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How to be Happy

Are you almost disgusted with life, little man?

I'll tell you a wonderful trick

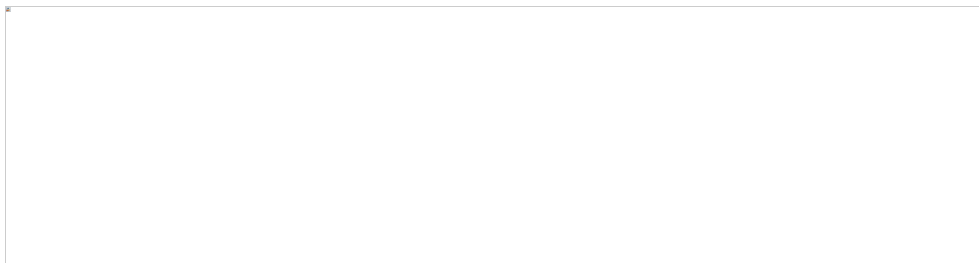
That will bring you contentment, if anything can,

Do something for somebody, quick!

Are you awfully tired with play, little girl?

Wearied, discouraged, and sick - I'll tell you the loveliest game in the world,

Do something for somebody, quick!



Though it rains like the rain of the flood, little man

And the clouds are forbidding and thick.

You can make the sun shine in your soul, little man

Do something for somebody, quick!

Though the stars are like brass overhead, little girl,

And the walks like a well-heated brick

And our earthly affairs in a terrible whirl,

Do something for somebody, quick!

Anonymous

First Things First

Swami Dayatmananda

Time passes away so swiftly. Before we are even aware a new year has come around. It is time to look back on the progress we have made and plan ahead for greater progress with renewed hope and aspiration. Sometimes, of course, we do feel despondent and frustrated when we see how little progress we have made. There is no need to despair. The future is bright and holds enough opportunity to make our lives worthwhile.

Truthfulness, single-minded devotion to the ideal, patience and surrender to God - these are the four important qualities that are absolutely indispensable to success in any field

of life inclusive of spiritual progress.

1. Truthfulness. Sincerity, honesty, a right way of living, hard work, and of course speaking the truth - all these fall under the category of truthfulness. 'Shraddha' is the Sanskrit word. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that truthfulness is the austerity of this age. He himself was an embodiment of truthfulness. Truth speaking in time leads one to Truth-seeking and ultimately to Truth which is God. Truthfulness according to Sri Ramakrishna is to make the mind and speech one (Man mukh ek kora). It is not such a simple affair. One must be aware of what is going on in the depths of one's mind. We have a habit of deceiving ourselves. It is rare, psychologists tell us, that one is aware of what is going on in the depths of our unconscious mind. Tremendous courage, sincerity, honesty and objectivity are needed to be able to delve within and find out what goes on in the deep. But there is no other way to freedom and self-improvement. "Have Bhakti within, and give up all cunning and deceit. Truthfulness is the Tapasya (austerity) of this age. "When mind and speech unite in earnestly asking for a thing, that prayer is answered. "Be not a traitor to your thoughts. Be sincere: act according to your thoughts; and you shall surely succeed. Pray with a sincere and simple heart, and your prayers will be heard. What you think, that you should speak. Let there be harmony between your thoughts and words."

2. Nishtha or single-minded devotion to one's ideal: Sri Ramakrishna has taught the harmony of all religions, of all paths. Although it is true that every religion is a valid path leading one to God realisation, it is absolutely necessary to choose one particular path suited to one's nature and stick to it. Otherwise it will lead to no good. These days we come across many spiritual shoppers, who go on drifting from religion to religion, from one Guru to another in search of easy shortcuts. There is no shortcut to spiritual progress. One has to walk the hard way and all by oneself. This sticking to one ideal is

called 'Nishtha' i.e. single-minded devotion to one's ideal. Sri Ramakrishna was very emphatic that one cannot progress in any field without it. "The unflinching devotion (Nishtha) of the Gopis is wonderful. When the Gopis went to see Krishna in Mathura, they got admission into the audience chamber after begging the sentinel at the gate several times. But when they saw Krishna there, with a turban on, they bent their heads and began to whisper among themselves, 'Who is this turbaned man? We won't talk with him lest we should be culpable of infidelity to our Krishna. Oh, where is our Lord, that supremely Beloved, who wears a yellow cloth and a crest of peacock feathers'. Ah! mark the single-hearted devotion of the Gopis!"

3. Patience. Infinite patience is needed in order to make headway in any field. One must do what has to be done to the best of one's ability. That much alone is in Man's hands. The rest lies in the hands of the Lord. Patience seems to be the commodity this age lacks very much. We are brought up to expect instantaneous fulfilment - instant coffee, instant communication, fast travel - everything instantaneous. The slightest delay seems to bring on rage (road rage, aeroplane rage etc), frustration, anger etc. As a Swami puts it humorously, 'Be patient, otherwise you will become a patient'. To do one's best and wait patiently under all circumstances is a great spiritual quality. Everything happens at the right time. "He who bears lives", Sri Ramakrishna used to say. "A man began to sink a well. but having dug down to a depth of twenty cubits, he could not find any trace of water there. So he gave up that site and selected another spot for the purpose. There he dug still deeper, but even then could not find any water. So he selected yet another site and dug deeper than before, but it was also of no avail. At last in utter disgust he gave up the task altogether. The total depth of all these three wells was only a little short of one hundred cubits. Had he the patience to devote even half of the whole of this labour to his first well instead of changing the site again and again, he would surely have succeeded in getting water. The same is the case with men who continually change

their faith. In order to succeed we have to devote ourselves wholeheartedly to one object of faith without being in the least doubtful as to its worth. "The hereditary peasant does not give up tilling the soil though it may not rain for twelve years; but a merchant who has recently taken to agriculture is discouraged by one season of drought. The true believer is never discouraged even if he fails to see God in spite of lifelong devotion. "Look at the anvil of a blacksmith - how it is hammered and beaten; yet it moves not from its place. Let men learn patience and endurance from it".

4. Surrender to God. Having done all that one should do, one has to surrender oneself to God. Surrender to God is not the way of defeatism. It is an act of supreme freedom. Only a hero can do it. Self-surrender is not losing one's freedom and a sign of slavery. On the contrary surrender to God makes one completely and absolutely free, for God is another name for freedom. Only he who strives his hardest is capable of real self-surrender. Obviously it is not easy, but God takes care of a devotee who surrenders himself to Him totally. He knows that whatever happens is ordained by God for his own good. Whatever be the circumstances a devotee always looks up to God in every way. Every action of such a devotee expresses joy, peace and contentment. In truth, spiritual progress does not depend on what one does; it depends on God's grace alone. His grace comes only to one who depends on Him alone. Self-surrender is the highest spiritual practice. All spiritual practices will and must, in the end, lead to complete surrender to God. "Give up everything to Him, resign yourself to Him, and there will be no more trouble for you. Then you will come to know that everything is done by His will. "There is no path safer and smoother than that of Bakalama (power of attorney). Bakalama means here resigning oneself to the will of the Almighty and having no feeling that anything is one's own. "He who can resign himself to the will of the Almighty with simple faith and guileless love realises the Lord very quickly." Every spiritual aspirant must strive to develop these four qualities. Without these there is no hope of ever reaching

the goal. With these success is inevitable.

The Purity of Sarada Devi

(A Westener)

"If my wife had not been so pure, who knows what might have happened." Sri

Ramakrishna

When exceptional people exist in the world, it seems inevitable that myths grow up around them, spreading out to mythologise those within their circle - relatives, friends, disciples, etc. Take, for example, the stories which have arisen regarding Mary, the mother of Jesus. Sarada, the consort of Ramakrishna, has not entirely escaped being turned into a legendary figure, so one feels it would be good to consider her life simply, as she herself lived it, unadorned by exaggeration. She was the first-born of a pious couple living in the small, remote Bengali village of Jayrambati. They were not wealthy, but at the same time were not excessively poor. They were at least better off than some other villagers - they were certainly less poor than Sri Ramakrishna's family. (Sarada's uncle was incensed when her wedding jewellery was taken away to be returned to their real owner from whom they had been borrowed.) Again, at a time of harsh famine her father was able to supply cooked rice and dal (lentils) to the starving neighbours. Sarada grew up much loved by her parents, but at the same time she was expected to work hard even as a child. We hear tell how she had to feed the family cows by cutting grass for them, even though it might mean that the only available grass was growing in the

local pond, and even though she might have to wade out to get it, the water growing deeper at every step until, almost out of her reach, she was able to pick the grass growing in water up to her neck. As a full-grown adult she was not very tall, so as a young girl this must have been a considerable chore. A boy might have been able to swim, but it is not very likely she would be able to. To learn to swim you have to have the time to play in the water with your friends, and splash around like a little frog. A young girl in her situation would probably have gone to the water only for her ablutions and frequently for collecting pitchers of water for household use. Besides, her nature was shy and retiring, it is unlikely she would want to play in the water under public scrutiny. Little girls were taught to be demure. Why weren't the cows driven to the water to help themselves, we wonder? We can only think it was because the cows were kept permanently tethered near the house under the solicitous eye of the owner. Sarada soon had several brothers who she had to look after, and who proved to be millstones round her neck, for the rest of their lives. In those days the lot of the average woman was a pretty hard one (maybe it still is). A woman was considered to be a financial burden on the family, which could only be removed by marriage, when the bridegroom's family shouldered the responsibility and took the wife into their joint household. It is only to be expected that Sarada's parents would be on the look-out for a suitable partner for her, so, when they were approached by Sri Ramakrishna's mother (who was widowed by then) and his older brother, they considered marriage to him to be a desirable event, even though Sarada was still a child, barely six years old, and Gadadhar (Ramakrishna's familiar name) was a twenty-four year old young man. The story is told - and here we risk entering on mythology - that at a local social event when Sarada was only two years old, she was asked of the roomful of people: "Who would you like to marry when you grow up?" and she unhesitatingly pointed to Ramakrishna. When his mother and brother were looking for a bride for him, he directed them to Jayrambati

where there was someone 'marked with a straw' for him. In an ecstatic mood, he declared: "Why are you searching for a bride here and there? She who is 'marked' for me is awaiting at the house of Ramachandra Mukherjee at Jayrambati." The marriage ceremony duly took place at Jayrambati and the little girl was escorted to the family home in Kamarpukur. However, as has been mentioned, the bride's uncle was devastated to realise how poor the groom's family was, and forthwith carried off the little child-bride back to her parental family. Sarada's new mother-in-law was distressed at the turn of events, but she was consoled by her son: "Never mind what they do. The marriage has happened anyway and they can't undo it." Not a propitious start to a marriage, and from then on, Sarada suffered greatly from people's attitude towards her new husband. She was told stories about his eccentric behaviour at the Kali temple and was pitied for being married to a madman. Still, life was not all gloom as at fourteen she was able to visit Kamarpukur when he was there recovering his health. Then she became very happy in his company with her in-laws. Her older sister-in-law taught her how to cook his favourite dishes, and she was delighted to be able to serve him. In her own words: "It seemed my heart contained a pitcher overflowing with bliss." Ramakrishna also used the opportunity to teach her many things, secular as well as spiritual. So she lived very happily as a member of the joint family until the time came for Ramakrishna to return to Calcutta, and Sarada herself went back to her family in Jayrambati.

When Sarada became a woman, she felt more and more anxious to join her husband in the big city. She had heard he had lost his reason and she needed to see the situation for herself. If he really had gone mad she might perhaps be able to look after him or to serve him in some way, and in any case, life in Jayrambati had been made intolerable for her by malicious gossip. Therefore, when several women were going to visit Calcutta for pilgrimage, she asked her father's permission to go with them. He understood her motive and actually suggested accompanying her. The time came when the whole party

left on foot for the long journey, a journey which they expected to entail several days walking. Imagine what this must have been like for a young Indian girl. Barefoot walking in the heat in the village might have meant going to the water-tank several times a day - just a few yards - with rests in-between. But barefoot walking in the heat all day, on and on, mile after unaccustomed mile! Sarada became exhausted and at last succumbed to a high fever. She and her father were obliged to stop at a wayside boarding house. While there, Sarada had a strange dream or vision - again we border on mythology, but the incident was told by Sarada herself. Furthermore, by that time Sri Ramakrishna was approaching forty years of age; he had undergone innumerable spiritual austerities, and as an advanced yogi, had acquired tremendous spiritual power. He was able to know things and do things quite unbelievable to ordinary people. While the young woman was tossing on her bed in delirium through high fever, it seems she suddenly found a beautiful dark-complexioned girl sitting at her bedside, stroking her head and heated body with cool hands and making her feel much more comfortable. She was smiling and reassuring, and a conversation took place. When asked where she had come from the stranger said: "From Dakshineswar". "What a coincidence" exclaimed Sarada, "that is where I'm going", and she told about her anxiety for her husband who lived in the temple of Kali there. "Yes", said the stranger, "I know him. He is waiting there for you." After saying which she went away, while Sarada, feeling greatly consoled, fell into restful sleep. On waking in the morning, she found that the fever had left her, to the relief of her father and all, so they were able to continue their journey that very day. In due course they arrived at the Kali temple, although Sarada was still feverish, and they found Sri Ramakrishna in his room. Solicitously he welcomed them and at once arranged for Sarada's nursing until she had recovered from the journey. He had her sleep in his own room where he could look after her. Seeing everything taken care of, Sarada's father went back home with a mind at ease. This was a crucial time for the marital

relationship of the couple. While showing approval of Sarada for coming to him, Ramakrishna bluntly asked her: "Did you come here to drag my mind down?" Horrified at the suggestion, Sarada replied: "No indeed. I want only to help and serve you as best I may." This answer satisfied Sri Ramakrishna and he proceeded to give her spiritual instruction. To a Westerner, it seems strange that, in spite of their relationship, Ramakrishna probably did not usually see her face because of the heavy veil she always wore while in Calcutta. She recounts how "the master" would talk to her at length in the evening, and she would be so engrossed in his teachings, that only when it was time for her to retire would she realise that her veil had fallen. In the early days while she slept in his room, Ramakrishna confronted the challenge she presented. He asked his mind: "See, this woman is here. Do you want her? She is legitimately yours. Which do you choose? Do you want carnal pleasure with her and lose all your God-consciousness, or do you want to keep your knowledge of God?" The immediate reply of his mind was to shoot up to such a height he became quite unconscious of ordinary life and remained in a superconscious state until morning. When Sarada became aware of his habitual samadhi she became worried as she was quite unused to such a condition, and remained awake all night in a state of anxiety. This went on night after night, and Sarada suffered from prolonged lack of sleep. At last Ramakrishna realised her anxiety and taught her how to bring him back to normality. At the same time he realised what a strain she was under and arranged for her to sleep in a small room nearby where she would be able to see him if she chose. This little room was to be her abode whenever she stayed in Dakshineswar. There she dwelt for several years doing spiritual practice and cooking food for visiting devotees. Much of her time she spent doing japa and meditation, during the day and the night also. She would gaze at the beautiful full moon and pray: "Even the moon has dark spots on it. May I be pure like the moon, but without any spot or stain." Came the time for Phalaharini Kali Puja when Sri Ramakrishna sent for her to

attend his private formal worship, only to discover that she was to be the embodiment of the goddess to be worshipped. The ceremony proceeded and both parties attained a very high spiritual level. Thus the marriage was consummated on a spiritual plane. It was never consummated on a physical level. Shortly after this worship Sarada returned to Kamarpukur, to her in-laws, and eventually returned to Dakshineswar some months later to resume her occupation of the little room. On one occasion in the hearing of Ramakrishna, her mother was bewailing the fact that she would never have children of her own, when he replied: "She will have so many calling her `mother' she will be tired of it!" And so it transpired after Sri Ramakrishna had passed away. In the beginning of their intimate relationship Ramakrishna was very much the guru of Sarada - her teacher, not only of spiritual matters but everything, including day-to-day etiquette - but at the same time he was honouring her as an embodiment of the Divine Mother of the universe. As time passed and the relationship matured, so their attitudes altered somewhat. Sarada became confident of her own abilities as well as being assured of the master's personal affection for her. On one occasion when she was busy making betel rolls, she was seen to be making two different kinds - one batch with attractive spices and extras, the other batch plain. When asked, she explained that the special rolls were for the visitors and the plain ones for the Master - "because he is mine already". A different episode occurred once when Sri Ramakrishna found her over-feeding some disciples against his exact instructions. "What will happen to the spiritual development of these boys?" he demanded. Sarada replied boldly that he need not worry as she herself would take their responsibility. Quite a breath-taking statement to a highly advanced yogi, yet Sri Ramakrishna seemed satisfied with her reply. It seems that Ramakrishna must have held her in some awe, as he warned someone that, if he was rude to himself he might get away with it, but if he roused Sarada to anger the consequences would be dire and the Master would not be able to save him. An episode in her life which occurred after

she had been widowed seems worthy of mention. It seems she was alone in her village home with a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna who had previously been zealous in his austerities. Under some madness, the devotee began to make advances towards 'mother'. Sarada retreated in alarm round the house, only for him to chase after her. Seven times he chased her around the house until he caught up with her at last. Then, like the proverbial stag at bay rounding on the hounds, mother stoutly defended herself and was able to stand on his chest and with her hand grabbed his tongue and vigorously shook his head with it while yelling out for assistance. As she said about the incident: "My real nature asserted itself," meaning, her aspect of Kali, the fearsome, took over. On a couple of occasions, when Sarada had travelled from Jayrambati to Dakshineswar so as to be with him, the Master had sent her straight back home again. This must have been galling in the extreme, yet when the Master fell ill and she was sent for, to help look after him, she came immediately and quickly settled down to the routine of cooking his special diet. When the Master was taken to Shyampukur for nursing, a devotee made comments to Sarada which gave her the impression that she had been left behind at Dakshineswar deliberately because she had done something wrong which had upset Ramakrishna. This made Sarada so distressed that she at once left for Calcutta to see if matters could be put right. Of course, when she reached her destination she was assured this was not the case, much to her relief. After his prolonged illness, when at last the Master died, Sarada was distraught. As she began to remove all her ornaments, she had a vision of Sri Ramakrishna who instructed her not to dress like a widow. In spite of this consolation, for days she was overcome with grief, until at last she had another vision of him asking her why she was grieving so much: "I have after all only gone into the next room," he said. This consoled her somewhat though she still mourned him for a very long time. Sarada's devotion to the Master continued to the very end of her life. It became her habit to do puja and make food offering to him every day through his photograph

and only after that would she herself eat. This went on no matter where she happened to be - even travelling through the countryside. As her life went on and she became sought-for as a holy woman, devotees had opportunities to watch her daily life. They noticed that after her periods of meditation she spoke and acted just as Sri Ramakrishna had always done - she had virtually become Ramakrishna - just as Radha and the gopis felt they had become Sri Krishna. Thus did their relationship continue even after Ramakrishna had left the body.

Guru Nanak: Prophet of Unity (continued)

Swami Rasajnananda

At Varanasi he met pundit Chaturdas, the chief Brahmin of the holy city, proud of his vast learning, and teaching the people the fourteen sciences - reading, swimming, medicine, alchemy, astrology, singing the six rags and their raginis, the science of sex, grammar, music, horsemanship, dancing, archery, theology, and statesmanship. Guru Nanak convinced him that better than all these was knowledge of God and sang the long composition called the Omkar, the first two stanzas of which are as follows:

` It is the one God who created Brahma;

It is the one God who created our understanding;

It is from the one God the mountains and the ages of the world emanated;

It is the one God who bestoweth knowledge.

It is by the word of God man is saved.

It is by the name of the one God the pious are saved.

Hear an account of the letter O -

O is the best letter in the three worlds. Hear, O Pandit, why writest thou puzzles?

Write under the instruction of the Guru the name of God, the Cherisher of the world.

He created the world with ease: in the three worlds there is one Lord of Light.

Under the Guru's instruction select gems and pearls and thou shalt obtain God the real thing.

If man understand, reflect, and comprehend what he readeth, he shall know at last that the True One is everywhere.

The pious man knoweth and remembereth the truth - that without the True One the world is unreal.' On hearing the whole composition, the pundit fell at the Guru's feet and became a Sikh.

Guru Nanak and Mardana met the Sidhs at Gorakhmata, or temple of Gorakh, some twenty miles north of Pilibhit. The instruction given to them by the Guru regarding religion is worthy of note: `Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a Yogi's staff, or in ashes smeared over the body ; Religion consisteth not in earrings worn, or a shaven head, or in the blowing of horns.

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world: thus shalt thou find the way of religion.

Religion consisteth not in mere words;

He who looketh on all men as equal is religious.

Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation ;

Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimages.

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world; thus shalt thou find the way of religion.'

When Guru Nanak visited Kamrup, a queen called Nurshah and her women companions, who were famous for their skill in incantation and magic, went to him and tried to obtain influence over him. As all their spells and charms failed, they fell at the Guru's feet and prayed to him to show them the path to salvation. In a mood of forgiveness, the Guru instructed them to repeat God's name, conscientiously perform their domestic duties and renounce magic. It is said that they became followers of Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak and his companion went to Mecca, the pole star of Mohammedan devotion. Weary and footsore, the Guru lay down to sleep at night with his feet unwittingly turned towards Kaaba. An enraged Arab priest kicked him and said, 'Who is this sleeping infidel? Why hast thou, O sinner, turned thy feet towards God?' Significant was the Guru's reply: 'Turn my feet in a direction in which God is not.' It is said that on the priest's turning the Guru's feet, the temple itself turned round. Some interpret this to mean that Guru Nanak made all Mecca turn to his teaching. Wonderstruck at this miracle, the Qazis and the Mullas crowded round him and enquired which was superior - the Hindu or the Mohammedan religion. The Guru replied, 'Without good acts the professors of both religions shall suffer. Neither the Hindus nor the Mohammedans shall obtain entrance into God's court. All their devotions shall vanish like the fleeting dye of safflower. Both sects are jealous of each other. The Hindus insist on saying Ram and the Moslems Rahim,

but they know not the one God. Satan hath led them both along his own flowery way.'

He continued:

`Thy fasting and worship shall be acceptable When thou, O man, ...

Abandon delights, ease, evil speaking, mental anxiety, and vexation; Treasure kindness in thy heart, and renounce the devices of infidelity; Extinguish the fire of lust in thy heart, and thus become cool. Saith Nanak, thus practise fasting, and thy faith shall be perfect.' When the high priest of Mecca asked Guru Nanak how God might be obtained by men, the Guru replied that it was by humility and prayer.

Last Phase of Active Life

After a long and strenuous itinerary, Guru Nanak returned home tired and old. On the last lap of his life, he settled down at Kartarpur, a village on the bank of the river Ravi, founded by a millionaire who from a detractor gradually turned into a great admirer of the Guru. There Guru Nanak finally gave up his Udasi style, wore the garb of a householder, lived with his family and took to farming, thus becoming an inspiring example of his own teaching `to abide pure amid the impurities of the world', for religious men who ought to be guiding their flocks had retreated to the solitude of mountains or forests. A true religion had been founded with a pragmatic approach and simple methods. There was a halo of holiness in the personality of Guru Nanak and everyone addressed him, `Hail, Nanak! a great saint hath been born in the world.' His reputation increased day by day, a large number of people - Hindus and Muslims - flocked to hear him and many became his disciples or sishyas from which the Punjabi word Sikh is derived. Sikh societies began to be formed and the Guru busied himself in the work of consolidation. We get an idea of the daily routine he initiated for the Sikhs at Kartarpur from the following account: `At Kartarpur, a watch before day, the Japji

and the Asa ki War were repeated. Then followed reading and expounding of the Guru's hymns, until a watch and a quarter after sunrise. This was succeeded by singing and the reading of the Arati (Gagan mai thal). After this, breakfast was served. In the third watch there was again singing, after which in the evening the Sodar was read. Then the Sikhs all dined together. The repast ended with further singing. After a watch of night had elapsed the Sohila was read, and every one then retired.'

Glorious End

Aware of the approaching end, Guru Nanak appointed his faithful disciple Angad to be his successor, setting aside the claims of his own sons. Having fulfilled his divine mission on the earth by founding a separate religion with an easy and simple way of obtaining salvation by the repetition of God's name and the worship of One God - 'primal and omnipresent' - and having established a casteless society, Guru Nanak at last breathed his last in the year 1539. He was great in death as in life. Just before death, a difference of opinion arose between the Hindus and the Muslims over the disposal of his body, the former being anxious to cremate him as a Hindu and the latter no less anxious to give him an Islamic burial. According to the biographers, the difference was resolved by the Guru himself. The body having disappeared, the two communities stood satisfied to salute the spot where the Guru had lain. No better compliment could have been paid to Guru Nanak at the time of his passing than this spontaneous one for the wide tolerance taught by him, social cohesion achieved by his efforts and the deep love he bore to all. Even today people lovingly and reverently remember him as the Guru for Hindus and the Pir for Muslims when they utter the following words: 'Guru Nanak Shah Fakir

Hindu ka Guru, Musalman ka Pir.'

In view of his invaluable gift of eternal spiritual riches to mankind, he continues to be a source of guidance and inspiration to seekers after Truth.

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God is one, but He has innumerable forms.

He is the Creator of all and He Himself takes the human form.

Nanak

Sri Ramakrishna: Some New Findings Translated by Swami Chetanananda

Swami Saradananda had planned to write a Sixth Part for Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga, Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master. With that in mind, he kept two small notebooks in which he jotted down information gathered from conversations with various people in which they reminisced about the Master, as well as ideas that might come to him from time to time. In one of these notebooks he had written, indicating that such was his plan, 'Reference to be made (i.e. to be used) in the Sixth Part of Lilaprasanga or "Sri Ramakrishna in Cossipore".'

At any rate, his plan never materialised. But he did write three further articles, based on his notes, which were incorporated in the Fifth Part of Lilaprasanga. The unused portions of Swami Saradananda's notebooks have been published by Swami Nirlepananda (a grandson of Yogin-Ma) in a small book, Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishnadeva, and the following is translated from that work.

From Yogin-Ma

When the Holy Mother was living in Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna would often ask her opinion on various matters. And Mother would reply: "Please excuse me, I would rather not answer right now, I shall give you my opinion later." "Why not now? With whom are you going to consult?" the Master would insist. But the Mother's reply would invariably be: "Oh no. Let me think a little and then I shall talk with you about it." Then, returning to the Nahabat, the Mother would pray fervently to the Divine Mother: "Please tell me, Mother, what to say." As a result of her prayers, an answer to the Master's question would come to Holy Mother and she would then tell it to him. The Master called Bhavini 'cook of Vaikuntha (heaven) - perfect in preparing sukta (a vegetable soup made with bitter squash).' Once with Yogin-Ma and some others, he went to visit Jadu Mallick's garden house, where he sang and gave the devotees advice.

On another occasion he went to Beadon garden (in Calcutta) to see some Masonic symbols along with Golap-Ma and others. It was nine o'clock in the morning and all were hungry and thirsty. One of the devotees bought two pices worth of rasamundi (sweets) and offered them to the Master, who ate them all and then drank a glass of water, which satisfied the hunger and thirst of everyone. Golap Ma had hoped that the Master would give her some prasad, but she now discovered that she was full to her heart's

content. The Master's satisfaction gave satisfaction to all. They were amazed and finally told the Master about it.

One day Yogin-Ma went to Dakshineswar with Balaram's wife, taking some kshir-kamala (rice pudding with orange) which she had made for the Master. While there she heard that Balaram would be returning from Vrindaban the following morning. So she went again in the afternoon of the next day, and the Master told her that he had saved some of her delicious pudding for Rakhal and Balaram and had fed them.

Another day Yogin-Ma went to Dakshineswar along with Gour-dasi. That day Tarak's (Swami Shivananda) father was there. The Master was highly pleased to see him and touched his chest and head. Yogin-Ma was reluctant to leave the Master, but the boat was waiting for her, so she saluted him and left. Two days later Yogin-Ma and Gour-dasi came back to Dakshineswar from Sukhchar (Khardah) via Panihati. They bought some sandesh (sweets) for the Master, but Gour-dasi secretly withheld some for Nitya-gopal, and so the Master could not eat them. No one could understand why he refused them. The whole mystery came to light later. (Sri Ramakrishna could not touch food that had not been offered to the Divine Mother, and since a portion had been set aside for some person, the food could not be offered, even mentally, to Her.)

Ramdayal (Balaram Babu's priest) or Master Mahashay usually arranged for kirtan at Dakshineswar. Once the Master sent Haripada to invite Yogin-Ma, Bhavini and some other Calcutta devotees for one of these occasions. When they arrived, the Master asked them to sit on a blanket on the northern veranda. The kirtan that day was dull. The singer gestured with his hands so much that he appeared to be quarrelling with someone. The Master at no time was ecstatic and spent his time chatting with others.

When the kirtan was over, the Master said: "Ram, you people did not dance during the

kirtan - why not?" "Do the monkeys dance of their own accord?" Ram Babu replied. "Sir, you did not dance, so how could we?" Then the Master asked Yogin-Ma and the women devotees to visit Mother Kali. When they returned to the Master's room, they found him clad in a green shirt, dancing with the devotees and singing this song:

"Is Kali, my Mother , really black?

The Naked One, of blackest hue,

Lights the Lotus of the Heart..."

Yogin - Ma and the others entered the room and stood to one side. It came to be nine o'clock in the evening and still the Master had not come down from his ecstasy. Yogin-Ma was anxious to return home because Bhavini's mother would make a fuss if they were too late. Accompanied by Haripada they were about to leave. Suddenly, all were astonished to hear the Master shout in ecstasy. He came down to the normal plane and asked: "Who is leaving without taking any prasad?" Haripada replied: "We are leaving, Sir."

The Master then gave prasad to Haripada, Yogin-Ma and the other women devotees, after which they departed, arriving home at midnight. At one time Yogin-Ma was in a disturbed state of mind, so she decided to go to see the Master and tell him of her problems. Early one morning she left for Dakshineswar on foot, and on arrival she discovered that Gopal's mother was also there. The Master was standing on the northern veranda, leaning against a wall and as soon as she saw him. Yogin-Ma forgot everything. She had plucked some flowers from the garden and tied them in the corner of her cloth. "What are you carrying?" the Master asked. Yogin-Ma showed him the flowers and offered them at his feet. In ecstasy the Master touched one foot to her head. Gopal's mother told her to hold the Master's foot to her chest, which she did. After the passing away of the Master, while practising japam one day, she heard a voice say: "The imprint of the

lotus feet of Gadadhar (an epithet of Vishnu as well as the boyhood name of Sri Ramakrishna) is on your chest."

It was the month of Jaistha (May-June) 1885 - the last Panihati festival attended by the Master. The Master had asked Yogin-Ma to cook for the devotees who were supposed to go with him - Golap-Ma assisted her. While the Master was having his meal, a number of devotees arrived and still more came late. In any event all the food was consumed and there was nothing left for the women devotees. So the Holy Mother hurriedly cooked rice and a vegetable curry with some ripe eggplants, green plantains, etc., and it was delicious. Yogin-Ma, along with several others, went in the same boat with the Master.

One day early in the morning, Yogin-Ma and Golap-Ma arrived at Cossipore. They had brought some food for the Master, which they sent in to him. When he learned of their arrival, he asked that they wait below. After a while he sent for them saying, "These are my children. Ask them to come here." The room was full of his men devotees to whom he had been telling the story of a salt doll which went to measure the depth of the ocean. The Master blessed Yogin-Ma and Golap-Ma, touching their heads, and then asked them to go below again. Rakhal Maharaj was seated at the right side of the Master and said to him: "Yogin-Ma wants to salute you by touching your feet." Whereupon the Master extended his feet, she touched them with her head and left the room. On another day in Cossipore, Holy Mother had carried the Master's food to his room which was on the upper floor. "By the by," the Master asked, "do you know how to play asta-kaste?" (This is a game similar to English `Ludo' or American `Parchesi'.) Holy Mother: "No." Master: "If one can pair two checkers, the opponent cannot "take" them. Likewise, one should unite oneself with the Chosen Ideal and thus be rid of fear. Otherwise, a ripe checker (that is, one which is near the goal), if it still be single can be turned back. If a man can move in this world with his Chosen Ideal like a pair of checkers, he will be saved."

When Sri Ramakrishna was gravely ill in the Cossipore garden house, the Holy Mother was stricken with grief. One day she had a vision. A black girl with long hair appeared and sat near her. Realising that it was Mother Kali, she exclaimed: "Oh, you have come!" "Yes, I have come directly from Dakshineswar." After some further conversation, the Holy Mother observed that the black girl's neck was bent to one side. So she asked: "What has happened to your neck?" Mother Kali: "Well I have a sore throat." Holy Mother: "My goodness! The Master has a sore throat and you also have it?" Mother Kali: "That is true." Thus, the Holy Mother was made to understand that the Divine Mother and Sri Ramakrishna were one and the same.

One night in the Cossipore garden house the Master had a terrible haemorrhage. The next morning Yogin-Ma went to see the Master and say good-bye, as she was leaving for Vrindaban. The Master asked her to take down from the wall the picture of Mother Yasoda. He worshipped it with flowers and then pointed to his own feet. For a moment Yogin-Ma did not understand. Then she realised what it was that the Master was indicating and worshipped his feet with flowers. In the past, whenever Yogin-Ma would say, as she took leave of the Master, "Permit me to go," he would say, "Come back again." But this time he said nothing in reply, because he knew that she would not see him again

From Golap-Ma

Once at midnight Golap-Ma saw the Master in a high spiritual mood, strolling about the temple garden at Dakshineswar. It seemed to Golap-Ma as though Mother Kali herself were strolling there, and her hair stood on end. Gopaldada (senior Gopal) was sent, one day, to do some shopping. He spent half a rupee and tied his purchases up tightly in a piece of cloth. (Golap-Ma reported to the Master that the knot was so tight that she could not untie it.) On seeing so many groceries the Master was upset and said to Holy

Mother: "Why did you ask Gopal to buy so many things?" Holy Mother: "But there are a lot of devotees here." Master: "You know that here at the Kali temple there is an arrangement to feed devotees and yet you have spent so much! Moreover, the heat from the fire will make you ill if you cook twice a day and in such large quantities. You don't have to cook so much and anyway I am not going to eat all those things." He did not touch any of the food and consequently it was all sent to the temple kitchens. The Holy Mother was hurt and she wept. The Master consoled her: "You know it would be too much of a burden for you, so I spoke like that because I was concerned for your health. I have decided that henceforth I won't ask you to cook anything for me. 'Eat what chance brings you' - I shall follow that method. If you have a desire to cook for me, please do, but don't ask me what I would like." On 11th March 1885, the Master had supper at Girish's house and stayed that night at the home of Balaram. Golap-Ma did not eat anything at Girish's house, for which the Master scolded her. Later she asked Girish for a luchi (fried bread) which she ate.

From Kishori Mohan Roy (Abdul)

I had an arrangement with my wife whereby both of us would take initiation from the same guru. Then one day I was in my office and received a letter from my wife (who was then at her father's house) requesting me to send her some money as she had decided to take initiation with her mother from another guru. I was very much upset and left my office for the Cossipore garden house to see the Master. That day X - - - was the gatekeeper and he would not allow me to see the Master. Moreover he scolded me as I approached the steps. At this my mental pain became unbearable, and my eyes filled with tears. As I was leaving, Swamiji stopped me and asked: "Why do you look so awful today?" I told him everything. Swamiji said: "There is something wrong today. The Master has not yet (3pm) taken his lunch. Some unwanted visitors went without warning to the

Master's room and disturbed him. But that gatekeeper is a dumb-bell, he could have told you frankly about the incident. All right, would you like to see the Master? Perhaps seeing you the Master will be happy and ask for some food from you. You know how the Master loves the devotees!" I was not inclined to go, but Swamiji forced me to go. He scolded the gatekeeper and pushed me to the steps. So climbing the steps I reached the door of the Master's room; I saluted him from there and then was about to leave. In the meantime, the Master beckoned me to come near him. I said, "Sir, your gatekeeper will scold me." He showed his thumb (a gesture of disdain) and asked me to come in. Then he showed me his throat. I said, "Sir, today you look so thin; perhaps you did not eat anything. Shall I bring some food for you?" Farina pudding was ready in his room. He asked me to warm it up. After finishing his food, he said: "Is any amalaki (a kind of fruit) available? Can you bring me some?" With this he asked me to go with Gopaldada to bring some amalaki from Sil's garden. While taking food the Master asked Gopaldada to tell me the story about the initiation of Suresh Mittra's wife. I was dumbfounded. Anyhow, being asked, Gopaldada said to me: "You see, Suresh Babu's wife wanted to take initiation from a particular guru, but he would not consent. As a result there was misunderstanding between them and gradually the Master came to know about it. The Master said to Suresh Babu: `Suresh, what can you do if your wife wants to be wicked?' Suresh: `Well, how can I stop her?' Master: `Why then are you opposing her wish to take initiation? After all she is trying to do something good.'" I got a good lesson.

From Atul Chandra Ghosh (Brother of Girish Chandra Ghosh)

Sri Ramakrishna visited the house of Dinu Babu (in North Calcutta) one day, and my second brother, Girish, went to see him. When he returned I asked him: "What is this man like?" "A hypocrite," he replied. Thus I was dissuaded from making any further

inquiries about the Master. But my brother soon became a frequent visitor to Dakshineswar, and I began to observe that Deven Babu and my brother were always whispering about him, keeping everything secret from me. One day, probably in March 1885, I came home to find Deven Babu and Haripada with my brother, and when I entered the room they began whispering as usual. "What are you whispering about?" I asked. "Is it about the Paramahansa? Your Master is not a Paramahansa, he is a Rajahansa. He wears a red-bordered cloth, beautiful shirts, polished slippers and sleeps on a comfortable bed." It was in this vein that I was talking when Sri Ramakrishna entered the room, accompanied by Narayan, saying: "Girish, it is by the grace of God that I have come to you." The Master had crossed the courtyard and climbed the steps to the first floor without any of us being aware of his presence until we heard his voice. My brother and the others saluted him by lying full length on the floor, and since it was our family tradition that 'a brahmin should be respected', I too saluted him, with folded hands. The Master then took a seat and my brother sat in front of him while the rest of us sat in a circle around him. My brother, Girish, introduced me saying: "This is my younger brother, but he has just been criticising you." Then he looked at me and said: "Why are you silent now? Are you charmed by his presence?" I was somewhat embarrassed but not at all fearful or intimidated by the Master. So I said to him: "Sir, you are not a Paramahansa, you are a Rajahansa - that is what I was saying when you arrived." Whereupon the Master said to my brother: "But this is not a criticism. When milk and water are mixed together, the swan separates them and drinks only the milk. Moreover, if you go to Varanasi you will find innumerable Paramahansas all over the place, and he has made me their king. It has been well said." I could see that the Master was very intelligent and was not to be caught out by my comments. I wanted to test his ego, so I asked: "Sir, what is your name?" Caressing my back, the Master replied: "Do we have names?" 'Hei,' 'Hallo' - in this way one can call me and I will know who is being

called." "What is this?" I thought to myself. "Is he reading my mind?" I knew a little about thought-reading and had practised it for some time. Anyhow the Master continued: "Before today I was a little frightened of you. The other day I was passing by your house. Knowing that Girish was not at home, Narayan, who was with me, pointed out to me that you were seated on the veranda and asked whether he should speak to you as to the whereabouts of Girish. I forbade him to and we went on to Balaram's. Seeing your long beard I was frightened of you, but now it is all gone." "Sir," I replied, "how do I know the cause of your fear and why it has gone away today? I am the same man with the same beard." About that time, M., Paltu, and the younger Naren entered. The Master said (to M.): "Welcome, O three-and-a-half degree holder, come in." They saluted the Master, smiling at him, and took their seats. The conversation got underway with a discussion as to whether God is formless or with form. Then came the question of knowledge and devotion - which was the higher way. The Master: "Both are the way and one can attain God through both of them. The path of knowledge and the path of devotion both lead to the same destination, and after arriving there one understands that pure knowledge and pure devotion are one and the same." The conversation continued in this way for a time and then all left. As time passed I learned that many devotees always took something to the Master when they visited him. I rarely presented anything to him. One day, sitting near the Master at Cossipore, I was thinking to myself that it would give me so much pleasure if he would ask me to bring him something. Immediately he said: "My stock of barley has run out. Rakhal, would you check the can?" Rakhal opened the can and found it empty. Then the Master asked me: "Could you buy a can of barley for me and bring it tomorrow?" I hesitated since it would not be possible for me to bring it the next day. Right away he said: "Please buy the barley tomorrow morning and send it to Balaram. Inform him that I have no barley and that it must reach me without delay. He will make the necessary arrangements."

From Tejachandra Mittra

Tejachandra's first visit to the Master was in the summer of 1883 with Hari (Swami Turiyananda). Hari: "Let us go and see a holy man." Tejachandra: "All right." It was a Sunday - Balaram Babu and Master Mahashay were present at Dakshineswar. The Master asked Tejachandra his name and said: "Very good. Come now and then." Later he questioned Hari Maharaj about Tejachandra separately. On the first day, the Master asked Tejachandra: "Are you married?" "Yes, sir," replied Tejachandra. Master: "All right, all right." Another day the Master asked: "Can you show me your wife?" "How is it possible, sir?" replied Tejachandra. Master: "All right, show your wife to Hari one day; that will do." (Later the Master came to know through Hari that her signs were good, i.e. she was a vidyashakti who would help her husband to realise God.) The second visit was related by Tejachandra: I did not find Hari at his house, so I went alone to Dakshineswar and the Master was pleased to see me. I don't remember who was present there that day. It was Saturday. The Master took me to the southern long veranda and touched his finger on my breast and tongue. Master: "Whom do you like as your Chosen Ideal?" I did not respond. Master: "Oh, you don't like to mention it. All right - (pointing to Kali) you like this deity - isn't that true?" I nodded my head and the Master gave me the mantra. Later I said to the Master: "Sir, you have initiated me; but if my family guru is upset, will it not be harmful to me?" Master: "Why? Take a mantra from him also. Also if you don't want to take a mantra from him, then give him his usual fee." The Master fed me nicely and I came back home after spending the whole day at Dakshineswar. It was Phalaharini Kali Puja day of 1884. Either Hari or Narayan was with me. When we reached Dakshineswar, the Master asked me to spend the night there. I was in a fix because on the one hand there was the Master's invitation, and on the other I never stayed out

overnight. I said to the Master: "Sir, I can stay but where shall I eat?" Master: "That you will not have to think about; I shall feed you." So I stayed and sent a message home through either Hari or Narayan. At midnight the Master took me to the Kali temple and fed me at one o'clock in the morning. We returned to his room and he asked me: "What do you want?" It came to my mind that I should ask for money but I kept quiet. The Master said: "All right, all right. I understand what you want." Next morning I returned home on foot.

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Physics and Vedanta

We are thankful to Prof. Dobson of San Francisco, USA, for his erudite article.

" The constitution of the Universe may be put in first place among all natural things that can be known." Galileo

The task of the physicist, of course, is to see if he can figure out the constitution of the Universe. I went to the University of California in 1934 to study bio-chemistry in the hope of keeping Einstein alive, so that he could figure it out. Now I believe that it is impossible to figure it out without the help of the Vedantins.

What we now call the philosophy of Vedanta (and I don't mean the practice, but the philosophy behind the practice of what we call Advaita Vedanta) was apparently invented by some very sharp physicists in India a long time ago, because a great deal of

that old physics (including Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$) is built into the Sanskrit language, and that language is very old. Those old physicists discovered some very interesting and important physics which we desperately need now if we're going to figure this thing out.

The Sanskrit word for this Universe is Jagat, the changing. However, those old physicists were smart enough to see that, since change is seen against the changeless, there must be, underlying this changing Universe, an existence not in time and space, and therefore, neither changing, finite nor divided. That they called Brahman. The problem then arose, "How, then, do we see change? If what exists is changeless, how do we see a Universe of change?" And they said, "It can only be by mistake." So they studied mistakes, and through their careful analysis of our mistakes they have made some essential contributions to our understanding of this Universe.

They pointed out that in order to mistake a rope for a snake, there are three things that one must do. First, one must fail to see that it's a rope. Next, one must jump to the conclusion that it's a snake. And finally, one must have seen the length and diameter of a rope in the first place or one never would have mistaken it for a snake. Those old physicists sometimes referred to these three aspects of a misperception as red, white and black. Black refers to the darkness of evening, white, to the partial light of twilight, and red, to the fact that the perception was coloured by imagination. They also referred to these three aspects as the three Gunas (Tamas, Rajas and Sattva). The mistake of seeing the underlying existence in time and space they called Maya or Prakriti, the first cause, and it is said to be made of these three Gunas. Tamas is said to have the veiling power, Avarana Shakti. Rajas is said to have the projecting power, Vikshepa Shakti. And Sattva is said to have the revealing power, Prakasha Shakti. (The veiling and projecting powers are presumably native to the genetic programming, but the revealing power is

native to sentiency itself.) To quote the Panchamahabhuta Sutras, "As if, being hidden, through the veiling power of Tamas, the nature of Brahman, through the revealing power of Sattva, shone in the otherness for which, through the projecting power of Rajas, it is, as it were, mistaken." What we see as energy is the result of this mistake, because the underlying existence shows through. The concept of energy did not arise in European physics till 1845 with Thomas Young, but those older physicists saw that the whole Universe is made out of energy which they called Shakti. Energy is that underlying existence, which they called Brahman, as seen in time and space. And they could see that the underlying existence has to be changeless, has to be infinite, has to be undivided, and that it has to show through in the physics which we see.

According to the Vedantins, the first cause of our physics is Vivarta, apparition. It is the mistake of seeing the underlying existence as in time and space. After that, things proceed by Parinama, transformational causation, because the underlying existence shows through in the mistake as gravity, electricity and inertia. Parinama is what we European physicists usually think of as causation. It is governed by the conservation laws. The form of the energy may change but the amount of energy, in any such change, remains constant. With the help of the Vedantins we can understand, for the first time, why we see a Universe of gravity, electricity and inertia. The changelessness of the underlying existence shows in time as inertia. The infinitude and the undividedness show in space as the electrical and gravitational energies, energies of position in space. (The electrical energy of an electrical particle would go to zero if, and only if, the size of that particle went to infinity; and the gravitational energy of the Universe would go to zero if, and only if, the dividedness of the Universe went to zero.)

Had those old physicists known what we know now, that the Universe is made of hydrogen and that the hydrogen is made of electrons and protons, they would have seen

that the changeless shows through in the hydrogen as its inertia, the infinite, as its electricity, and the undivided, as its gravity and the attraction between opposites. But without the physics of this mistake, the European physicists failed to understand the origin of gravity, electricity and inertia. Richard Feynman has pointed out that although we (in Europe) know how things fall, we have no knowledge of why they fall, and that although we know how things coast, we have no knowledge of why they coast. And Einstein has made a similar remark about electricity, namely, that we cannot comprehend, on theoretical grounds, why matter should appear as discrete electrical particles. Only the primordial hydrogen arises by Vivarta from the changeless, the infinite, the undivided showing through in time and space. Everything else that we see arises from that hydrogen by Parinama. We know now that the hydrogen falls together by transformational causation to galaxies and stars, planets and people. Even the bodies of living organisms arise by transformational causation, but the notion that one is such a body is, again, a Vivarta, a personal mistake. The practices of the Advaita Vedantins take all this old physics for granted. It is even taken for granted that there is but one reality behind both the individual and the Universe, Ayam Atma Brahma, this Atman is Brahman. (Atman is the reality behind the ego, and Brahman is the reality behind the Universe.) The ego is described as Chid-Jada-Granthi, the knot tied between consciousness and matter. It is taken for granted that if seeing it thus is a mistake, it must be possible to see through it, and that it must also be possible to see through the ego to the Atman, and through the Universe to Brahman. Now those old Vedantins were not content simply to understand all this in their intellects. When they discovered that there must be an existence underlying the world which we see, their question was, "Can we reach it?" That was the effort that swept India in those days, and may yet sweep Europe and America. That is why we have the Upanishads with all those stirring declarations: "All this is Brahman. Let a man meditate on that visible world as beginning,

ending and breathing in it, the Brahman." "Not there the Sun shines, nor moon nor star. There the lightning does not flash, how could this fire? That shining, after-shines all this. By its light all this is lit." "That which is beyond this world is without form and without suffering. Those who know it become immortal." "I know that great Purusha of sun-like lustre beyond the darkness. A man who knows Him truly passes over death. There is no other path to go." "Only when men shall roll up the sky like a hide will there be an end of misery unless That has first been known." "The infinite alone is happiness. There is no happiness in the small." But still, for us physicists, there is a question. Why do we see hydrogen and not something else? Why is that underlying existence seen as hydrogen? Perhaps those older physicists would have pointed out that in order to see, in space and time, that which is not in space and time there is a problem. If the one were to be seen as two, the oneness, the undividedness, showing through, would bring the two together, and close the twoness down. Similarly, if the one were to be seen as many, the oneness, showing through, would close the manyness down. But if the one were to be seen as both two and many, as a duality within a plurality, then the plurality could keep the duality up, and the duality could keep the plurality up, because neither could be seen alone. That's what we do see. What we see in this Universe is an electrical duality (the electrons and the protons of the hydrogen atoms) against a gravitational plurality (the dispersion of the atoms through space). The oneness shows through in the duality as the electrical attraction between the electron and the proton. It shows through in the plurality as gravity. But the demise of the electrical duality is prevented by the gravitational dissimilarity of the electron and the proton. That's Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. And the demise of the gravitational plurality is prevented by the spin duality of the neutrons. That's Pauli's exclusion principle.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle does not prevent the demise of the duality of the electron and the positron (an electron with a positive charge) because gravity is not

involved in the rest energy of either particle. But it does prevent the demise of the electrical duality in the hydrogen atom, in spite of the enormous electrical attraction between the electron and the proton, because the rest energy of the proton is related to its gravitational separation from all the rest of the matter in the observable Universe. The electron's is not. As Richard Feynman has pointed out, "The electron is purely electrical; the proton is not." The spiritual practices of the Advaita Vedantins follow the cosmology of those old physicists. If we have mistaken the real for the make believe, there are four things to do about it. First, discriminate between the real and the make believe! That's Jnana Yoga, the path of knowledge. Next, hang on to the real! That's Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion. Fall in love with the underlying existence! Next, give up the make believe! Give up the attachment to the fruits of your actions! Give up the expectation that through transformational causation you'll reach the underlying existence! That's Karma Yoga, the path of action. Finally, keep your body and mind in such fantastic shape that you can get the job done! That's called Raja Yoga, the royal path. Sri Ramakrishna saw the underlying existence, manifest in time and space, as Mother, and said that we are not the doers. Mother is the doer. And Lao Tzu said, "To Her only I bow, trusting Her now and forever." If it were impossible to see through this mistake to the underlying existence, we would not have the Upanishads and the lives of saints.

Mother is the hydrogen. Mother is the star.

She falls it all together to make us what we are.

She makes the heavy elements and throws them all around,

To make the rocky planets with soil on the ground.

She scatters the ingredients across the planet Earth, Assembling them with sunlight to give us all our birth.

She shines the sun on all these plants; the oxygen is waste.

We munch the plants, and huff and puff, and run around in haste.

But we, poor dears, so mean of heart, assume we're in the know,

And thinking we can manage, fail to see Who runs the show.

Religion and Life (continued)

Swami Bhuteshananda

In the Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna to fight. Again, he says that one should give up everything and surrender wholly to him. Why has he said two different things?

At the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Krishna teaches Arjuna: 'Do not yield to unmanliness.' Arjuna has developed a fear that he may lose the battle. Krishna wants Arjuna to give it up and fight. A warrior's duty is to fight. By sincerely performing the duties of his class, if his mind gets transformed, then he has no action to perform. If he continues in this way and does not feel that he is the doer, then alone can he go beyond the pale of work. (18.11) There are various stages: initially he asks you to perform your duties; to perform them with great earnestness. Then comes a time when you will have to go beyond the pale of duties. Then there will be no duties for you. When you have

renounced all duties, Krishna asks you to surrender yourself completely to him. (18.66)
He who feels, even after performing selfless actions, that he is not the doer, is the real doer. He has nothing to perform from then on. The animal has no duty to perform - it eats, roams about, and follows its instincts. But the human being is a much higher being. While performing actions, if he becomes established in the truth of unselfishness he goes beyond all work. Just by sitting silently you do not become a renouncer of actions. You renounce all actions only when the idea that you are not the doer becomes rooted firmly in your mind.

Maharaj, what is the meaning of ekesvara-vada?

To consider only one God or Isvara as true and real is called ekesvara-vada. Christianity, Islam, and Brahmos follow this principle.

Following the path of dualism, can we follow the servant attitude with respect to God?

Why not? Certainly you can. The Vaisnava scriptures have described five methods of sadhana. These are, the peaceful attitude (santa), the servant attitude (dasya), the friend attitude (sakhya), the parental attitude (vatsalya) and the beloved's attitude (madhura).

The peaceful attitude is like this: without assuming any personal relationship, one maintains the simple relationship of God-and-devotee with Him. This can be called the peaceful attitude. The servant attitude is to consider oneself as His servant like Hanuman did. The friend's attitude was seen in the cowherd boys of Vrindaban. The cowherd boys never knew that Krishna was divine. To them, he was a friend and so they jumped on him, played with him, and ate with him. The parental attitude is to consider

God as one's child. The attitude of lover and beloved is to see the Lord as one's Beloved.

These apart, amongst the Saktas there is the attitude of worshipping God as mother. To worship God as one's father also is there, but there is no mention of this in the Vaisnava scriptures. To consider God as mother is the speciality of the Saktas. Nowhere is such an attitude seen other than here. Christians consider Mary as mother, but they do not say that Mary is an incarnation. Mary is like one who mediates between God and man. So the attitude of the Saktas is unique.

Why is maya called aghatana-ghatana-patiyasi maya?

Maya means indrajala, magic. The deer behind which Rama had run is called maya-mrga. There is no golden deer, you see. The attraction of human beings for the world is maya. This maya extended its tentacles and made Rama run behind it. So what to speak of the common masses!

If maya is impossible to overcome, how can we reach God?

he Lord has declared: 'Give up all do's and don'ts and think of Me.' (Gita 18.66)

Are maya and moha one and the same?

The meaning is the same.

What are vidya and avidya mayas?

Vidya maya takes you towards mukti while avidya maya binds you, makes you deluded.

Maya is nothing but falsification.

What is suksma sarira?

The subtle body is made of subtle elements. The five sense organs (jnanendriyas), five organs of action (karmendriyas), five vital forces (pranas), mind (manas) and intellect (buddhi) - the inner organ (antahkarana) with these 17 elements is called the subtle body.

Maharaj, has anyone seen the causal body (karana sarira)?

No, nobody has seen the causal body. The reason is, the subtle body or causal body cannot be seen by the gross eye.

Are the sun, moon and Hiranyagarbha manifestations of Sakti?

The sun, moon and Hiranyagarbha, all are coming from It or Him alone. Hiranyagarbha is an expression of Sakti itself. Hiranyagarbha is the earliest manifestation of power; that is, he who is the creator at the beginning of creation is Hiranyagarbha. His form is imagined to help meditation. He has golden-coloured hair, golden-coloured beard, even his nails are made of gold. All this is imagined to help meditation.

Maharaj, occasionally we see dreams about Sri Ramakrishna or other gods and goddesses. What value should we assign to them?

Can such things be measured? Anyway, dreams are untrue but the impression (samskara) they leave behind is true. While good dreams leave behind good impressions, bad ones leave bad impressions. You saw in dream that you were practising somersaults. Does that mean you will wake up and practise somersaults? A girl told me she had received a mantra in dream. I said good. Then I thought I should ask her what she had received. `What have you received?' I asked. She replied: `Vrooom'. Does that mean she should repeat this `mantra'? So remember, dreams are not true but the impressions they leave

behind are true.

What are good dreams?

I told you. Those dreams which leave good impressions on the mind are good dreams.

***'He who has fear will doubtless succeed.'* This is a statement. What is its meaning?**

You see, 'fear' means reverence. You must be conscious of your behaviour. That is, we should not do evil or whatever we like.

Reprinted from Prabuddha Bharata (to be continued)

Book Reviews

Elsie B Mack

The Pancaratra Agamas - An Introduction by Swami Harshananda Published by Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore 560019 India Price Rs.5

Prapatti or Self-Surrender by Swami Harshananda Published by Sri Nithyananda Printers, Bangalore 560050, India Price Rs.5

The above two booklets are the latest of Sri Harshananda's publications to be brought to our notice. The former has a daunting title if one has no knowledge of Sanskrit.

However, such a title seems unavoidable in view of the complicated translation of the words. Pancharatra has literal, mythical and religio-literary meanings. Agamas are

literary works; panca indicating five, is simple enough; but ratra can mean `night' or `knowledge', and the knowledge is extensive. We are told that the total number of works exceeds two hundred, but sixteen samhitas currently available are summarised. All this explanation is covered at the beginning of the book. The fourth portion of the book deals with the philosophy of the Pancaratra Agamas based on the Jayakhya Samhita, one of the sixteen works mentioned.

All the pancaratra agamas belong to Vaisnavism, so that various terms, names and disciplines may be encountered in other Vaisnava literature, such as the Bhagavatam and the Bhagavad Gita, so one feels familiar with much of the material covered. However there is also plenty of new information, dealing mostly with worship of various deities and also explaining the implications of initiation, a factor which might be very useful for someone contemplating such a step.

This bhakti literature leads on logically to the second booklet, Prapatti, one of the disciplines leading to Realisation.

Here there is no confusion with regard to Sanskrit terminology - we feel we are back `at home' with Sri Ramakrishna and Girish Ghosh. Girish was asked to give Thakur his `power of attorney'. This expression does not arise in the booklet, but the spirit of self-surrender implied in the act is there. In the path of bhakti yoga there is the choice of behaving like a baby monkey clinging on to its mother, or like a kitten which is carried around by its mother, unable to do anything but mew. In prapatti the aspirant chooses to behave like the kitten. Regarding the act of self-surrender the author says "... It is done only once... One can only imagine the intensity with which it should be done!" Then the aspirant lives his life "... but there is always a strong undercurrent of his being an instrument of God." Eventually the prapanna, solely by God's grace, attains

Realisation.

One can derive much joy and satisfaction from the comforting words in this book. The two booklets are in marked contrast - the former being a scholarly analysis while the latter is a guide to one path of practical spirituality. It is for the reader to take his choice!

