concepts and values. It was the joy of teaching that was his inspiration, no material interest of any kind lurked in his mind. As time went on that higher inspiration evaporated when guru assumed the role of saving souls of disciples and taking them on to God, Whom he represented in person. This absurdity was welcome because disciples were obliged for this short-cut to winning God’s grace. The absurdity speedily developed into horrid malignity, as degenerate yogis and dissolute gurus diverted all their thought and endeavour to freely enjoying lust for sex and for money. Divinity was hurled down to dust. Religion was brought to market. Holiness was put up to sale. Piety grew pale and perverse, feeble and fantastic.

8

Miracle and Mystery

CREATION itself is a mighty miracle, a magnificent mystery. It is a tale of miracle that the myriads of starry worlds communicate. And our human world: what a sublime puzzle! One weeps for another, dies for another; just so, one robs another's joy, one kills another, often for small ends.

And you forget yourself as you gaze into the mysterious firmament. White clouds, clinging to the blue sky as children embracing the mother, beam in happiness. At another hour, the same sky roars and rattles with flaming lightnings, tearing through dark clouds, out to deluge the creation in a havoc of destruction.

Or, turn to our mother earth. The lotus with her hope enclosed, waiting all the night in soft suspense till the crimson sun kisses and the delighted petals open. A poet will write of the pent up hope of the lotus or a painter will splash colours to portray her sweet and silent love. A scientist will not do anything of the kind. He will seek and find his joy in a law to say how and why. Yet no man of science has a final word; only the man of spirit, perhaps, has. The old, old, old thing God only a mystic sees; a scientist only explores the treasures of Nature. Both are equally devoted to truth, in their different ways.

A miracle, usually, is a performance of power over another's mind. When the power is moved by kindness, it is holy and white; otherwise, it is malevolent, black, and awfully bad for him who performs and on whom it is performed. Benevolent miracles work by the grace of God. Spinoza and Hume are against any miracle. "Even by the apostles miracles are seldom referred to as having any

“evidential character.” (A. T. Lyttleton, *The Place of Miracles In Religion*)

But miracles are attributed to Christ, who says that such miracles are but “signs” of his power for the good of man. Take the saying of Christ: “I am the bread of life.” And to partake of the Eucharist is a very meaningful miracle: “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him.” It may be compared to the Vedic sacrifice at the end of which the priest and the sacrificer both eat the cake of meat (*purodās*) and drink *Soma* elixir while others too join in a communal feast. Sufi saints—much like the Prophet—are credited with happy miracles. While a few miracles are attributed to Buddha and Laotse, generally speaking, they disapproved of such feats.

Buddha had no design to set up even monasteries and such monkish organizations. All these were the doings of succeeding Arhats, his big disciples. He himself had no thought of ruling the mind of the people. He simply felt that they should be able to get rid of sorrow. He disfavoured any practice of miracles. He protested: “There is no path through the air. A man is not a Sramana by outward acts.” When an Arhat flew through the air he is said to have censured him: “This will not conduce either to the conversion of the unconverted or to the increase of the converted, but rather to those who have not been converted remaining unconverted, and to the turning back of those who have been converted.” He categorically said: “I command my disciples not to work miracles.” (Rhys Davis; also see *Dhammapada* and *Chullvagga*).

The Chinese saints held the same view: “To search for what is mysterious and practise marvellous acts in order to be mentioned with honour in future age: this is what I do not do.” (G. G. Alexander, *Confucius the Great Teacher*) His considered view was simply this: “Absorption in the study of the supernatural is most harmful.” (*The Sayings of Confucius*, p. 94) Equally, Laotse was opposed to all magic:

he was a man of plain belief and pithy saying : "He who conquers the world often does so by doing nothing." (*The Book of Tao*, XLVIII)

Magic is a part of priestly craft. A belief in super-human elements is common to all ancient religious practices. Not only it was there in the Veda, even ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans indulged in magic rites. "The melodies of Samaveda," writes Winternitz (*A History of Indian Literature*, I, p. 167), "were looked upon as possessing magic power even as late as in brahminical times." Yajurveda, particularly the Sukla (White) Yaju, is full of spells and formulas which seem to have been used for coaxing, even coercing the deities to produce magic effects to favour the sacrificers. Max Weber (*The Religion of India*) thinks that Brahmans cultivated a "systematic rationalization of magic." They maintained "a compromise between their own elite interest in a dignified way of life and their need to provide for the masses magical release from the misfortunes that were their lot."

Tāntriks and Vaiṣṇava Gosāins followed suit, and they quite easily descended into libertinism.

Any good thing may be carried to horrid excess. And this happened to the cultivation of miracles, torn away from its pure spiritual contexts. Extravagant crudities, indulged in Tāntric rites, provide a popular example of malevolent exercises. It should, however, be noted that right at its beginning, Tantra was indeed high-pitched, when it was adopted as a new way of Vedic teaching. In the Veda, the woman sage Vāk, representing herself as elemental power, says in her supreme dignity : I am the Over-soul—*aham brahmāsmi*. In the same spirit—but a little short of that sublimity—the Tantra declares : O Śambhu (Śiva), my soul is what you are—*ātmā tvam Śambho*. Again, the Tāntric *hamsa* mantra is about the same as the Vedic *hamsah*. Further, the Gītā enjoins : 'Whatever you do, whomsoever you worship, all that you dedicate to me.' The Tantra almost echoes : O World-Mother, all that I perform is your worship—*yat karomi jagannātā*

taḍeva tava pūjanam. But before very long there was a fall from this height into depths of lusts under cover of esoteric rituals.

To return to parallelisms of Vedic-Christian concepts. In the turns of ideas and phrases they are in wonderful accord :

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>The Śruti</i>
There is but one God	ekamevādvitīyam
God the Father	yo nah pitā janitā
Living God	sa u prānasya prāṇah ataeva prāṇah
Everlasting	aja
Without passion	niranjana
Without part	akhaṇḍa
Without body	divyo amūrtah puruṣah soh
Maker and Preserver of all things	yato vā imāni bhūtāni jā- yante yena jātāni jīvanti
Very good from very good	pūrṇa madah pūrṇamidam
Life from life	pūrṇāt pūrṇamaducyate
Light from light	tamivā bhāntam anubhāti sarvam
I and My Father are One	soham...tat tvam asi
And the Word was God	śabda brahma
Let there be light and there was light	sohakāmayata...atho yad atah paro divo jyotirdip- yate
Saviour	Tārah-brahma (saving by faith, not saved from sin)
Man's sin was so great that God only could pay it.	tvam hi nah pitā, yohs- mākaṁ avidyāḥ pārāṁ tārayati.

Such Vedic-Biblical agreements may be multiplied. However, an important disagreement is that the Veda, unlike the Bible, bothers little about sin ; the one big worry of the Veda is *avidyā*—ignorance or nescience. Another issue is that with the Bible the centre of creation is the earth ; while having ample tenderness for the earth, the Veda holds the sun as the

vital force and as such it is daily worshipped as the illuminator of the world and mind, and giver of energy.

As regards miracle there is little difference. It is regarded good as long as it uplifts the mind to higher altitudes. When it is diverted to the trade of power-cult it spells ruin for all concerned : who practises and for whom it is practised. In its higher flights, the performer is carried away by divine power itself ; he has little personal choice and no interest in its material effects. He does it without effort or plan, often himself not conscious of the performance. He has only the awareness that it is done, and done for the purpose of awakening faith and stimulating a trust in the unknown.

The godly beings on our earth directly share the Creator's power. They do not have to borrow or requisition it from God from time to time nor do they have to exert for it. Divine-human beings, by virtue of living in the Supreme Being, can get strange things done by mere wish and can remain at several places at one time ; time-space conditions do not restrain them. Only they cannot (Vedānta IV) create worlds, as there is no need of it, for God Himself has been doing this all the time. But they can create events and transform men's mind by communication of grace. All these hold good of Dada, who does not indulge in power but works by a delicate compulsion for kindness, for sweetness, for transmission of the voice of the super-soul into any of his comrades or brethren who have a yearning for communion with the World-worker Who is set inside their own soul—*esa Viśvakarmā mahātmā sadā janānāṃ hṛdaye sanniviṣṭah.*

The proof that Dada does not trade in power is that men of perception find him as an utterly ordinary being ; only there is a certain flash in his look that says that he lives in an unknowable sphere, the light of which beams through his tender eyes. Here is an impression of a notable visitor :

Those who have the intuitive eye can easily see that though he seems ordinary, he is extraordinary. His ordinariness may be called a mask which intrigues so many who come to have his *darsan*. Many who have

heard of his power of performing miracles come with high hopes to see them performed, and when they do not find anything happening they return disappointed and even begin to scandalise him. Only a handful come to receive peace and light and strength and the luminous nakedness of interior vision which such a being as Dada can bestow. But the trouble is that we do not really wish to have ourselves stripped of what we erroneously call our individuality. What the peace does, what the light does, what the interior vision does is to strip us of our individualism and not our individuality. We are accustomed to the darkness, we are afraid of the light which Dada wants to spread in the heart of the seeker.

—Harin Chattopadhyaya.

There is a vision when an individual is emancipated from his worldly narrowness, when he feels that he is an emanation of the Supreme from Whom a man derives his form. At such times we take courage to transport ourselves from our accustomed world into an unaccustomed refinement of reality. We see then a new light playing on our familiar triviality, our coarse concept of individuality ; and then our individual self mingles in the universal. Then, an individual, not tied to any bloc, has no conflict with another ; he is cleansed with the knowledge of Oneness. To quote Boris Pasternak :

In that new way of living, and new form of society, which is born of the heart, and which is called the Kingdom of Heaven, there are no nations, there are only individuals.

This is the freedom from the fetters of morbid egoism. Each individual is linked with the other by a common awareness of belonging to the same spiritual source, by an innate sense that men are indivisible 'souls'. The foundation is human, the expression is individual. Spiritual self-fulfilment is based on this new definition of the individual, on the refinement of individual federation. This way lies the release from friction and the fulfilment of happiness that is based not so much on goods as on goodness ; that is how and why one is inclined to lose his happiness for the happiness of others.

The One God has chosen to split Himself into innumerable individuals. But they, every one of them, must in that case hold the image of the Supreme One. When this is not felt, when the individual lives loose, life loses grace, being forgets its foundation in divinity. The fundamental problem, then, is to raise our little ego, to develop its spiritual outlines, and transform it into I AM THAT I AM—as Moses spoke to God, or as Āruṇi spoke to his son, Śvetaketu.

If he has any business, Dada is busy in reminding individuals to recover his or her higher self-awareness. The only perceptible effect of seeing Dada is the radiation of his spirit and its excellence and mental betterment transferred to the visitor then and there, through some sense of nearness to the divine. This is the real miracle that Dada works: transformation of his brethren, at least for the time-being. Indeed, this is the task of spiritual companion, the non-material guardian, the man of God.

An eminent visitor, Jaiprakash Narayan asked Dada a "simple question". He said, "Intellectually we cannot accept the fact that God is within us as well as outside us. Since He is within us it is not necessary to seek Him outside. But how can we have the actual experience." Dadaji assured him that the Absolute is within, and He is there to clear your vision from within. He will communicate to you and endow you with the experience of the in-dwelling Spirit. When He is not within, who from where can keep you in existence? If you are earnest you can have a glimpse of Him Who is life, Who is existence, Who is manifestation. Seek Him, and He will give you the *mantra* which will lend the visual impression. The Veda says, *ṛsis* are seers of *mantra*; they do not compose; they just see what is revealed before their clarified vision. Jaiprakash asked: Who will give the *mantra*, and how?

Then the great miracle took place. In Jaiprakash's words:

When my wife and myself bowed to Sri Satyanarayana both of us clearly heard the words which came from nowhere and they appeared in red ink on

a small piece of paper I had been holding, affirming the words we had heard. The words, however, disappeared after a few seconds, and the piece of paper I had received again became blank.

It was an amazing experience. I did not know how this 'Mahanam' came. It was a miracle. God can do anything. We were overwhelmed with our experience. We were told by Dadaji that Pralhad had similarly received the mantra when he went to Narad to get it. I wish I could understand intellectually, but that is not possible. We have to accept it with sraddha (respect with faith).

Dadaji then asked me if I would receive a present from him. I replied, "I hope it is not a precious thing. I would gladly receive a kind present from you." Dadaji was all along sitting with his upper body completely bare. He put his bare hand inside my kurta just under my neck, and immediately brought out a very good wrist watch with strap and all that, and gave it to me. He asked for it and with the touch of his finger on the glass cover the name of the watch appeared on the dial. I had never received such a gift in my life.

I did not know that some more experience was still in store for me. My wife had carried a bottle of clean water. Dadaji placed it before the symbol of Sree Satyanarayana for a few moments and then took it in his hands. The plain clear water started changing its transparence in Dadaji's hands till the change covered the entire area. When I opened the bottle, a sweet strong fragrance came out, and both my wife and myself were overwhelmed. The sanctified water was a pleasant surprise and we accepted it with gratitude.

In conclusion I would humbly submit that Dadaji's supreme message to mankind that Truth is one, Humanity is one and Language is one has great significance to our country, or rather to the entire humanity. All divisions which have been created by considerations of religion, caste and creed are artificial, and should be harmonised and rather be eliminated if the people want to show their regard for Truth Eternal where no division and no dissension can ever enter. I consider myself fortunate that I had the privilege of having this noble and universal message from Dadaji whose sole concern is to propagate this simple fact about Truth without taking the position of a Guru.

What needs to be noticed is that Dada speaks what is meant for the heart. It is not loaded with learning but is clad in the light brought from heavens. With him a conversation is held between two like-minded beings, difference of opinion is then washed away and a serene trust reigns between the talker and the listener. The second very noticeable thing is that behind the miracles there is no long, even no preparation at all, to influence and overawe the mind of one who receives the message of the miracles. Indeed, these miracles do not end in credit on one side and obligation on the other. Dadaji's miracles are such as shed light, produce belief, change the heart and envelope the whole environment with a sensation of a new life, provide a near definition of a new faith. Such miracles leave an impression of enduring reality, give a glimpse of a power that draws out our soul and leaves it elevated, listening to "the music of the spheres".

A note on Dada's concept of miracle may here be given. He has asked his 'brethren' not to take any noble miracle either too literally or too materially. He has often given bits of warnings against getting addicted to it. His view he has told briefly but firmly on many occasions and to many persons. It is here summarised :

A miracle is blissful when it is worked with a high purpose. It is to create a belief in the power beyond our vision. It proves, in the first place, that supernatural power is a physical fact—by no means an illusion; in the second place, that it is a benevolent power, which we do not understand by our common sense. It gives us a glimpse of the unknown and the unknowable. It is inadvisable to employ this other-worldly power for the sake of idle curiosity, certainly not for fulfilling an unkind intention: to bring suffering on anyone, to advance one's own selfish ends, even to establish one's own glory or supremacy. To indulge in any such harmful activity ultimately reacts on the performer himself or herself. Such perversity ensnares one in disastrous temptation of exploiting the virtue of occult science with a mind sunk in nescience.

The exercise of super-power is justified only for enlightening the mind of another person and stimulating spiritual perception in him or her. Even then, it should be only sparingly used. For, to bring into play a movement of super-power that defies the normal limitations of space and time is to engineer some sort of disequilibrium, for the time-being, in the usual cosmic order. So it is injudicious and improper to bring about such disturbance just for fun or fancy. It is not to be undertaken except under a compelling spiritual necessity. When a miracle releases some uplifting force, only then it is a blessing, an inspiration for rising to moral elevation or spiritual betterment ; otherwise, it is an abuse of a virtue.

In the course of an article released to the press on Sept. 22, 1972, the Hon. the Chief Justice of Calcutta Highcourt, Mr. S. P. Mitter wrote :

Dadaji kindly visited my house and graced us all by his divine company. While sitting in our midst, with his upper body bare, he suddenly spread his right bare palm before us. And on it appeared from nowhere a bright silver locket embossed with the image of Sri Sri Satyanarayana. Dadaji gave it to me and we all examined it very thoroughly. Then somebody expressed the desire for a golden one. Dadaji took it back, touched it with his finger and lo, it became transformed into a golden one...It was really a breath-taking phenomenon to us...In my opinion, it is never a miracle. For to transform the matter from silver to gold at will, does not fall in the range of acquired powers by siddhi or kriya-yoga. Even then Dadaji says that this is also extraneous in the way of attaining the Truth and it just happens at the Divine Will of Sri Sri Satyanarayana.

Jaiprakash speaks of the concern to propagate the Truth held by Dadaji. He is himself a man of conviction as well as influence. Sincere service of men of faith is needed to advance a Truth. Jesus's Truth was taken up by twelve men of plain belief ; Buddha's message was preached by his five followers.

So on. No object that is great by itself can be attained by casual mention of it. To propagate a Truth, such as Dadaji has in view, requires dedicated striving for it by men who accept it or him. When a Truth is elemental, essential, celestial, in its nature and implication, the struggle to get it going must have to be both intellectual and devout, for it is an abstract, not a mere marketable truth, inasmuch as it concerns the health of man's higher being. A truth that centres round the inner relation of God and man is undoubtedly a most subtle, even elusive, one. Even the best and the ablest of men or women are put to test in its performance. Certainly, only paying homage or singing praise does very little. It is a cause that Dadaji holds on behalf of all of us, of mankind. And, as men have many minds, the task surely is manifold.

Truth, in Sanskrit, is Satya—that which exists. The Veda alludes to two types of what exists : Satya (human law) and Rta (cosmic law). By one is held the value of man as God's creature ; the other refers to the conduct of nature and universe, their forces and formulations. The latter is unalterable ; the former is changing according to perspective : moral, mental, material, etc.

Of particular significance is man's will to convert his 'ego' into love and to cover humanity. A training of his thought in the human direction is as much necessary as the physiological task of strengthening his nerve and brain centres, for the higher centres have to be activated in order to release energy for the growth and strength of consciousness. Man has been given all the implements for elevated thinking and all the fine emotion for moving God's good world with his love. But he is, restrained by tension. Of course, tension is a part of vital life. The creative art is to modulate the tension and make it conducive to the awareness of the indwelling spirit. Only then, there is end of tension and joy of creation. As St. Paul says : "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law (of the flesh)."

Here is a remarkable example of one led by the Spirit.

He is Mr. G. T. Kamdar, a man in big business and with a noble mind. He writes :

I recall very vividly the first time I had the revelation of Dadaji's divine glory. It happened this way. Mrs. Kamdar and myself had the good fortune to have been received into Dadaji's room that was lighted with his presence. It was 6th April, 1972. As we sat at his feet, the Mahanam presently rang in our heart, and a strange sweetness filled the air.

At this point of Mr. Kamdar's account, it may be desirable to turn aside for a while. The reader may well ask here : what is this Mahānāma, this 'solemn Name' ? What is its purport, its purpose, its power ? Word for word, it means : 'the great name' ; the meaning behind it is that it is the name of the Supreme which is the source of all that is and will be. So then, it is the "ineffable Name" (in Browning's word), that *par excellence* is good for all,

In a way, 'mahānāma' is parallel to the term : 'mahāvākya' —i.e. 'the great word'—of the Upaniṣad about the oneness of man and God, of soul and over-soul. This sublime text has found four alternate expressions to reveal the relation between the individual and the universal, the finite and the Infinite. They are :

tat tvam asi	(That thou art)
soham	(I am He)
aham brahmāsmi	(I am Brahma)
ayamātmā brahma	(This soul is Brahma)

R. W. Emerson has a lovely poem on the indescribable and infinite Brahma :

They reckon ill who leave me out ;
When me they fly, I am the wings :
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

Broadly speaking, deep in man's mind lies the eagerness to grow the joy of touch with the Supreme. All through the ages, man has been seeking this joy, but the trend of seeking

and the mood of finding changes from time to time, from country to country. In our country the tune of joy was first set by the Upaniṣad. For instance, Maitreyi, the dear wife of Yājñavalkya, in quest of the Supreme, made the grand declaration : I must live in the joy that does not languish nor is lost. I seek the joy of immortality.

A new style was evolved in the Gītā by Lord Kṛṣṇa. From the abstract Supreme he turned the thought on live, personal God. He instructed Arjuna : Seek to be wholly enveloped by Me ; lose your identity in Me ; with the intellect given to you, remain attached to Me in thought and deed , live in the delight of oneness with Me. (X, 9-10).

Not long afterward, in the Śrīmadbhāgavat, the Lord switched on from Intellect to Love. Later, this art of oneness was developed by Śrī Chaitanya of Bengal ; in another form by Nanak in Upper India. Thus was introduced the war on all formal worship, cancelling all ritual and resorting only to take the name of God and keep it vibrating in the heart.

Dadaji who inherits the role of Kṛṣṇa, transformed Śrī Chaitanya's 'Harināma' into Mahānāma, which broadens out the ideal for reception by all. And the beauty lies in the replacement of the Nārāyaṇa of the priestly tradition, whom one can worship through a brahmin priest only. Released from the priestly prison, Dadaji's Nārāyaṇa is Satyanārāyaṇa, who in truth belongs to all, and is directly approachable by all, irrespective of caste, creed or race. The Mahānāma is the one open to whole humanity.

To return to Mr. Kamdar, under the spiritual spell of the Mahānāma. He continues :

Dadaji wanted us to keep in mind that he was not our Guru. Indeed, no person can be a Guru of another. The one Guru of all men is Sri Sri Satyanarayan, dwelling in every heart and making Himself felt as the Mahanama becomes audible inwardly. The name of the Absolute, the Ultimate, the Supreme Truth—of Sri Sri Satyanarayan—is the one by the holiness of which we are to rise above our ego. Some months passed by, when all of a sudden I deve-

loped a severe backache. Doctors, called it Skipped Disc. We were at the time in our home at Bombay, and the illness kept me confined to bed. It was good in a way. It gave me ample leisure to recite the holy Mahanama all the time. This brought me an indescribable peace. As my mind went weaving my garland of the Mahanama, I sensed a faint fragrance slowly enveloping me. The fragrance grew stronger by the second, and before long I realised that this was the fragrance which always pervaded the place where Dadaji was present. To make sure that I was not labouring under any illusion, I called out to my wife and children, who came rushing in, no doubt with a sense of fear that my pain had increased. I asked them if they also smelt divine aroma, in my room. 'That was just what they had felt,' they said. The fragrance became stronger as each minute went by. Presently, the whole room was overspread with a fog of fragrance. Mrs. Kamdar shouted in joy: "Here is Dadaji"! Enthralled by the mystery, I asked: where? "Right here at the door", she replied. I got up with a desperate jerk and looked at the door. Dadaji had vanished. And, lo, my backache, that a moment before would not allow me to get up, also now disappeared. To this day that pain has not recurred.

The beatitude that has pervaded my heart ever since, shall be, I believe, as long as I live. How did Pujya (reverend) Dadaji in Calcutta know that I was ill in Bombay, and how could he be present in Calcutta and Bombay at the same time, and how could he instantly give me total relief? I do not know, how. But I am altogether sure: Dadaji knows. He is all-knowing. And by his grace, we get glimpses of Truth.

Dadaji performs wonders, works miracles. But the larger view is that he embodies Truth, reveals the divinity in man. He lives behind a veil, though it be a veil of light. So, we cannot well make out what he is, while we feel assured of his compassion. He has access to every form of power, but he is not enamoured of power. He is divinity in person. In fine, this is about all that Mr. Kamdar wants to say in conclusion.

People come to Dada to have the benefit or just the enter-

tainment of miracles. One genuine enquirer once sought clarification: "They are widely talked about and, if I may say so, not a little misunderstood." The enquiry was made to Mr. Abhi Bhattacharya, the renowned film-actor. He answered in a characteristic dramatic manner, but full of deep meaning :

I know, I know. Miracles are rather misunderstood not because miracles themselves are wrong, but because the word has become much abused in recent times. What after all is a miracle? That the moon and the earth move only in their appointed orbits is no less a miracle than the immediate delivery from nowhere of a gold medallion or a shwal or a string of letters. This human body itself is indeed a miracle. How do these things occur? By His will, if you ask one. Dadaji disclaims any knowledge of the why and wherefor of the so-called miracles. They just somehow come to pass, at His will. We cannot predict or anticipate them. They don't occur at our insistence. Why should people misunderstand these? I am not unaware that people visit holy men mostly for some or other miracle, and it is often these people who talk slightly of the phenomenon they have either not witnessed or understood. Dadaji has repeatedly told us that the miracles are acts of His will. You can neither wish nor stop them. They exceed men's curiosity about higher power.

Mr. Bhattacharya has put it well how a miracle is inexplicable. Reason goes a long way; but up to a point. Beyond lies the frontier of mysticism, of truth beyond reasoning. Dadaji once told Harin Chattopadhyaya: "I warn you, do not take miracles to be anything but external happenings. I perform them in order to impress upon you that there is a power above and beyond the reach of mind. Once you have faith in Him, you must forget all about miracles". And Mr. Chattopadhyaya records his own impression: "Several of us, who are not quite insane or undeveloped people, have been witness to miracles. I, for one, do not doubt that when a miracle is performed it is performed, not by him who per-

forms it, but by some Power, whose ways are unpredictable”.

Francis X. Sutton quotes the high authority of Max Weber: “From the thinking laymen, however, emerged the prophets who were hostile to priests; as well as mystics, who searched for salvation independently of priests and sectarians.” But prophets and mystics notwithstanding, the priestly profession of overawing simple folks by magic and miracle has gained new currency. The developing worries of modern times keep men, running to miracle-managers. Professional saints and sadhus have now a big job. Superior saints take to miracles, not for any personal gain, but for relief to suffering devotees. But saints of the highest order have occasional recourse to miracles only to create among people a trust in action and appearance of God, to charge man’s mundane thoughts with heavenly vibrations and instil spiritual insight. A god-man’s only mission is to lead man Godward: and this applies to Dadaji.

Indeed, Dadaji always remains indifferent to his power, to his command over the elements. He is sublime in his simplicity. Power is a part of his being. This is what is conveyed in a message, dated October 9, 1974, from Dr. Karlis Osis, Director of the American Society for Psychical Research, New York: “My heartfelt greetings and best wishes for the most wonderful celebration. Great things do happen in Dadaji’s presence.” His closing sentence, short though, is big in its connotation. Such things just happen. They are not brought about by any endeavour. They spring from his mere presence. And a sense of bliss prevails.

An admirable critic, who loves to parade his lack of faith, Mr. Kushwant Singh, Editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, was glad to receive presents brought in by acts of miracles and gladly allowed himself to receive the Mahanama from Sri Satyanarayana, while around Dadaji a heavenly light was on. The Editor felt, Dadaji’s eyes had “a hypnotic spell-binding power”.

Anyway, how the power works? By radiation of the waves of love, goodness and compassion in high frequencies: that is the simple answer, if an answer at all there can be. Radiation of waves of various length and frequency is the vehicle of power. When frequencies of different waves coincide they have mutual effect, and this effect confers mutual strength. On such occasions, the radiation from the superior one produces a kind of power. Miracles fail to appear when frequencies are disagreeable. When the impact is weak, a gap occurs; and then the effect is nil. A benevolent, beneficial, benign radiation serves to animate love, belief and blessedness. Waves are shortest and frequencies highest when and where love is at work. Frequencies help penetrate minds and communicate energy. It may well be imagined that as love is the essence of God, irresistible effect is produced where love of God radiates. Men of true, not formal, religion or love of God are most radiative.

It is common truth that leaders of politics radiate tremendous waves of high frequencies, and they today have command over millions, for today millions are involved more in politics than in religion. A comparison may be permitted to be made between Jesus Christ and Karl Marx. Masses of the whole world had welcomed the Marxian message. But the wave frequencies of politicians are not steady; these are often subjected to "interference"—as the scientific term is. Churchill performed adorable magic; but it was weakened or neutralized in his lifetime. So also was the matter with Gandhiji. He lamented very feelingly that he used to be given only "lip homage" lately; his non-partition plan was ignored, and his non-violence was politely put away. What eventually brought India independence was not non-co-operation but willing co-operation of the Working Committee with Mountbatten, neither of whom counted Gandhiji's opinion. It sheds a pathetic light when Gandhi's self-pity is set against his surprise at Churchill's fall from public grace. Gandhi told a press correspondent of *New York*

Post : "To me it is a sufficient miracle that in spite of his oratory and brilliance, Churchill should cease to be the idol of the British people who till yesterday hung on his lips and listened to him in awe."

Nor is Shrimati Gandhi's power over Indian mind the same in 1973-74 as it was in 1971. Her love for the people is undoubtedly great. Nonetheless, her 'Garibi hatao' has remained a mere dramatization, whereas Roosevelt's 'New Deal' was switched to movement by 'Heaven's creative hand'. New Deal gave his men more than economic benefits; it as well stimulated a creative life. Here India, in spite of Mrs. Gandhi's grand leadership, has been wading through grave economic miseries while political and psychological bearings have been progressively unpromising. Opposition parties are good only at inflaming people, all the while failing to inspire them.

People have learnt slogans. They have not been taught to grow ideas. They have been only used for taking orders and have shaped as tools of agitation. This has been going on right from the great days of the Mahatma. Nehru himself confesses, referring to the years since Chauri Chaura (Feb. 1921): "All organisation and discipline was disappearing... and the masses had so far received little training to carry on by themselves." (*An Autobiography*) No Congress leader, since then, can say what Chairman Mao, in 1966, could have well said: "I have spent much time in the rural areas with the peasants and was deeply moved by the many things they knew. Their knowledge was rich. I was no match for them." After independence, Congress leaders figured as "political Mohants"—in Nehru's fine phrase.

Mrs. Gandhi has a religious turn of mind. To arrest the approach of a political deluge, she had gone (11. 9. 74) to the ancient temple at Kanchipuram in South India; there she prayed to the deity for half an hour and begged of the venerable priest, Shri Swamigal, to equip her with divine blessings to be empowered to defeat the conspiracy against

the good of her people. Does she really believe that power for good comes from God, not from Party? She knows what she means. Also, in a way, the priest knows his mind; or is it likely that Whitman's gentle irony may apply to him: "Let the priest play at immortality." People's troubles, however, worsen daily, while the one concern of political parties is to be fuelled by large funds.

Faith, Dada says, proves itself, much as science proves physical facts. Physical and spiritual nature obey their own laws, which meet at a point. For, the world-maker and the mind-maker is the same Supreme Being: He has physical or cosmic laws and also moral and mental laws; these work in different ways but converge at a point, however distant it may be. Apparent contradictions resolve at a far end.

When spiritual activities follow conventional ways and are conducted by professional authorities, the process does not ring true. A formal experiment has a false note. Stephen, a character drawn by James Joyce, says in a plaintive tone: "I fear . . . the chemical action which would be set up in my soul by a false homage to a symbol behind which are massed twenty centuries of authority and veneration."

But where faith is profound, symbol has the breath of reality. For instance, many critical and competent recipients of *Mahānāma* have testified to the mystic truth of the event. They include Chief Justices and High Court Judges, litterateurs and scientists, poets and publicists, men of all eminent ranks, and of course, quite a good many common men. It is an exercise in silent self-expression.

No doubt, power impresses profoundly. That is behind our idea of an almighty God. But the secret of His might is that it operates internally and normally. His creation follows love, and what is lively is lovely. Kālidāsa opens his *Raghuvamśam* with a prayer to god Śiva and Pārvatī and they are conceived as parents full of love for man. Tulsidāsa begins his *Rāmāyaṇa* with a hymn to Śiva who wears fetters, holds serpents round his neck and drinks poison—and all these

are symbols of his divine love, his chosen way to suffer for man, so that man may be relieved from the evils of bondage, of serpentine crookedness and of the miseries that poison his life. God sends his chosen men to raise them to higher life. It is this quality of the god-man—sweet holiness and gracious nearness—that has been at work through the ages for the good of man.

Rare, extravagant spirits come by us at intervals, who disclose to us new facts in nature. I see that men of God have from time to time walked among men and made their commission felt in the heart and soul of the commonest hearer."

—Emerson, Essays : First Series, p. 31.

And it is this unearthly quality that is well noticed about Dadaji by Dr. R. S. Dinkar, a national poet :

Except for the state of spiritual excitement in which he constantly dwells, and which gives to his beautiful face an awesome serenity and his smile a beatific significance, he may well be mistaken for a charming old man who has preserved in his make up youthful zeal and enchanting manliness of a blue-blooded aristocrat. ...He holds his court in the tone and style of a good-natured paterfamilia who derives his authority from the unselfish love that he bears his children.

Eminent scientists too have had the same feeling. For example, Dr. H. C. Sethna and Dr. L. K. Pandit, of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, have noticed Dadaji's overflowing affection for all who come to him or even may not come. For his love radiates beyond the confines of the Dada Brotherhood.

An informed member of the Brotherhood, Mr. D. C. Chakravarty writes that elites and intellectuals, as also scientists from foreign countries, have grown eager to meet Dadaji and felt the appeal of his attraction, while those who have attempted to probe into Dadaji's mystic profoundness have been pleasantly baffled and yet drawn nearer.

Indeed, the attachment grows. For instance, a man of deep religious conviction, Dr. R. L. Datta (Director : Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute, Bhavnagar, India) writes : "I have often written and tried to understand the message and philosophy of Dadaji. It is very difficult for me to record all the encounters of mine. Infinity cannot be bound by thought process of the mind."

Dr. Datta brought in to Dadaji at Bombay his distinguished friend from Berkeley. He was Professor Marshal F. Merriam of the Dept. of Materials Science College of Engineering, University of California. His experiences may be briefly touched here. He was taken aback when Dadaji told him something of what his house was like and advised him to return home where his son was very unwell but would soon come round to normal health. He took leave to make a move but it was raining a lot. Dadaji waved his hand, and presently the rain stopped. Similar was the experience of Dr. D.N. Naik, who had his finishing education at the University of California. Looking at the sky heavily overcast with dark clouds, he requested Dadaji to light it up with some sunshine. The sun appeared and shed its splendour over a certain area for a short while. Dr. Naik was told : The law and order of Nature need not be much disturbed.

Prof. Merriam's story stirred curiosity among his associates at home. A good team, used to conduct astro-physical researches, came over to Calcutta with a view to examine the type of Dadaji's brain activity. A demonstration was held in Calcutta at the residence of the hotel magnate Mr. Oberoi. Dadaji kept sitting and smiling in his sleeves in one room while in an adjacent one was laid out the elaborate paraphernalia of taped electrodes to record the waves of his brain, his blood pressure, his heart load and metabolic currents and resistances. But all that collection of intricate and powerful instruments failed to obtain any impression. They simply did not work though nothing was wrong with any. The notable scientists felt confounded.

Take another variety of miracle. There have been famed Sadhus who on particular occasions had brought the dying back to life and even revived the dead. In regard to such miracle healing, Dada's power acted in a right benevolent way. And top-ranking doctors have borne witness to his rare gift. But Dadaji does not set store on his performances of reclaiming the dying and the dead. Indeed, what is of especial value is his vital message, which we need to follow all the time, like a column of cloud in the day and of fire at night.

A day may come when Dadaji will choose to be off our world's stage. By his own simple divine wish one day—very far away yet—he may close his present chapter. Then he will not be here to work any more miracles. Even then his holy teaching will go on resounding. His divine grace will continue to act as a live force to raise and revive coming generations. His living words will lead the men of that day, wipe out their tears by his unseen hands and push away their fears by his echoing voice of hope. His treasured message will spark brightly and illumine our mind dipped in darkness. Devotion to Dadaji need not be pinned to his power of performing miracles. The lamp of devotion may burn bright for ages, much as the Gitā of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the strains of Lord Gauranga sway the hearts of believers today.

This luminous lamp has been drawing good many seekers. A very notable one among them is Mr. Bruce Kell, an able judge of values. He feels, he has had the happiness of listening to the inarticulate resonance of the Mahānāma. The other day he had come all the way from Australia to see Dadaji.

I should refer to an observation of Dr. L. K. Pandit, if I am reporting him aright. We had a few whispering words exchanged on Dadaji's comment on 'zero'—a wonder of mathematical symbols, that in Indian metaphysics means 'avyaya': ever the same in value, neither exhaustible nor reducible. Dr. Pandit observed: "Dadaji is absorbed in his

work on 'supreme science'—the science of the supreme value. And he has no experiment to make. He has had the result ready with him. His knowledge is inborn."

This, indeed, is a good analysis of supreme science that is God's truth. It comes along its own way of revelation. Natural and Physical sciences pursue the method of experimentation. The Supreme is attainable by the pure knowledge of ever-living bliss. In the West, probably, Descartes was the first to have opened this issue when he framed the syllogism :

God possesses all perfection ;
existence is a perfection ;
therefore God exists.

What throws a tender aura about Dadaji is his love of man. It is this that fills us with faith in his role as the comrade in our spiritual trials and travails. While his ways are inexplicable, the effects are felt realities. Reality keeps itself hidden but it animates us with his presence, sending his rays into the dim area where—we may or may not know—the indwelling spirit resides. To have a glimpse of it is to witness the profoundest miracle.

Between the natural and the supernatural the border line is rather thin. Any high and noble power at work takes a mysterious turn. Indeed it is a miracle, for example, how a Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Tagore wreathes his words and ideas in uncommon cadence and unearthly excellence. Many great discoveries in science likewise came about incalculably and unexpectedly, and the result had been a surprising revelation even to the discoverer.

Every age and every country abounds in anecdotes about miracles performed by redeemers and mediators, seers and saints. Since religion has universal appeal, compared to arts and sciences, a large fund of folklore on religious miracles has ever been in circulation in all countries, shared by all men, learned and unlearned.

But science does not stop short and compromise. To entertain doubt is its virtue, its badge of honour. So, it is out to

enquire into the how and why of every event. What it means and how it turns out is a question that compels a scientist to seek to uncover the reason behind an occurrence. Even then there may well be a limit to the exploration of the cause or the causes. The Maker's mysteries are after all unfathomable. As such, god-men's doings, in this context, defy analysis, more or less. One may say, the supernatural is something like Nature acting at times without causal coherence; in a sense, the Quantum theory of Physics applied to the field of metaphysical miracles.

A miracle as a rule laughs at logic. Anyway, the finer and the more elevating mysteries keep us dumb and confounded. A thrill overwhelms us, and in vain we grope our way to causes of events. In fact, any unusual miracle—such as are much more than magic—is inexplicable and undefinable. Nevertheless, men of science, true to their high calling, are not prepared to leave a subject before a definition can be framed and an explanation formulated.

In that solemn scientific spirit, recently, at the end of the 2nd week of January 1975, the eminent American psychophysicist, Dr. Karlis Osis, accompanied by his able young assistant, Dr. E. Heraldsson, visited Dadaji with a view to collect first hand reports on the many miracles credited to Dadaji. His interest, obviously, lay in finding facts, not reviewing philosophies, of miracles. Surely, his collections of various reports, from men who have directly witnessed or have been connected with these marvels, are going to prove a very interesting document of a very attractive area of human affairs. They will be more than captivating stories, for the events are profoundly puzzling and the recording is going to be strictly scientific.

Even then it should be noted that miracles have little human worth if they do not go beyond providing mere amusement or amazement, beyond catering to the excitement for novelty-seekers. And the central focus is lost if it be not realised that the performer of miracles is more important

than his performances. I would submit : the super miracle is the divine man who rather absent-mindedly does the miracles, and does them for the good of man, not for his entertainment or even wonderment. To me it has always been evident that the essence of the miracle is this man, Dadaji himself ; while any miracle is to be judged by its power for moral elevation or spiritual illumination. And, after all, its abiding value lies in awakening in man faith in God, aiding the vision of God at work. As Emerson says : "A miracle is the only means by which God can make a communication to man, that shall be known to be from God". (*Young Emerson Speaks*, 1958)

9

A Trial of A Saint

HE was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned
word, he was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater
Community. —W. H. Auden

The first philosopher of the West, Pythagoras (530 B. C.) was expelled for the offence of undertaking the moral reformation of the society. His doctrine of purifying soul, with a view to help it escape the cycle of birth, irritated the authorities. They expelled him from place to place, they crushed his school of "Magna Graecia" and burnt the meeting houses of his religious brotherhood. When he died of broken heart, he has been enshrined in the memory of man!

Small men do not spare their great men. Whoever loves mankind is bound to be man-handled. Great men have ever been on the dock since about the dawn of civilization. Such a great man is on trial today in a Calcutta Court.

Calcutta awoke on the 12th December, 1973, with a strange news. The papers flashed: Dadaji was under arrest last night in the small hours before daybreak. In that dim quiet hour a fleet of police vans enclosed a small house on Anwar Shah Road (South Calcutta), with an army of police guards hanging on the scene. No, not a leading burglar, not a notorious kill-devil, but only a humble saint was taken to Calcutta's Police Headquarters at Lalbazar.

The big operation was rather much too big. The enormous display in wide columns and bold headlines made the news amusingly out of proportion. After all that drumming, the police asked for long enough time for more investigation, though, reportedly, the arrest was made after months of diligent spying.

Anyway, the waves of event in Calcutta splashed against far away shores of Bombay and Madras. All over people were amazed. But they were more tickled than worried.

One charge is forgery. The accused is alleged to have forged a deed of gift of a modest house on Bepin Pal Road, South Calcutta.

Dadaji declined to be any party to the transaction. Having had nothing whatever to do with it, he returned the deed to a friend and follower. The friend had a wave of afterthought of moving the Court against the disinterested person.

The charge now waits to be proved in the Court. Till the judgment is not given, nothing is to be publicly said on its legal issue. Law is sacred. Lawyers will presently debate over the merit of the charge-sheet.

Meanwhile lay men may only talk about the tasty rumour that has been afloat. And it is this : Dadaji is a showman, under the cloak of a god-man. His profession is to delude simple folk by his power of magic, which is all flim-flam in the guise of spiritual bluff. Before the court of philosophy this accusation may now be briefly argued.

The good God's own creation is a massive magic, contrived by *maya* (power of illusion) that God employs in His work of creation. Indeed, the Creator has been regarded as the one who spreads the net of illusion : *yo eko jālavān* (Śvetasvatara Up. III, 1). When the world is a magic or illusion, what's wrong with any one who in imitation of the Lord practises magic, as long as it does not improve his own matter nor harm anyone, in so far as it is not black by any effect. *Māyā*, as Max Muller (*Indian Philosophy*, p. 243) comments, "is the cause of a phenomenal, not a fictitious world." That is to say, creative *māyā* has a base of truth.

About the kind of magic attributed to Dadaji, the Hon-ble the Chief Justice of Calcutta High court, writing on Sept. 28, 1972, pays this tribute :

Dadaji is a personality, initiating a new chapter of life in history, to whom eminent people from all

walks of life convey their sincerest tribute as the Supreme Wisdom in human form. He has come to establish the truth that a human heart is the most potential source of the Cosmic Divine Consciousness.

This is an estimate recorded a year or so before the police raid and the sensational arrest.

Such reverence has not at all evaporated. Some seven months after the arrest, the case still pending, Dadaji visited Bhavnagar and Bombay. His host, a high-souled millionaire, Shri G. T. Kamdar, had built at his place in Bhavnagar a spacious temple dedicated to Śri Śri Satyanārāyaṇa. His wife, Shrimati Kamdar is a lady of advanced spiritual life, and is justly addressed as Mātāji. At Bhavnagar a good number of eminent journalists of Bombay attended the rally, out of personal love and admiration for Dadaji. Naturally, the press report was profuse and profound. Nobody was least disturbed by any shadow of the pending case in Calcutta Court.

In fact, it was at this time that His Holiness the Samkaracharya of Dwarka Math had come to make submission to Dadaji and receive his blessing. Those who witnessed the marvellous scene were nearly choked with amazement and mystification that the Holy Samkaracharya was happy to be overpowered by the refulgent aura that played around Dadaji, whose right hand, as if it was made exclusively of light, softly rested on the head of His Holiness. The team of notable pressmen recorded their own exuberant impression of Dadaji as the loving redeemer.

The scene in Bombay was naturally more full of enthusiasm, of an environment mingled with elegance and sophistication. The elites and intellectuals, the cine-stars and industrial moguls were eager to have darsan of Dadaji. A most meaningful event was that the celebrated counsel, Mr. N. A. Palkhivala paid Dadaji a solemn homage and in all humility received the god-man's blessing, as the saint's blissful hand was laid on the legal luminary's learned head. Such

was the reverential reception accorded to a man under trial.

People of poor knowledge and impure heart do not have mental equipment to size up a man of divine mystery. They deserve pity, even compassion. They are incapable of forming even a most vague conception of the incomprehensible.

History has horrid charges against human-divines and tragic punishments are usual, for these are pretty abstract. In such cases, as Radhakrishnan says : "We kill one another for doubtful definitions of the unknown."

Once Dadaji said that the police action, followed by law suit, against him was preordained by destiny. This is an old belief among all people. Pre-destination is the decree of Kâla (Time) in the view of the Hindu Purânas. A long discourse on prârabdha (pre-ordained consequence) appears in Yogavâsîstha Râmâyana. Not man alone, even gods are subject to the inexorable ordeal of paying for the deeds of previous births, which set the wheel of rebirth rolling along. Chinese fatalism is not far different. The Islamic tenet is suggested by the term : 'kismet'. Plato was a believer in this ancient dogma. The Roman concept was that destiny was a decree of God.

The dogma is undying. In modern times the morbid faith in fate lingers on :

Those with a stake in the status quo often assert that the good and bad in life are controlled by God or fate, and are hence beyond the power of mortal man to change.

—Chester Bowles, *Ideas, People And Peace*, p. 56.

This belief is a convenient course to peace of mind. An informed analysis of doctrine of predestination forms a part of Max Weber's general studies in religious systems. He "deduced that an unfathomable divine decision concerning the fate of men in the hereafter would produce great anxiety among a people intensely concerned with the salvation of their souls, and he assumed that this anxiety was at its height

in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1904-05.)

Dadaji's belief in predestination is not any attitude of helplessness. It is a cheerful recognition of the inevitable. Nothing is to be regarded as good or bad, but one has to rise higher and feel beatified at whatever happens: *na sat na cāsat śiva eva kevalah* (Śvetāśwatara Up., IV, 18.) This sense of resignation, this power of rising above mere pleasantness and unpleasantness, is not any easy stoicism, but the soaring of a mighty spirit.

Man does not like to be alone. Unwell when he is lonely, he loves to live in community. Yet one feels sick when he finds that another is finer. He is rarely just, and the more unjust, he cries for justice against others; in this regard exceptions are few. Consequently, he who is notably kind to fellowman is repaid with gross unkindness.

Higher a man is the more he is exposed to uncharity. The high-souled one is rewarded with accusation and viewed with jealousy. A man is great by the quality of his heart and head. It is common knowledge; but this does not influence the behaviour against our great and good ones, who look after the society in lieu of their own interests. Small men have little comprehension of the great love, the sweet sacrificial service, of their great men.

A man in love with fellowman happens to be a suspect and is a target of envy just for the fact that he is too great to be sized up properly. So, a majority is indifferent while only a small minority keeps on and pays due homage. A great man is thus besieged by unfriendliness in a variety of ways. In every society, at all times, there are restlessly at work a number of men, gifted with malign power, who do not tolerate one for the only reason that one is much higher and immeasurably greater; and instead of love and admiration they are inspired by envy and malice.

They are often very able managers of mischief and have a notorious talent for organizing public resistance to the one

guilty of great goodness. When knaves lead fools, one who should be adorable is inevitably made a victim of cool and calculated cruelty and thrown at the mercy of the misguided. This has been so even in the advanced West. Indeed, everywhere and at all times, the man who is verily the glory of mankind has been damaged by infamy and then persecuted with banishment, disgrace, even death. When worldly intrigues take such horrid turns, life on earth is in the grip of utter discord. The realisation of the venomous perversity comes long afterwards. Mankind is in mourning only when it is too late.

In India of old there was no persecution over religious opinions. Controversies were limited to academic criticisms and jeering comments. The Veda was held inviolable. To go against it was branded as atheism. Even then when Buddha deviated from the Vedic path and denied its value, even he was not stopped from preaching, far less given any mortal injury. It was only in medieval India that bigotry grew intolerant. Śri Chaitanya was tortured and banished by the lords of Tāntric vocation. Ultimately Chaitanya's message of love and defiance of forms prevailed, but not in his lifetime. Generally speaking, whoever shines in the glory of God, whoever communicates the dream of a new day, is crushed with opposition, smeared with poisonous gossip and finally thrown to the wolves. This is the tragedy of human holiness.

Man's education in righteousness and human values is badly belated. Its horribly expensive knowledge is gained only after poisoning a Socrates, crucifying a Christ and burning a Joan at the stake. A general picture of the price paid for love of man but shows: "The wicked plotteth against the just." History's undying heroes have risen after they were put to death. Men lament over the injuries they inflict only very leisurely. The innocence of the noble victims is seldom proved before it is too late. And then, with belated conscience the once mortally persecuted are installed as

immortals. Trials of the great are indeed the trials of mankind in the court of history.

From this larger background it may not be irrelevant to recount here, in very brief outline, the trials of Pythagoras, Socrates, Jesus, Galileo and Joan of Arc. No thesis on a spiritual topic can be understood in their true perspective without the lessons of these trials.

Even if there had been no Socrates, even if he might have been Plato's creation of a philosophical allegory, Socrates is more real than many living beings. And the singularly inspiring part of the great tale is that, offered an opportunity to escape, Socrates refused and stayed on to "tell the truth in his own words."

What most profoundly turned the trend of man's spiritual remaking was the trial of Jesus. Jews, led by Judas, charged Jesus of violating the Old Testament as also of blasphemy of calling himself the Saviour. Punishment of blasphemy (Lev. XXIV, 16) was death. The Jews transferred the case to the Roman political authority, Pontius Pilate. Under popular pressure, he pronounced the capital punishment. The Crucifixion of Jesus is now a symbol of the guilt of whole mankind.

This is how men mistreated the prophets who lived before you.

—*The Sermon on the Mount.*

The indictment before the Athenian Court stated :

Socrates is guilty on the ground that he does not recognize the gods recognized by the State, but introduces other new divinities ; he is further guilty on the ground that he corrupts the youth. The penalty is death.

Even as a young man, Socrates earned a name for wisdom. He encountered even the leading sophist, Protagoras. The Delphic oracle had pronounced that no man was wiser than Socrates. His guilt in regard to youths was that he influenced them to argue with parents and the noted superiors of

Athens. This was resented by the elders and important citizens.

Socrates charged the main accuser: "But tell me, in the name of Zeus, do you really think that I believe there is no God?" Meletus cried out: "By Zeus, I swear that you believe there is no God at all." Thus by a logical twist, Socrates disproved the allegation that he "introduced other new divinities." On the contrary, Socrates made the accusers small by making an impassioned declaration about himself:

Such a man, citizens, you will not find easily again, and if you take my advice you will spare me. And that I am such a gift of God to the State you can see from this my conduct; for it is not in the ordinary course of human nature that I should have been thus neglectful of my own affairs, and have suffered my household interests to be uncared for these many years, while I was continually busying myself with yours, going about to each one of you individually, like a father or an elder brother, and trying to take thought for virtue.

What enraged citizens and their chiefs was that Socrates charged that leaders, including Pericles himself, were unmindful of higher values and so they did not fulfil the first condition of true leadership and rulership. He advocated rule by intellectuals, and doubted the value of government by votes. Democracy, it may be remembered, had been ridiculed by many thinkers—from Aristophanes to Bernard Shaw. Rousseau wittily observed: "Only gods are fit to run a democracy." However, not political jugglery but moral debility was Socrates's point of attack. And it was also his regard for the moral law—truth, *satya*—that he did not yield to the entreaty to escape, and with his last prayer to the gods, Socrates drank the hemlock.

When Joan of Arc (1431) was captured, her one solace that kept up her spirit was that "voices" still rang in her ears, speaking to her heart to remain brave and faithful. Before a court consisting of 117 hard-headed persons, includ-

ing priests, professors and counsels, and with no one to aid or advise her, there still burned in her "the fire of the spirit", still sparkled the sure sense of "having God within her". Each day of the long internment, for long hours, hammered by heartless questionings from all sides, the simple peasant girl by the power of her simple honesty answered the judges and lawyers: "May God retain me in His grace. I would rather die than know that I were without the pale of the grace and love of God."

In this connexion, the Article 1 of the Accusations may be remembered: "A certain woman says and affirms, that being of the age of thirteen or thereabouts, she has beheld with her mortal eyes Saint Maichael, who came to offer her consolation, and sometimes also Saint Gabriel, who appeared to her under a corporeal form...that she even beholds them daily and has heard their voices...that the two saints repeatedly stated to her, by the order of God, that it was necessary she should repair to a certain secular prince, and promise him, that by her assistance and labour he should recover, by force of arms, a very large temporal domain and great worldly honour. ... The saints said and commanded her to execute many other things, in consequence of which she styles herself the messenger of the God of heaven and of the church triumphant."

When the final act was to be performed, Joan asked all the clerics and all her enemies to pray for her. All that she asked for was holy water. As the flames shot up and the smoke enveloped her, she looked up and burst with the one last word: Jesus!

The trial of Galileo (1633) was of a milder order, compared to what have been just narrated. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Copernicus had proved: the earth revolves round the sun. Galileo, a century later, developed the theory, and also added his findings about other planets, showing, especially, that Jupiter had satellites. This was not all. He did not stop with his scientific discoveries. He

suggested that the Church might revise the Holy Bible in respect of these revelations of science. He wrote :

It appears to me, therefore, that no effect of nature, which experience places before our eyes, or is the necessary conclusion derived from evidence, should be rendered doubtful by passages of Scripture which contain thousands of words admitting of various interpretations, for every sentence of Scripture is not bound by such rigid laws as is every effect of Nature.

Controversy heightened in the course of two decades. Galileo was summoned to Rome. The charges were introduced by Pope Urban VIII : "May God forgive him, for having involved himself in these questions...There is one argument which nobody has been ever able to refute, which is that God is Almighty and may do as He sees fit. If He can do all, why question His works ?"

Galileo was forced to abjure his faith, his pride, as he had conceived it.

Having before my eyes the holy gospel, on which I now lay my hands, swear that I have always believed, and now believe, and God helping, that I shall for the future always believe whatever the holy catholic and apostolic Roman church holds, preaches, and teaches .. this holy office had enjoined me by precept, entirely to relinquish the false dogma which maintains that the sun is the centre of the world, and immovable, and that the earth is not the centre, and moves...

The notice of this abjuration was communicated to all professors of philosophy and mathematics. That such a brave mind could bend is not the point here. His half-uttered words, after the abjuration : "still the earth moves" is the testimony that man cannot forget truth even at the hour of his mortal defeat.

Anyway, these tales, unconnected with our subject proper, are introduced in the hope that they chasten man's mind. In our trials of worldly life at times we need to look up to a moral dimension. In practical life, decision-making at a higher level often calls for impractical wisdom, but the

risks of expensive possibilities are taken. A plain speculation of a spiritual turn may here be cited :

But in carrying out my responsibilities, it has been necessary for me to say 'no' one hundred times for every occasion on which it was possible for me to say 'yes'.

—Chester Bowles, *The Conscience of a Liberal*, p. 154.

Man is at his best when his mind is at its finest flight. Yet mind is usually unruly. It muddles its own peace as often as it poisons the peace of another. And it gets entangled in the coils of wayward desires that promise happiness, but the promise fails or it is founded on false premise.

The art of good life is to cultivate the mind and stir up its latent excellence. To be able to rouse mind to its own unearthly height is not that easy, of course. But when we gain a measurable success in directing mind along its higher course, it is easily able to quell the primary animal in man which is too often on the alert to defeat his dignity, distort his dreams, defile his divinity. The soul then loses its strength to break open the prison gates of impious passions.

All that needs a tremendous discipline. Our education in general provides some aid. Our habits are so to be framed as we may make good thoughts come easy. Of course, a tug of war is on all the time, and copy book morals about good and bad fail most often. We have so to train our instinct that good thought may not need to await conscious effort, that we may shut out evil much as "our eyelids close before we are aware that the fly is about to enter the eyes."

Our animal heritage of million years weighs heavily on our finer resolve. Our pride that "Man shall be man" is often laid low. Our double nature is too often in tension. It is to stimulate our nobler nature that we have to arrest our easy-going mind. Nevertheless, men have had Buddha and Laotse, Plato and Newton, Whitman and Tagore. And we take inspiration from the great masters and remember that we belong to a great order.

Most direct aid we receive from spiritual teachers. The tales and trials of our god-men, our human-divines, fill our mind and heart and soul with the belief that we are sons of the Immortal—*amṛtasya putrāḥ*.

Today a god-man of the kind is at work for us. He is Dadaji—an elder brother, an elder comrade. He says: Knowledge of the higher law of life is too trying for common men, not within the range of an ordinary one's normal ability. But man has his right to this life and the life divine. So, even within one's normal resources of mental powers, man has to have the bliss of good life. Just as an economically poor man has right to a human living so also the spiritually poor one cannot be left out. God is as much his as of the saint's. But this simple course must be made workable for him. That, Dada says, is to take the Name of the Supreme One—Śri Satyanārāyaṇa, as he puts it—in his heart as often as he may, in sacred silence and without any show.

When questions provoke Dadaji, he gives many sweet and sound but all simple talks—unloaded with scriptural phrases, as a rule. But simple talks on spiritual subjects are not so simple as they may sound. They are to be mastered by meditation and felt in the depth of the heart. Often Dadaji sits or remains reclined in a sweet, absent-minded silence, his mind roaming far away. But even then his unspoken speech behind the words that vibrate in the minds of the audience do the work of illumination.

Pray for the sunbeam for your interior illumination, he says. To hold communion with your own mind, at available intervals, will give your mind a certain poise which is wanted for a life of peace. To allow yourself to be overpowered by suggestions of another is a wrong that you do your own personality. Go by your own suggestion; when you take instruction, compare it with the voice of your own mind. Rise by your own power. You have the power; find it and hold on to it.

Have the right regard for your own self. To slight yourself is about as bad as vanity. And to have balance, have regard for others as well, with the faith that they and you belong to one another. That way you go up your highway to the love of God. And love with the mother's love for her only child; love as the lover who is wholly lost in his or her beloved, where no two-ness remains. A sense of the two is valid in a most fine way, but the two is to be inseparably merged in one fullness, absorbed in one another.

Dadaji says : love suffering—the crown of thorns, as it is said. That is the one way to overcome sorrow. Say to yourself that what is sublime is yours : sorrow that is petty is an insult to your nobility. Remember : Kṛṣṇa suffered for you; Śiva swallowed poison on your behalf ; Jesus took your suffering on himself. You belong to mankind inasmuch as you offer to bear the sorrows of others. Divine love is just what does not divide man. The test of higher life is peace within and love all around. A life of faith is really alive when it is mingled with love. Dadaji says : knowledge is on the right road when it begins with love and ends in love. With hate and envy begins the fall.

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will.

—William Butler Yeats.

Mind is a rebel. That is the allegory of the Paradise Lost. The rebel is all the time being converted. All religion, all poetry, all science, in their mystic elevation are but ways of wooing and winning the rebel. The real conqueror is love.

To return to the trial. Goodness is always on trial. Huxley's solemn manifesto : "Truth's a menace" (*Brave New World*) reveals how common is reaction to truth. Nevertheless, there may be occasions when truth also wins. Most brethren of Dadaji share the deep faith of John Wycliffe :

"In the end the truth will conquer." (J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*). Meanwhile he remains at once a world celebrity *and* a controversial divinity.

What a furore was made at the time and in the manner of the arrest, though a long enough time is being taken to substantiate the charge-sheet, delaying the date for argument. Immediately after the arrest, the police at Bombay interrogated Mr. Abhi Bhattacharya, the cinestar : what was his reaction to the arrest of the saint he was so particularly devoted to. His reply was simply a hearty, rhythmic laughter, in unshakable belief in the god-man. It is a belief that has been largely shared and warmly held.

10 Mankind on the Move

THE stream of religious life in India has been on the ebb and flow along immemorial ages. At times the stream shrinks, at times the bed is all but dry or nearly muddy ; at other times, copious waters rush on musically and majestically, overflowing the banks, fertilizing the territories and embellishing the human environment. But it is the same lively river that goes on for ever.

Just so, in a sense, the Dada movement does not begin only today nor will it come to an end with him. His words will be echoing through the corridors of continuing time, while generations will be heartened by his message and inspired to refill their belief.

It was Lord Kṛṣṇa who had led the way. It was he who took up the task of tuning the life of faith, having declared himself the incarnation of God. He appeared at an age of crisis—the first noticeable in our history. Then the ancient Vedic tradition had grown dim and doubtful. The soul of man was stifled under a heap of forms.

The crisis today in our society is even more complicated and confounding : to our homely ailments have been added—for good or for evil—the strange exports from the modern West, and that is the trial of living in a one world. Eastern religion, Western philosophy and modern science make the complex fabric of life today. An answer has to be found. A reincarnation of Kṛṣṇa to answer our new times has come in. He is Dadaji. His thoughts already largely sway people in many parts of India and the world.

As the Vedic values had become old and invalid, while codifying the Veda, Vyāsa drew up the great epic : the Mahābhārata. The hero of the whole piece was Kṛṣṇa. And he had

been noticeably backed by grandfather Bhīṣma, great as a warrior and no less great as a truth-teller.

The caste system was not yet hopelessly hardened. The highly authoritative Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, appended to the R̥gveda, was the work of a sage known to have been the son of a maidservant, named Itarā i.e. low-born. Vyāsa himself was born of a fisher-maid, Matsyagandhā by name. He was rather black in complexion. It is also doubtful if the five Pāṇḍava brothers were traditionally as noble by birth as were king Duryodhana and his brothers. At least, the proposal of sharing a one wife between five brothers was regarded by the bride's father, Drupada, King of Pāncāla, as a custom not in accord with his land.

Of course, colour does not mean much. The non-Aryan god, Śiva was snow-white, his one consort Umā was bright as gold, while the other, the Mother goddess Kālī, was dark black. Kṛṣṇa's beloved, Rādhā was adorably exquisite. Much as cloud and lightning; Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are all the time together and yet seeking one another. Kṛṣṇa woos her, wins her, but lodged right well in his heart, all the same she is stricken with the fear of losing him. An idyllic game goes on: an endless yearning for union even while remaining incorporated. And in their embrace, the earth and heaven meet, making the earth more heavenly and bringing the heaven nearer to the earth. The holy urge of love throbs with ecstatic trance.

To return to more sombre doctrines. One that Kṛṣṇa emphasises is: act well your part, and honour the assignment. But he enjoins: perform your duty much as you perform yoga (Gītā: II, 48), inclining the mind to non-attachment. To idle away is to live in darkness. The Vedic hymn to the mobility of life is a stirring call to action:

Whoever keeps going he attains the good things of life. Who moves onward, the god Indra becomes his comrade...So, on you go, on you go.

Whoever loves to be on the move, his body gains the beauty of a flower and his soul is in excellent bloom. So, on you go, on you go.

Look up and see how the Sun god, the source of all light, has started on his non-stop journey since the creation began, and never has he fallen into dozing for a while on the roadside. So, on you go, on you go.

— Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.

The conventional law of *karma* has little room for relaxation. The goal of life runs through a chain of rebirths, in terms of merit or demerit of actions of the previous birth. In a way it points to fatalism but there is little indulgence to discontent or resentment; rather, a reconciliation with trials and tribulations is encouraged. For, it provides an incentive to good action to undo any sad effects of the last birth. A better life for the next birth is promised. Divisions into castes have no heartless intentions. To every grade is allotted its particular rights and obligations.

This plain doctrine of *karma* has been raised to a philosophical height:

It does not expect that the world will be suddenly and miraculously transformed by a war or revolution, or an act of God. It embraces vast stretches of time, cycles of human ages, whose successive lives gravitate in concentric circles, and travel ever slowly towards the centre, the place of Deliverance—already attained in certain of the souls of the Prophets. Such a philosophy knows no discouragement: it is never impatient. It knows that there is time. The full cycle of Time must be accomplished. It watches the turn of the wheel and it waits. For this proud philosophy demands most of those who are capable of most.

— Ananda K. Coomarswamy, *The Dance of Śiva*.

The ring of action and reaction, the causal circle, has been conceived of as Śiva's rhythmic dance.

From this poetic flight we may return to the prosaic procedure of spiritual tenets. However, one is bound to be disappointed, if he looks for a clear-cut rule of procedure. Take a simple example: the Gītā's injunction on sin (*pāpa*).

The Lord once categorically declares (V, 15) that He is not concerned with any one's vice or virtue. Nevertheless, He warns (III, 33) : Arjuna will acquire sin if he fails to go to war but will have freedom from sin (II, 38) if he goes in for war. And finally, Arjuna is assured : he will be absolved from all sin (XVIII, 66) if he seeks refuge in Him. Or, take another example. At several instances the Lord mildly deprecates the Veda, and yet He is the objective (XV, 15) of all the knowledge of the Veda.

The higher one rises, it may be, the more blurred becomes the vision of the Reality. The Chinese ideal of Tao (the Way) has been aptly called the Unseen Reality. Indeed, all truths at their best are pretty inexact and indefinable. In unison with the essence, they are likely to be not known nor seen ; they are only felt and perceived. A religious emotion or experience, by its very subtlety and sublimity, has a quality that eludes observation or analysis. Nevertheless it is real. And, on some rare occasions, seers of supreme holiness are pleased to make it in a way visible even to ordinary men like us.

Indeed, a layer of high and harmless magic lies beneath every symbol of worship. Undoubtedly, a deity dwells in an image, made of mud or metal or stone or drawn on a portrait. All that is no hallucination. It is a substantial magic. Cosmic reality is communicable. The symbol conveys—does not conceal—the reality, which is therein. It is only brought out, not brought about by any trick of showmanship. In fact, what is unmanifest is made manifest.

When or where a faith is shrouded by convention, the life in image remains unawakened. For example, the priest Raghupati, in Tagore's lyrical drama—*Visarjan*—had but to have recourse to a pure stunt that the deity had spoken out her wishes. On the contrary, Sri Ramakrishna proved that his Mother goddess Kāli was alive and could be talked to. And this he proved to none but the firm doubter, Narendranath (later known as Vivekananda) who was as full of ques-

tions even in his student life as to have been on writing terms with Herbert Spencer. It may be noted that Spencer in a way agrees with the concept of Power behind the universe: "The power which manifests itself in consciousness is but a differently conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness". (*Ecclesiastical Institutions*, p. 838).

However, mode of worship is never the same in every country or in every age. And every holy man has his own vision of Reality. The power of creativity under a veil of illusion is no myth. The very concept of God is that He is all-powerful. As such, an urge to cultivate power is human. But it is productive of good when cultivated with a good motive. It must not be allowed to be tainted with temptation, to be selfish and self-willed. Power is to be true to its godly source: to be enlivened with sweetness, free from sensation, informed with purity of purpose and conducive to peace of mind. That is what Dadaji says to his brethren. Earn power, he enjoins, but see to it that it hurts no one and, above all, it confirms belief in the existence of God.

It is the sensation of bliss that tells us that God exists. Dadaji says this so often. This view, I may here have leave to recount, came up again in the course of a talk on February 23, 1975. Mr. Sen Gupta (of the Economic Times) said: sense of sorrow takes man away from the path that should be his. Mr. Acharia added: Joy is so little while sorrow is so vast. Dadaji said: No. It is just the other way about. The sweep of joy is much vaster; it is this that secures man against all gusts of sorrow.

This spiritual tone went rather unheeded. A diversion was then created. Dadaji waived his palm several times and Mr. Acharia smelt each time a different scent. The talk was farther diverted. One narrated at length how Dadaji from Calcutta released a wave of miracles that did him great good in Madras. Another reported how his neice in Manchester was saved by a miracle that was understandably worked by

Dadaji from Calcutta. Miracles are facts of life; but their spiritual worth is often limited. This he always stresses.

So, it is wrong to go after miracle and mystery. It is not to be a hobby; it is to be a service. A mania for miracles leaves the mind unwell and unsure. In his view, power is what chastens and strengthens the mind and holds a light in its inner region.

Priest became debased by morbid love of low power. Dadaji is sternly and systematically against it. In good old days, however, priesthood was not polluted by cunningness for power. The Vedic *purohita* was dedicated to the well-being (i.e. *hita*) of the family, of the king or the commonalty. (A. B. Keith, *Oxford History of India*, vol. I, p.95). A valuation of this ancient institution may be given below :

The State in India has not, till recently, claimed the right to regulate private worship or to treat places of worship as public places subject to State control. Hinduism has had no priesthood. The description of the Brahman as a priest is incorrect. All persons who are entitled to perform sacrifice can themselves officiate as such, but with suitable guidance in the intricate technique of the sacrifice or Yajna. The learned Brahman supplies this guidance and renders the necessary help. But he is no priest. The Veda is the common possession to which all the twice-born (*dvija*) has access.

- K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar,
Some Aspects of the Hindu View of Life, p. 17.

The Aryan worship of the Vedic age was *Homa* or fire-ritual while the non-Aryan practice was *Pūjā*. Animal sacrifice was common, more or less. *Homa* is done with *havi* or clarified butter into an altar lit with fire; *Pūjā* is performed with flowers. The *Gītā* (IX, 26-27) narrates different styles – with flower, fruit and water, but all with reference to the deity, ranging from various manifestations of the divine power to the supreme reality of God. And these varying forms have little conflict among them.

Hinduism has been a concert of diverse religious melodies whose basic harmony has been appropriately and solemnly

pronounced by Swami Vivekananda in 1893 at the International Congress of Religions that was celebrated in Chicago. The Swamiji poured out his noble conviction in a sermon that kept spell-bound the whole august galaxy of the world men of faith :

I am proud to belong to a nation which has taught the world both toleration and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.

From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatory with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion.

This is the concord of religious notes implied in Hinduism. And it is on this that Radhakrishnan founded his famous treatise : *The Hindu View of Life*. He did not feel shy of the word 'Hindu'. And he has invested the Hindu ideal with a profundity that has evoked admiration of the thoughtful world.

By the way, the word 'Hindu' originally indicated a race: not a religion. It may be noted that the word 'Aryan' was related to 'Iran'. Indo-Iranian or the Indo-Aryan conquerors, as a mark of superiority over pre-Aryan occupants of India, called them 'black-skinned'. And it was a piece of irony that these very conquering Indo-Aryans, in the course long centuries, fell a prey to the tropical climate that darkened their own colour, and Western Asians or Iranians now called them 'Hindu'—a Persian word for unfair skin.

To return to the ideal of power. Every pursuit of values leads to growth of power. Culture, politics, economics—all give power and increase it. Indeed, power is the pivot on which all live actions turn. The Vedic devotee begged of the Sun-god to enliven him with his celestial rays that both purify and energise. The key-note of Tantra is the quest for power over others. The Vaiṣṇava view of power is what

sweetens the soul. It is viewed as Hlādinī Śakti: the power that is blended with bliss and illumined with love. This blissful love is personified by Rādhā: while her own heart is crushed by her impetuous will for union with Kṛṣṇa, the very vibrations of her abandonment crushes the world's heart in its sacred fury and romantic symphony.

The theme of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa has an unflinching fascination for Dadaji. Energy is the essence of life. But then, he holds, it is only a spiritualised energy that invests life with a right vigour. Undisciplined by love, power only leads to disharmony in human relations. For example, Tantra worship is gripped by lust of such power as runs into wild eddies of evil, when the gracious vision of the Mother goddess is lost. Similarly, science, in its superb non-material dedication to the quest for the laws of Nature and the energy of creativity is the greatest boon and a revealing light. On the contrary, diverted to sordid contests for power, science loses its meaning and directive; then it turns out to be a menace and a mortification for mankind. The foundation of science is its great dream of knowing what is in the heart of creation. It is for this inherent intellectual purity of science that not only the great discoveries awaken the awe of the students of Nature but also the very lives of the discoverers have a human thrill.

Likewise, the "lantern" of Jesus shed its serene light on the Dark Age of Europe. The Christian fathers touched the heart of the suffering folk, and in affectionate recognition of their sympathy they were called 'papa', from which came the word 'Pope'. And yet before very long the "lantern" grew dim, and Papacy was involved in gross power. On Christmas Day of 800 A. D., Charles I (Charlemagne) came to Rome to receive the crown from the Pope. "Charles Augustus, crowned by God": was the Pope's blessing. Power of the sort rapidly rose. From the Church to the State it extended. Pope Gregory VII summoned king Henry IV of France to be judged at Rome, not for his moral vices

only but also for misgovernment. And the whole Western world saw the spectacle of their mighty Emperor "standing bare-foot and woolen-frocked" in the yard of the castle of Canosa, awaiting leave to be admitted into the hall where the Pope would absolve him.

It took time. But the State retaliated. At the Jubilee of 1300 A.D., Pope Boniface VIII was seated "on the throne of Constantine, arrayed with sword, and crown, and sceptre, shouting aloud 'I am Ceasar—I am Emperor'". And it was on his death that Philip the Fair of France, in 1305, set up a Pope of his own choice. Here began the rise of the secular State. Here began the decline of the Church of Rome. The fall was complete when the Treaty of Westphalia, in 1648, concluded the Thirty Years War of Religion.

The secular State went to excess. It generated—though that was not directly intended—disregard for religion. The modern man.

has the feeling that our religious truths have somehow or other grown empty. Either they cannot reconcile the scientific and religious outlooks, or Christian tenets have lost their authority and their psychological justification. People no longer feel themselves to be redeemed by the death of Christ; they cannot believe—they cannot compel themselves to believe, however happy they may deem the man who has a belief.

—C. G. Jung, *Man in Search of a Soul*.

At the same time, spiritual life began to weaken when "science undermined belief in transcendental religion and so prepared the way for positivistic superstitions." (Aldous Huxley, quoted by Vaughan Jones, *Democracy and Civilization*)

But all our investments in modernism have not given us the key to peace. Persecuted by disappointments, man, it is obvious, has been led to a renewed search for old remedies. At least, knowledge today has ceased to ridicule faith. However slow and whispering, there is a rising inquiry in the West about the old "lantern" for new light.

The 'young rebels' pose another problem. At the same time, they reveal another hope, which slowly but surely may attain fulfilment, even though today they are frantically worried and bewildered. At times they are tantalised by the promises of elders to make the world better for them. It is these half-hearted promises that shock the young. And thus, annoyed with themselves for one reason and angry with us for another, they grow wayward and desperate. Without enough confidence in themselves they cannot well convert despair into any positive activity yet. But before long they will be on the right road to creative enterprise. If they still go in for destruction that is because they are ailing from confusion about what construction is like. It is time that elders realise the common loss and open a broad way to understand and be understood. Indeed, nothing is built unless the old and the young build together.

The world over the same distemper and tumult is raging. Here indeed is a one world : the angry and agonised world of the young—India, Japan, Rome, Germany, France, America, Mexico, England are in the same high tide. Maybe their ideas are immature, hands unskilled, eyes failing to see far. Yet they all have a compelling urge to mould a fair future, to outgrow the horror of a dark void about to swallow all their todays and tomorrows.

They have a will to see the light of a dawn and hear the song of a radiant day-break. They have a resolution to see through new dimensions, to keep the flame of intellect clear and correct. They have to have a hope to live by, a zeal to press forward.

Youth is likely not to remain unaware of its essence of the mind. Natural sense of values one day, sooner rather than later, is sure to help remove its shades of aberrations and strike the inner light. I happened to have seen the other day quite a little of this light, Mrs. Puravi Bharatiya, M.D., a young Indian lady, who was here on a short leave from the U.S.A., was talking to Dadaji. Her turns of

thought had caught a touch of the spiritual undertone that is Dadaji's. Maybe, Mrs. Bharatiya had as well a strain of inheritance in this regard from her father Dr. N.L. Sen, a thoughtful student of Dadaji's philosophy.

It is an assuring sight that many young men and women, even boys and girls, come to see Dadaji. He enriches them with his non-material gifts. They go back with a mind radiated with a strange resolve to fill their future with fresh fragrance of faith in themselves. And then a sweet sensation keeps prompting in their heart that God is at work within.

Happy are those who work for the peace among
men :

God will call them his sons.

— *The Sermon on the Mount.*

The call of God is listened to in trustful reverence. As it happens from time to time, mankind is again on the move in quest of profound fulfilment. As yet to most minds the goal may be unclear, undefined and unchartered. But masses of men have been seized with a resentment against a blank future and animated with a spirit of setting out for an attainment, even if its outline be vague and objective rather half-understood. The very emotional awareness of being out on a great quest opens out the mind to receive the ray of Truth (Satya) and gain the grace of the Supreme (Nārāyana), afloat on the primal seas overlaying the creation about to be put into shape. Heaven's holy hand is now extended to clasp the struggling mankind, young and old, and charge them with an inward urge for worthy performance. From time to time the human world is thus notably rebuilt. And at any such turn of events a new lovely vision of glory airily hovers on the illumined horizon.

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