

1. Editorial
2. Practical Vedanta for Teachers - Swami Yogeshananda
3. The Buddha and the Robber - Marie B. Byles
4. The Christian's Faith in the Son of God - Dr.David C.Scott
5. Leaves of an Ashrama: 9 / Spiritual Struggle as Productive of Authenticity - Swami Vidyatmananda
6. St Teresa, Bride of the Sun - Swami Atmarupananda
7. Book Review

Editorial

Swami Dayatmananda

Yajna or Sacrifice

It is said in the Vedas that the Lord (Purusha) made a sacrifice of himself for the sake of creation, and he is sustaining it through continual sacrifice; for it is he who is manifest in the form of the sun, the moon, air, water, fire, earth etc.

Creation came out of sacrifice; hence sacrifice is the law of life; Life is a continual act of sacrifice. Willingly or unwillingly everyone is forced to participate in this sacrifice. We receive and we give out. If we do not give we will not be able to receive or die! Just imagine what happens if you only breathe in but never breathe out! Selfishness is self-destructive really. Lord Krishna tells us in the Gita that one who does not live a life of sacrifice lives in vain, that is he remains ignorant and suffers.

One of the most important spiritual qualities is to make life a sacrificial act.

In Vedic times the ancient seers used to light a fire and perform varieties of sacrificial rites. Most of these were performed either for the fulfilment of some personal desires or for the general welfare.

In course of time the Vedic seers acquired a holistic vision. They understood that the

whole universe is an integrated whole and that everything depends upon everything else, both the living and the non-living. This understanding gave rise to the concept of the five great sacrifices (Panch Maha Yajnah) incumbent upon every householder. Devout study of the scriptures and teaching them to students, worship of the gods, worship of the ancestors, feeding the lower animals, and serving fellow human beings, are the five sacrifices. This is the concept which led Hinduism to deify rivers, mountains, animals etc.

By the time of the Gita the term "sacrifice" had acquired new and deeper spiritual connotations. Any act which brings us nearer to God, helps us to become less selfish, and leads to the welfare of society, came to be considered as a sacrifice. The Bhagavad Gita (4th chapter) enumerates twelve types of sacrifices, such as the worship of gods, charity, the study of scriptures, sense-control, food-control, the acquisition of knowledge etc. All these are considered sacrifices because they lead one gradually to the unfoldment of one's divinity. Of these sacrifices Brahma-Yajna, seeing Brahman in everything, is considered the best; it is the goal of all spiritual endeavour.

Sacrifice becomes valid only when it entails some amount of loss, pain or inconvenience. If a rich man donates even a large amount of money it cannot really be called a sacrifice since it does not deprive him of much. The widow's mite is a far greater sacrifice. (Perhaps some readers might recall the story of the mongoose in the Mahabharata!)

Spiritual life is an attempt to transform every action into an act of sacrifice. For an act to become a sacrifice it must fulfill four conditions.

1. It must entail some amount of deprivation.
2. It must be done without the expectation of any return.
3. It must be done for pleasing the divine only.
4. It must help reduce selfishness and egotism, and must be done unselfconsciously.

There are, again, four stages through which the sacrificial journey progresses.

The first stage of sacrifice is where we feel enormous gratitude for all that life is providing us, including loss, failure, pain, suffering etc; for pain is a great teacher and

leads us Godward.

In the second stage we express our gratefulness in some form of return -- charity, service, prayer etc.

In the third stage we feel strongly that the whole world is a manifestation of God and that everything in it really belongs to Him only.

In the last stage one becomes firmly established in this knowledge, and joyously participates in the divine sport, Leela.

Swami Vivekananda described Sri Ramakrishna as 'pranarpana', i.e, one who has offered his life as a sacrifice at the altar of humanity. Christ accepted crucifixion for the sake of mankind. The same may be said of Rama, Krishna, Buddha and every great person. It is through sacrifice that one becomes great and glorious. Greatness is directly proportionate to sacrifice -- sacrifice of time, energy, wealth, comforts etc. Giving up of selfishness, self-pity, sloth, pessimism, fault-finding, stubborn false opinions, bearing criticism and calamities calmly, sincerely attempting to reduce one's ego, all these, are spiritually helpful forms of sacrifice. Complete self-surrender (Atma-Yajna) to the divine is the ultimate act of sacrifice.

One of the purposes of an Incarnation of God is to inspire us with this ideal of sacrifice.

"Let us ...give up our whole body and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord ... In search of wealth in this world, Thou art the only wealth I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee. In search of someone to be loved, Thou art the only one beloved I have found: I sacrifice myself unto Thee. Let us repeat this day and night...

(Swami Vivekananda)

Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime, And, departing, leave behind us Footprints on the sands of time.

(H. W. Longfellow)

Practical Vedanta for Teachers

Swami Yogeshananda

Some of us are under the impression that religion is a spare-time affair. 'If I get time, I'll...' is the phrase with which we begin many of our best resolutions. 'If I get home early enough this evening, I'll have time to meditate a little before dinner.' 'I'm going to get myself out of bed earlier in the morning, if I can, so I can do meditation or japa before going to work every day.' 'I'll be at the service on Sunday (or the class on Tuesday) if I can arrange my schedule for the week. I hope something doesn't come up...'

Personally I have told myself all these things at one time or another, and lived to see my own mind cook up, sometimes in very roundabout ways, circumstances that prevent the execution of my promises. When we do this we only deprive ourselves and very often take it out on ourselves in the form of negativity or feelings of guilt and hopelessness. We begin to think we may never be able to take spiritual life seriously.

Vedanta, at least as taught in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, is lived religion; this is exactly what it means. There are no lukewarm Vedantists; either you are practising or you are not. The question is how to do it. In the suggestions which follow, the message is that we need to discover spiritual practice as virtually a twenty-four hour concern. We need not wait until we 'get home'; or until we are too tired to meditate; or until the lunch-break or for the stall in motorway traffic. Our spiritual practice goes on from the moment we wake, throughout the day and even on into our dreamlife at night. When we wake to this fact it is a welcome sign that our 'honeymoon' with the lure of spiritual experience is over! The following remarks are offered not as preachings on what Vedantists ought to do, but as suggestions which have been tried by others in the past, are being tried in the present, and may be found helpful. The Noble Profession

In Indian, even more than in other cultures, this is what education has been called. Although one branch of learning (the Veda) was held to be more so than the other (the Vedangas), all knowledge was considered sacred. Learning is the domain of Saraswati, Goddess to all students and teachers; Lord Siva is known as the Teacher of teachers. The

Attitude of Teachers toward Students

In what sense can we say the teacher is "superior" to the student? In age? In having a larger store of facts? In knowledge or wisdom? Or in experience? Every teacher has to ponder this question, not just make assumptions which are quite possibly unjustified. According to Swami Vivekananda, religion is 'the manifestation of the divinity in man'; education he calls 'the manifestation of the perfection in man'. Now as we realize in Vedanta, man's divinity and his perfection are no different. The teacher is the awakener of secular perfection if you will, but the sublimity of that knowledge is not to be forgotten. The teacher has manifested certain aspects of perfection and not others. No one knows what aspects the student will manifest as a result of the educative process. 'Each soul is potentially divine'. All points to an attitude of samesightedness: both student and teacher are learners, both are also in fact teachers, and yet there is a practical distinction between the two. Do we think of the student or child as a tabula rasa?

Are these young individuals in the classroom or home, 'material to be moulded'? Is the student a blank slate on which to write what we think should be written? Vedanta would discourage us from thinking in this way. It is true only in a very superficial sense, for the mind is a many-layered thing, bearing beneath its deceptively simple surface the storehouse of impressions 'from a beginningless past'. Virtually the whole world of education and psychology is rising now to protest the manipulation of others as objects, especially the young.

As Vedantists we hold firmly to the view that knowledge is within. That is, the real meaning of the word is the capacity to judge, discriminate, absorb, compare with past experience and profit by, stimuli from the "outside". The teacher is one such source of stimuli, and a very important one. He or she offers, suggests -- worships! One does not force one's worship on the Deity, and the best teachers know without all this philosophy that 'Hands off!' is by far the best rule. Does this mean no discipline?

Far from it. Many, hearing the Vedantic teachings, ask in wonder how anyone can regard the student as God and yet administer discipline. We must remind them of the instruction of Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield: ('Though all these are forms of Myself), be merely the instrument: I am the accomplisher of everything'; and that highest vision Sri Ramakrishna had: 'I clearly saw that it was the Divine Mother who had

become the executioner, the block and the victim.'

Discipline too is service and worship. At one period it was necessary for me to nurse a very senior Swami of our Order who was unavoidably placed for the time being in an unaccustomed condition of dependence. That service of mine, the guidance I had to give, was no less a service to God in spite of the roles we had to play! Someone has said the student is in the position of a block of stone or wood in the hands of a sculptor, begging to be cut. True. Cut we shall; disfigure we shall not.

We are not saying that this is easy. Here is a passage from Swami Ashokananda's *Spiritualizing Everyday Life*: "You look upon a child as God and at the same time you have to thrash him when he becomes naughty; it is not easy. It requires a great deal of cleverness; you must inwardly say, 'Lord, you have come to me as a child and therefore when I take the cane and give you a hiding that is my worship, O Lord, so don't take it amiss.' Or, if you go to a sick person, you recognize that the sick person is God, but you do not prepare all kinds of sweets and such things to offer him: you bring him sick diet. Maybe sometimes you scold him, or hold him down in the bed if he tries to get up. All these things can be done in a worshipful spirit. I do not really see any difficulty about it: it is all in the attitude of mind you have. If you say that it is not possible to have proper reverence while you are engaged in disciplinary action, I shall give you my own testimony in this regard. I have practised this and I have found that it works. You may discipline a person and be very hard on him when it is a necessity of your service to him -- not because of any emotion or impulse on your own part; not because you have become annoyed or irritated, but because you think it is the attitude that will accomplish what you want to accomplish for that person. Inwardly you think, 'Lord, this is an offering to You. An offering on my part to You.' You can be as hard as the occasion requires, and yet at the same time you can maintain the attitude of worship, and it is wonderfully effective." What about aggressive hostility?

It may sound naively pious today to speak of prayer as response to the taunts of the denizens of our classrooms. Actually this was the answer given to us by a senior Swami living many years in the West and far from naive. Asked about the best response to someone showing us hostility, he replied, 'I pray for that person, then and there.' This was counsel for monastics: professional teachers will sometimes have to take sterner steps! Still, the prayer part cannot be left out. If you have to employ restraints, remind yourself that we are here to please God, not man. This may seem to be a different,

more devotional action than the one just given, but in reality they do not differ; in both, you have to think of the Divine.

The delinquent, in a large number of cases, is an individual with talent and energy who has not been given sufficient responsibility in the right direction to develop faith in himself, and has had to compensate for inferiority feelings by bullying.

The charge of favouritism

If one recognizes this in oneself, a process of conscious correction should be initiated. Sama-darsana, same-sightedness, is a prime Vedantic principle and practice -- trying to see the same potential divinity in all. The solution for favouritism is a matter of subtlety and sublimation rather than a lessening or suppressing of affection. Where a special fondness for one student over another persists in spite of ourselves, we can, I think, discover a way of carefully expressing it by which others do not become conscious of it.

Racial, social and religious hurdles

Suppose we know that what we are attempting to teach runs counter to the students' upbringing, their minds being filled with social and religious prejudices we would dearly love to undo! A great deal of frustration can be worked up by the teacher who tries to repair all the damage done in the home. I am not saying the classroom experience cannot be therapeutic but it is no match for the home background. One simply cannot force liberalism. If one has it, some is bound to rub off. Let us never forget what Swami Vivekananda said: 'If you want to reform John Doe, go and live with him. Don't try to reform him. If you have any of the Divine Fire, he will catch it.' As teachers we are therefore limited.

Has the teacher the right to the fruits of his or her labour?

This is the celebrated question addressed by the Bhagavad Gita. We have the right to work -- we have also the right to expect that sincere labour will bear fruit -- but we have no right to enjoy those fruits ourselves. We need to know the effects of our system of education, the efficacy of the processes we use: that is simple feedback. What we have to learn is not to look for the reward of gratitude and appreciation.

I knew a man whose high-school history-teacher changed the whole aspect of life for

him, opening his mind in a way that few teachers are able to do. He never forgot it: sent her cards, called on her whenever he was in the hometown and cherished her before others. This is rare. All of you who teach know just how rare it is. You have to sow seeds in soil of uncertain quality with great patience. How true this is I discovered for myself when teaching in a school in India. There I once read this wonderful statement: 'Remember, if you are a history teacher, only a few of your pupils will grow up to be historians; but all will grow up to be adults.'

What shall we educate for?

What is it, exactly, that we want to produce? Maynard Hutchins of the University of Chicago spent years over this question and wrote volumes in reply. You and I know what it all boils down to -- not the production of these or those professions but just to make the student think. There is all too little originality in American culture. We tend to homogenize all our achievements. An apple pie recipe is liked in a particular place; it is circulated and used in restaurants all over the country. A television formula, an opera-presentation format, a movie plot, proves popular and is copied by every big producer. All become standardized to the point of monotonous mediocrity. In some other countries education still has the power to make the student think for himself or herself, and to generate creative variation in art, style, habit, taste and thought. May India retain her genius for variety and may the United States discover it! Sings The Prophet: 'The vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.'

Sri Ramakrishna told his elder brother, 'What shall I do with that schooling which enables one to bundle rice and bananas?' He wanted to know the meaning of life. Vedantists can help students always to look for the integrating principle; to see how physics and philosophy, theology and anthropology, psychology and sociology are all paths up the same mountain.

Those who have read the teachings of Swami Vivekananda know well what it was he would have us teach our youth: not the negative but the positive; not sin, but strength; not the destructive pulling down of ideas, ideals, social frameworks and institutions without offering better substitutes. There is plenty of 'self-fulfilment' and 'self-improvement' being taught today and the motivation for these is largely egoistic -- the success of the lower self. Whatever subject we teach, at whatever level, we are to realize we are to some degree inculcators of value-systems. We may, if we are fortunate

and skilful, awaken the spiritual instincts. Then we may be true 'makers of men'.

Thus far we have looked at the attitudes of the teacher. Now what about those of the student?

The attitude of students toward teachers

From the most ancient times in Indian civilization the imparting of knowledge has been regarded as an intrinsically non-commercial activity. To understand all the reasons why teachers (usually Brahmins) never become an organized body of professionals, expecting their due remuneration from a paying society, would require a long discussion. Suffice it here to say that teachers of olden times were content with the thought that their priceless treasures were being passed on down the line of generations and content, too, with the donations of food and other necessities, brought by grateful parents and students, which sustained them. Such was the idealism of a great culture.

The only way any of this attitude can be restored today is to try to cultivate in our children as early as possible a feeling of respect and reverence for teachers (including parents) and for scholarship. There must be the understanding that study is a kind of sacrifice and a form of worship. What are the 'gods' but the guardian angels and presiding deities of the culture and way of life of a people? A student is one who, through the austerities and sacrifices of study, strives to absorb and transmit the treasured values of his people to their descendants, taking the heritage from his esteemed teachers, the whole process as a service of worship to the Protectors of the society.

The younger the child, the simpler the terms; but the awareness of this philosophical basis of worship must be reinforced at every stage.

This can hardly be effective in the one-life framework of the Semitic faiths and related cosmology. I like to tell the story of the octogenarian in our ashrama library in Shillong, Assam. One day the head of the Centre found him studying a Sanskrit grammar. Surprised, he asked the old gentleman, who he knew did not know the language, why he was bothering to pore over it at his age. 'Why, Swamiji,' he replied, 'You see it was a matter of great regret to me that I could not study Sanskrit in this life; now I am trying to prepare myself for the next one.'

Well, we need not be so literal; the important thing is to help our students to have the firm conviction that their study-sacrifice is not dependent on the fortunes of one life alone. Today there are so many aids to teaching! It really is debatable how much blame for the ills in education should be put upon the young. They may excel us; they cannot if we do not lead the way.

Fatigue in the course of our teaching

There is no question about it, teachers today face the greatest challenge they have ever had. Theirs is now possibly the most difficult profession in the realm of public contact. After a day in 'the blackboard jungle' many feel that there is nothing left of them, and scores leave the work every year in larger cities.

In pleading fatigue, however, if we are true to our Vedantic convictions, we know that a careful self-analysis (which is incumbent upon us) often reveals ours is more a case of emotional frustration than of limited energy. We have, after all, the entire storehouse of divine energy to draw on; if we, together with our attachments, resentments and emotional hang-ups, can step out of the way, renewed strength and energy will flow through us. This happens with all creative, objective persons, whether or not they know why. How much more so should it be for us! If we can cultivate, as indicated above, the habit of offering our teaching and all our work to the Lord, trying to see him in the student, the co-worker and in ourselves, and resigning to Him the results of our sincere labour, we should find ourselves buoyed up and sustained and even provided with fresh energy.

A practical tip for meditation

This is a simple thing recommended for all busy persons but which has been found especially helpful for those in active teaching. When we are beginning our period of meditation the initial act of quieting and concentrating the mind often brings up things we have forgotten to do or wish to remember to do. Perhaps we try to file these away mentally, promising to carry them out when the meditation is over. But by then our mood has changed; we have lost all that! So take a little notebook in with you. As such reminders arise, jot them down and clear them from the mind with a few words on paper: then be at peace. In closing I will tell you a story about the Swami who founded our Chicago Centre, Swami Gnaneswarananda. He was a young man fresh from college

when he first became interested in joining the Order. The day at Belur Math when he first met Swami Premananda that great disciple of the Master asked him about his college career. 'I have finished my education,' he told the Swami. 'Then why have you come here?' Swami Premananda asked. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'So long as I live, I learn.'

Reprinted from Prabuddha Bharata, June 1987

The Buddha and the Robber

Marie B. Byles

The most memorable of the occasions when I happened to meet the Master during the middle part of his ministry was once on the way to Savatthi. As we approached the city we perceived that armed guards were posted at all vantage points both at the foot of the walls and at the top of them, and at many places outside the city also. The shields of those who stood guard glinted like spangles in the sunlight, and each man had his sword by his side and his bow and arrow in his hand. After the usual exchange of courtesies when we reached Jeta grove, the Master inquired why King Pasenadi had his city guarded with many guards all well armed. "Is he expecting an attack from King Bimbisara or the Licchavi lords?"

"Nay, Master," replied one of the brothers, "all neighbouring kings and lords are friendly towards King Pasenadi. It is the robber Angulimala who is troubling this realm and against whom the king has need to arm."

"Angulimala?" asked the Master, "and who is this robber, whose name signifies a necklace of fingers?"

"Truly, Master, he is very fierce and terrible and utterly without mercy, and his hands are red with blood. Because of him, what were villages are villages no more. What were townships are townships no more. And all that remains of the people that dwelt therein is a necklace of their fingers which he wears around his neck. No one dares venture forth into the countryside now that he is near, no, not though they were a company of men all well-armed."

"And does this robber Angulimala have a large band of other robbers with him that he strikes such terror into the hearts of people?"

"Nay, Master, he is alone. Leastways folk say there are now two others with him, but they are of no account. It is the robber Angulimala whom folk fear -- he and he alone."

"And where is this robber now dwelling?"

One of the brothers pointed to the hill on the other side of the town from Jeta grove, saying, "He dwells in a cavern on the hill yonder, so far as is known, for it is from thence that he sweeps down to destroy the villages and slaughter the villagers."

"Thither will I go and have speech with him," said the Master unconcernedly.

"Nay, nay, Master, do not do so," said another brother, both shocked and terrified. "No one has seen that robber and remained alive, no, not though they were a battalion of armed men."

"Master! Master!" cried another, "your life is of more value to the world than all others that dwell herein. Go not to the robber, but stay and teach those that can receive the teaching."

The Master smiled happily. "But mayhap the robber Angulimala has need of the teaching."

A brother who had not before spoken replied drily, "Surely he has need of it, but far more surely he would refuse to receive it." Then he altered his tone and became matter-of-fact, "See, Master, there is your sleeping place made ready and folk in the town are earnestly waiting to hear the teaching. Even though you take no thought for your own safety, surely with so many needing you here you would not set forth to convert a robber, that is, if he could be converted, which we all know he could not."

"Friend," replied the Master in the same matter-of-fact tone, "the robber Angulimala has need of my teaching and I therefore go to him."

Another brother made a last effort to save the Master: "Then, Master, take with you the well-armed guard which king Pasenadi has ready to protect you wherever you go."

The Master was almost laughing as he replied, "The robber Angulimala has need only of my teaching. He has no need of an armed guard to accompany me."

The brother last to speak was oblivious of the Master's amusement, and replied with desperate earnestness, "Oh, Master, can you not understand that none ever ventured into the sight of that robber and returned with his life?"

The Master appeared to be thoroughly enjoying the situation, but he now dropped his amusement and replied seriously, "Brothers, did any ever venture into the sight of Angulimala having left fear behind and carrying only compassionate love in his heart?"

"I trow not," admitted that brother reluctantly.

"Then you cannot judge the outcome of the visit of one who does these things. Now, shed your own fear, and have love, and tell the brothers and the sisters and the laymen and laywomen whither I have gone, and that shortly I shall return and bring the robber

Angulimala with me. Ask that they then accord him kindness and goodwill."

Very despondently and half-heartedly the brother replied, "We shall do as you bid, Master, but sorrow is heavy within us. You have the wisdom of all Buddhas, but you know not that robber."

I had witnessed this scene with something of the amusement of the Master. These brothers were young. They did not yet know the power the Master wielded, nor the compassion which would be even now flowing towards Angulimala. I should have feared to go to that robber myself, but I had no fear of the outcome of the Master's visit. When he disappeared from our sight, I turned to the brothers, saying, "There is no need for fear. The power of the Master is greater than the power of the robber. Let us now retire and meditate on the power of universal love which draws all things together."

My words seemed good to those brothers, and we retired each to our own lodging, I doing so after partaking of the plain but sufficient food which Visakha provided for incoming brothers.

What happened when the Master walked past the robber's cave I later heard from Angulimala himself. He was with the other two robbers at that time and was planning tomorrow's raid on Savatthi, when he purposed to relieve King Pasenadi of his fingers. He was depending on the fact that the guards were frightened, and being frightened would fall to his sword like sheep to a butcher's knife.

"Adventure!" cried Angulimala in exultation. "Adventure! Kings conquer realms! I conquer kings! Tomorrow we raid Savatthi!"

Then one of his companions saw the Master passing to and fro below and said with a laugh, "See, yonder goes a yellow-robed one. Belike he comes to beg alms of us."

The other laughed at the sally, but Angulimala said it was more likely the man was a spy, and shouted to him to stop.

The Master looked up and answered quietly, "I have stopped. It is you who have not;" and he continued walking as before.

"I say, stop" shouted Angulimala again and rushed towards the Master with his sword drawn

The Master looked him in the eyes, and Angulimala's sword dropped to the ground. What happened he could not rightly tell, except that he stood still and looked at this strange monk with the extraordinarily sweet smile and placid brow, and eyes that seemed to radiate peace. His mind flew back to his childhood days, and a certain holy woman who used to come to their house for alms. Never since had he seen anything remotely like the face of this monk. Terror, lust, hatred -- these things were ever around him, but serene beauty and stillness were something new. Then there came into his mind a feeling of lying in deep grassy meadows such as he had known when a child. His tense muscles relaxed. Unthinking he sat down. It was not until his men had bound the Master who stood unresisting, and now took out their knives and started arguing as to who should cut off his fingers, that Angulimala came to himself.

"Hold awhile," he said, "a man cannot answer intelligently while he is writhing in pain,

and I would fain know what brings this strange one hither. Wherefore have you come, oh monk?"

"You have need of me, oh chief."

Angulimala started, "I need of you?"

"Yes," replied the Master.

Angulimala tried to break the spell he felt was being woven around him, and laughed as he replied, "Need of your fingers only, I trow, since treasure you have none."

The Master held forth his hands so far as the bonds would permit, saying, "My fingers you may have willingly, but you have need of more than these from me."

"How so?" asked Angulimala, his curiosity getting the better of his previous intention.

The Master now spoke solemnly and seriously, "You seek a greater adventure than you have yet conceived, a greater conquest than you have yet won. I have come to show you the way."

Light began to dawn upon Angulimala as he remembered the strange spell that this monk had started to throw around him. He said eagerly, "You mean magic? Can you teach me magic spells? What can be a greater adventure than raiding the city of Savatthi, or a greater conquest than the rape of the fingers of its monarch?"

The Master's tone was friendly and familiar as he replied, "That is child's play to you, oh chief, for the guards are afraid and the king trembles at your name."

"I know," replied Angulimala proudly.

"I have come to show you the way to a conquest worthy of a man, worthy of one who knows no fear."

Angulimala pondered a moment or two and then said thoughtfully, "You are one who knows no fear. You speak as one who has known adventures and conquered. Yet you are only a yellow-robed monk. But magic!" He paused. "Yes, magic would give me a greater power than ever. All my other conquests would be only child's play. Is it magic, oh monk?" asked Angulimala. "What is this adventure, greater than any I have conceived -- this conquest worthy of a man?"

"It is the adventure of the Eightfold Path that leads to conquest of yourself."

"Of myself?" asked Angulimala a little indignantly, "but all the world is afraid of me -- except you! Why should I want to conquer myself?"

"Because you, my friend, are the slave of your lusts," said the Master, "your lusts for power and domination. You can no more stop your desire for futher conquests than you can stop the grey hairs which gather upon your brow."

"But all men bow before me and do my will."

"And you," replied the Master, "bow before the lusts which sweep through your mind and do their will, as helplessly as the rice which bows before the wind. As a craven slave you permit your passions to be your master. But I shall show you the way to be free, the way to become the master of yourself."

Angulimala looked over the city that lay below, and yet he did not look at it, but at something far beyond. He murmured to himself, "Adventure! Power!"

"Yes," replied the Master, recalling him to the present, "but this adventure will bring you pain and suffering."

"I have never feared pain and suffering," said Angulimala, rising to the challenge.

"It will take long and the way will be arduous."

"I have ever had patience, and hard work has been my delight," retorted Angulimala.

"And you will learn the meaning of fear," said the Master.

"I, who have never known fear?"

"You, who have never known fear."

"What is it that I shall fear?" asked Angulimala, but there was no hesitancy in his tone.

"The evil deeds that you have done," said the Master gently.

"I do not understand," replied Angulimala, "but I know that I trust you and that you hold before me the challenge of the greatest of all adventures. Master, I follow you," Angulimala paused and looked at the Master strangely, and added, "But tell me one thing. What did you mean when you first spoke, and said you had stopped, but I had not?"

The Master smiled as he replied, "I meant that I had stopped doing harm to any being, but you had not."

"I see," said Angulimala, "but you, Master, are going to teach me how."

"Yes," replied the Master. "Are you ready for this greatest of all adventures?"

"I am."

The Master rose, and Angulimala followed him down the hillside.

Meanwhile in Jeta grove the brothers waited anxiously, and say what I might, I could not allay their anxiety. I told them of my experiences of the power the Master wielded because of his all-embracing love, and that if he had any preference left it was to suffuse with his love the worst and vilest of people, even as a strong archer would prefer a bow difficult to bend. But they would not take any notice of my words, and when King

Pasenadi arrived to wait upon the Master, they could hardly delay their respects to him before they told him of the horror that was in their hearts. I reported to the king how the Master had said that Angulimala had need of him, but the king had no more faith, no, nor sense of humour, than had those young brothers.

Then I said to the king, "If the Master returns bringing with him that robber Angulimala, what will Your Majesty do?"

The king replied fiercely, "I should have him executed with the least possible delay."

At that moment I saw in the distance the Master returning and with him another yellow-robed one. I turned again to the king, saying, "But suppose the Master returns bringing with him the robber Angulimala, dressed in yellow robes, humble and lowly of mien, a man who kills not, steals not, a man who leads the higher life in virtue and goodness as a brother of the Order?"

The king replied despondently that in such an event he would have no alternative but to extend to him protection and defence as a member of the Order. Then he added cheerfully, "But how could virtue ever hold sway over one so depraved?"

I replied that I did not know, but I pointed to the Master and that other yellow-robed one, whose face bore the marks of violence. The king began to tremble with terror and the hairs of his body stood on end. Finally he gasped, "No, it cannot be he!"

As I expected, on entering the Master introduced that other yellow-robed one as Brother Angulimala. The king tried to control himself, but still trembling, asked for proof that this was indeed the robber. Angulimala then gave the name of his father and mother, and the king had no alternative but to believe him. Very reluctantly and still in fear and trembling the king extended to him the protection and benefit he extended to all brothers of the Order, adding fiercely, "But fortunate will you be if the villagers and townspeople extend to you the same protection and benefit."

Angulimala answered with gentleness and sorrow, "I know, oh king, I know. If only that were all. Stones and javelins I do not fear, for I must reap as I have sown. But what I do fear is that the evil deeds of my past life will never be wiped out." He turned to the Master, saying, "Shall I ever atone for my evil deeds and find the inner peace of which you tell? Truly, now myself and my evil deeds seem a foul stinking lump which can never be dissolved away."

The Master replied, "As a man has sown so must he reap. You must go forth and meet the karma of your evil deeds and gather in the harvest they will bear. But not exactly as a man sows does he reap, for the waters of the Universal and Imperishable are vast. If you seek virtue and centre your thoughts in the Imperishable, your evil deeds will be expiated here and now. They will be washed away even as would a lump of salt thrown into the river Ganges -- the same lump of salt that would make a small cup of water undrinkable."

"And shall I really taste the bliss of inward peace?" asked Angulimala still doubtfully.

"Think not of 'I' and 'mine'" replied the Master. "A man confined within himself cannot find the Deathless, nor lose his evil deeds in the vast waters of the Eternal."

Angulimala took the dust of the Master's feet, saying, "I take my refuge in you as my master. I go to meet the villagers -- and my evil deeds."

The king was deeply affected as indeed were we all, at the scene we had witnessed, and he now turned to the Master, saying, "It is wonderful indeed how you are the tamer of the savage and the calmer of the violent. Here is one whom I could not subdue with sword and cudgel, but you have subdued him without either."

"Ah, Your Majesty," replied the Master smiling, "compassionate love is a stronger power than either sword or cudgel. Oh man, with manly eyes, can you not see that love is everything?"

The king shook his head. "I confess I cannot. Some day perchance I may find the secret of the magic which you seem to wield, but the time is not yet. Now I must be gone, Master, for it seems the duties of kingship summon me."

"Do as seems fit to you," replied the Master, and the king departed.

I had been puzzling over what the Master had said to Angulimala, and I now asked, "I do not understand how what a man reaps accords with what he has sown, and how nonetheless his evil deeds may be wiped away. Could you explain, Master?"

"Evil deeds are not always wiped away; they do not always ripen and fall off. Whether they do depends on whether the evil-doer has found his being in the Beyond. He who has, and follows the path of virtue, pays for his evil deeds here and now, and though the penalty may seem grievous, yet are his evil deeds wiped away, for he is drawn into the peace of the Beyond. The waters of the Universal are vast and sweet, and are greater than the waters of the Ganges."

It was at this moment that one of the brothers came in bringing with him the two robbers who had been with Angulimala, and they now implored the Master to let them don the yellow robes even as had their chief, and the Master being satisfied of their sincere conversion ordained them also.

That evening, when the brothers were again gathered about the Master, Angulimala returned from the village. His head streamed with blood, and one of his eyes had been struck out. The brothers came forward to tend him, and he sank down exhausted.

"The king was right," he said. "The villagers did not extend to me the kindness and protection of their lord. They flung stones and knives at me. I reap as I sowed."

"And are you content?" asked the Master.

There was peace and gladness in his voice as Angulimala replied, "I am content, yes; a thousand times, yes. For even as the villagers struck me and my head seemed split, it was as if the great ocean of the Imperishable opened before me and that for a little while I was drawn into the peace of Nirvana."

"All is well with you, my friend," said the Master with great tenderness. "Continue thus through the suffering you will yet meet, and you will be drawn even deeper into the peace which you then knew."

"It is the greatest of all adventures," said Angulimala triumphantly, and as he spoke I understood how what a man reaps does not always accord with what he has sown, for if it did it would leave out of account the Brahma-faring life and the waters of the Immortal which are vast beyond measure, and in which evil may be lost even as a lump of salt in the river Ganges.

Angulimala, striving earnestly, in no long time found enlightenment, and was numbered among the saints.

Reprinted from Vedanta and the West , 1955

The Christian's Faith in the Son of God

Dr. David C. Scott

Whenever men make statements about divine things they speak in human images. Even the Christian Church's creed, which declares that Jesus the Christ is 'the only-begotten Son of God' is a human manner of speaking, for nobody thinks that there is any relation of sexual origin between Jesus the Son and God the Father. Nobody believes that now there are two gods in heaven, the old one and a young one. Rather, the familiar image of personal relationship between father and son is employed in order to describe the primal image of this personal relation, the close intrinsic union between Jesus the Christ and his divine Lord and Father. The Bible uses a great many images to illustrate this relationship which are no less effective and valid. Perhaps it may help in understanding if we try to illustrate the Christian Church's confession of Jesus the Christ with a few of the images and conceptions which are employed in the New Testament.

In the first chapter of the fourth Gospel, John the Evangelist uses the Greek term *logos* or 'word' to describe the divine nature of Jesus. A word reveals what is in a person. If it is a genuine word, it communicates to us the nature and attitude of a person. So John says in the first place that Jesus is to God what a genuine word is to one who has spoken it. Jesus was so inseparably united to God Himself that in Jesus' words God Himself meets men and women. Indeed, it is not only Christ's words that are God's message to us; to a far greater degree his life of obedience and love is a revelation of the true nature and the real attitude of our Creator.

Paul is saying the same thing when he uses another phrase to describe the nature of Jesus. He calls Jesus 'the likeness of God' (II Corinthians 4:4). In another passage he calls him 'the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation' (Colossians 1:15). This description of the nature of Jesus harks back to the biblical account of creation where it

is said that 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him' (Genesis 1:27). Here man is compared with a mirror into which one may look and through which another person can see our face. This happens when a mirror catches the rays of an image in such a way that the image is clearly and purely reflected. In itself the mirror is not divine. Man is created from earthly material, but he is nevertheless ordained to be God's image. What is divine is what shines through him when he is fully oriented toward his primal image and receives and reflects that image with spotless purity. The Christian faith does not recognize any kind of genealogical descent of man from God. And Jesus himself is no exception to this. But Jesus does say of himself, according to John's Gospel: 'The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does His works' (John 14:10).

This makes it clear what is meant by the image of God; it is not the face of God but rather the mystery of the person of God that is reflected in Christ. This is why it is immaterial for faith to know what Christ looked like and what his physical appearance was. When Christianity meets Christ it faces only the One whose person looks upon us and meets us through Christ. As Paul writes: 'From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come' (II Corinthians 5:16-17).

The same faith is expressed in still another figure, in which Jesus is compared with an unimpeachable witness. Thus in the Book of Revelation a message of the exalted Christ to the church in Laodicea begins with this statement; 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation' (Revelation 3:14). When a wife whose husband has vanished into a prison camp receives after many years a visit from a messenger who has returned from there, it makes a critical difference to her whether that messenger is a faithful and true witness who does not get things mixed up or give way to his imagination. He is dependable only if he simply repeats what has been committed to him. A faithful witness is like a clear window through which one can see the nature of God. Sinful man, who wants by his own power to be as God (Genesis 3:5), is like a coloured window that draws all the light to itself with all its colourful brilliance to the spectator. Christ desires to be nothing more than a witness who humbly receives and communicates what is given to him by God. Again, Jesus says of himself, 'My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me... He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood' (John 7:16, 18). Here is no second God or a man seating himself in God's anteroom to monopolize access to God by issuing arbitrary statements about God. Here, rather, a man's own will is so unconditionally surrendered to God that God Himself shines through him. And Christians believe this is precisely what is the peculiar and unique thing about Jesus.

In the first centuries after Christ, the Church absolutely refused to be robbed of this gladsome experience -- that here in the new history of the world a man of flesh and blood remained utterly and completely transparent to God, so that God Himself shone through him. This is why the whole late Roman Empire was shaken by controversy over a single letter, as Athanasius defended against Arius the doctrine that Christ is of 'one substance' (Greek homo-ousios) with God and not merely of 'like substance' (Greek homoiousios). In the true man Jesus, Christians believe, we meet not a godlike man, but the one, true God Himself. What was at stake was the question whether Jesus appeared as a deified man, who became like God, or as a real man, through whom, however, the

mystery of the person of God addresses mankind.

Strangely enough, therefore, Christianity defended the faith in the true divinity of Christ by the very act of declaring that Jesus was truly human and not merely seemingly human. In the accounts of Jesus' life from his birth to his death, very critical importance is repeatedly attached to the fact that he was a real human being. At the beginning a child lies wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At the close we find a man in the garden of Gethsemane shaken by all the terrors of body and soul, and a corpse from which there flowed blood and water.

Jesus himself preferred to call himself the 'Son of Man'. And when he used this term, Jesus was calling himself a man and yet at the same time the bringer of the kingdom of God, which the Old Testament prophet Daniel associated with this term (Daniel 7:13-14). Paul wrote to the Philippians that the unique thing about Jesus was that, unlike Adam, he did not try to seize hold of likeness to God but took the form of a servant and became like other men. The unique thing about him was this very fact that he humbled himself and was willing to render ultimate obedience. He did not, like the rest of us, make himself independent of God, put himself in the centre of things, and try to assert his godlikeness and set himself up alongside of God (Philippians 2:6-8). Just because he totally accepted and affirmed the fact that before God he was only a man and a creature who lived solely by the love and grace of God, Christians believe he is the revelation of God.

Having canvassed this variety of New Testament witness, it should be more clear what the church is confessing and what it is not confessing when it states its faith in the 'Son of God'. It is not professing faith in two gods, or even in three including the Holy Spirit. It is not denying that Jesus was a man of flesh and blood, just as we are. It is not asserting that Jesus walked this earth as an omniscient God and only seemingly possessed a human form. In defiance of all such legendary retouchings of the picture of Jesus, the Church clung to the faith that Jesus was a man, not an omniscient God. Even in his religious life he was a man, not an omniscient God. He did not know, any more than any other man, the day and the hour that God has set for the end of the world and the final judgement (Matthew 24:36).

Just like any other human being, Jesus was 'one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning' (Hebrews 4:15). But it is precisely these words, 'yet without sinning', that show why the Church declares its faith in the full humanity of Jesus and at the same time holds fast just as unconditionally to the confession of his divinity. Jesus maintained intact the absolute dependence on God which the powers of darkness sought by every means to break down. Before his public ministry, Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for forty days. When the tempter said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread,' he answered, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."'; and when on the very tip of the temple the tempter said to him a second time, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will give His angels charge of you," and "On their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone,"' Jesus replied, 'Again it is written, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God"' (Matthew 4:3-7).

All of these passages together indicate what the church is confessing when it calls Jesus the Son of God. He is the one who remained totally subject to God when he was tempted to put himself on a level with God. He is the one who proclaimed God's

sovereignty when he was tempted to display his own lordship with the means that God had given to him. From childhood Jesus remained involved with the things of his Father (Luke 2:49). So when Christians employ the human image of 'son' and 'father' to express the relationship between Jesus and God they are pointing to the innermost personal identity of being between the man Jesus and his God. This identity of being was not achieved by Jesus himself; it was given to and implanted in him by God from the very beginning of his life. He held on to it in faith, love and obedience through the utmost extremes of temptation.

Of course, this confession of Jesus as the Son of God gave rise to all kind of misunderstandings. Nevertheless, of all the New Testament pictures, it shows most clearly what, according to Jesus' disciples and the Church, constitutes the unique relationship of Jesus to God -- a personal, inseparable bond of love between son and father. Through Jesus God brings men and women into the personal fellowship of father and children. In union with Jesus the Christ, therefore, Christianity found the heart of God. For Christianity the confession of Jesus the Christ as the Son of God became the foundation of knowledge of God and man, the very source of divine revelation.

Reprinted from Prabuddha Bharata, Dec. 1978

Leaves of an Ashrama: 9

Swami Vidyatmananda

Spiritual Struggle as Productive of Authenticity

When I first took up religion, my ambition was to become, with as much dispatch as possible, a saint, but in the years of ups and downs that followed, I had to revise my goal. I found that it is much more difficult to attain the state of beatitude than one at first supposes. Now I am thankful if I can merely remember my Ideal steadily and take joy in the thought.

Yet there have been objective results. I feel -- to use a modern word -- that my sadhana¹ has made me authentic. That is to say, as I have grown 'better' I have less reason to give the impression of being so. As I have become more open, I am less motivated to put on a show of permissiveness. Pretension has been reduced; I feel myself increasingly free and real; I am what I am.

The escape from pretence, the search for authenticity -- these are in great vogue in the world of today. The 'hippie' phenomenon had as objectives: naturalism, absence of sham, self-acceptance. The communal movement was based on the idea that in living together and expressing impulses naturally, people would develop a considerable opening up of character. Encounter groups are oriented to accepting others as they are and oneself as one is, without defence or subterfuge. Modern therapy attempts to free

us from stress. These objectives are noble, explains Professor Ron E. Roberts in his survey of communes in the United States, *The New Communes*, but they work out poorly or not at all in practice.

How Sri Ramakrishna stressed veracity, and how he needed to! I suppose there was never a time when mis-representation was so consummately practised as it is today. A well-made advertisement, no matter what it claims, is self-authenticating. Anything presented on television -- as Marshall McLuhan has shown in *Understanding Media* -- is accepted as instant truth, because how can anyone question the evidence of his own eyes? Falsehood enlivened with 'charisma' can be more credible than plain fact.

Thus, learning veracity is the great lesson for the man of today. Sri Ramakrishna said that religion consists in making the heart and the lips the same. This takes years. It takes practice. It takes discipline. But sadhana has a way of producing this result -- better than the sad license that mere expression brings. Finally one stands free and says, "This is what I am, like it or not." Usually others do like it.

The final fruits of sadhana are said to be Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute. I haven't experienced them yet, but I have experienced this feeling of freedom from pretence and an inner relaxation. Simplicity, in the best sense, is coming, and it feels good and works well.

There is a Zen story about an archer who became so surpassingly skilled that he was eventually able to dispense with bow and arrows entirely. No need for such crude aids to hit targets! Much later, when a bow and arrows were shown to him, he could not recognize what they were for. Certainly an exaggeration. But I believe that something like this does happen to us. Struggles at first; the following of rules. In time, reactions come truthful and good automatically. The heart and the lips have become the same.

St. Teresa, Bride of the Sun (continued)

Swami Atmarupananda

The original Carmelites were a loose-knit group of lay hermits who lived in caves and huts on Mt. Carmel, Israel, during the twelfth century. Theirs was a life of contemplative solitude with an occasional, but informal, apostolate. Around the year 1200 the Patriarch of Jerusalem gave them a simple rule of life, which was approved by the Church in 1226. With the help of this recognition and nominal organisation, they began to found monasteries in Europe. However, the new European environment -- both physical and, more important, social -- demanded some adaptations in the Rule; so in 1247 it was modified, making the Carmelites an order of mendicant friars. In 1291 the last of the Carmelites in the east were exterminated by the Muslim Saracens.

The spirit of the times in Europe had further effects on the Carmelites, who now became

more and more active in the apostolate and neglected their original vocation of contemplative solitude. This trend naturally dampened their austere simplicity as well. In 1432 the Pope gave official sanction to this state of affairs through his Bull of Mitigation, which relaxed in certain fundamental ways the primitive Rule. The Mitigated Rule was itself reasonably strict; but by the time Teresa joined the Order in 1536, it had become further relaxed in practice. The nuns at the Convent of the Incarnation wore jewellery, chattered incessantly during silence time, visited each other in their cells, and at recreation time feasted their ears with worldly music. They weren't enclosed, but could receive visitors in the parlour and even leave the convent for long periods to stay with family, friends or pious lady admirers. The nuns were referred to as 'ladies' and addressed as Do-a, 'Madam'.

To complicate matters, this was the age of the Spanish conquests. Rather than settle into the humdrum of married life, the bright young men of Spain sought adventure in the Americas or East Indies. As a result, the convents of Spain were filled to bursting with women who despaired of finding husbands: the Incarnation had as many as a hundred and eighty nuns during Teresa's time, and this was just one of the convents in the small town of Avila. What spirituality could be expected under these circumstances?

Teresa had suffered terribly under this state of affairs: early in her convent life because of the bad influence the environment had on an unformed nun; later in her career because of the lack of understanding of contemplatives, but what could she do to remedy the situation? Women in sixteenth-century Spain existed to be seen and not heard; they were to look beautiful but not display too much intelligence -- that would be bad form; nuns were to be obedient, not innovative.

Around 1559, however, when Teresa first met the Franciscan St. Pedro de Alcantara, she was encouraged and began to consider the possibilities of starting a convent where the whole life would be dedicated to God, where there would be no distractions, no concessions to worldliness. Then one day, probably in 1560, she was in her cell at the Incarnation discussing with a few other nuns the hermits of old. During a lull in the conversation Teresa's niece Maria, a lay-boarder who lived in Teresa's cell much as the latter had lived at the Augustinian convent Our Lady of Grace some thirty years before, turned to Teresa and said, 'Why don't we found a convent where nuns could lead a stricter religious life? I'll give my dowry for the purpose.'

Teresa was a practical-minded daughter of Castile; she knew the insurmountable obstacles in the way. So, though pleased, she didn't allow herself to get excited by Maria's offer. God, however, who has no Castilian common sense, ordered her one day after Communion with 'the most explicit commands, to work for this aim with all my might and made me wonderful promises -- that the convent would not fail to be established; that great service would be done to Him in it; that it should be called St. Joseph's; that St. Joseph would watch over us at one door and Our Lady at the other; that Christ would go with us; that the convent would be a star giving out the most brilliant light...'

God Himself took charge of the operation. Still, the obstacles were truly awesome, and to human eyes the project looked impossible.

On Sunday morning, 24 August 1562 -- St. Bartholomew's Day, the District of San Roque in Avila woke to the tinkling of a small bell. Rubbing the sleep from their eyes, people left their houses in curiosity and followed the sound, tracing it to a house belonging to a

certain Don Juan and his wife Do-a Juana. What was the neighbours' surprise when they went inside and found a chapel which seemed to have sprung up overnight! Mass was being said by a priest, and among those attending the service was Do-a Teresa de Ahumada, the Carmelite nun who had been so much talked about during recent years for her ecstasies and holiness, and who happened to be the sister of Do-a Juana. Three other Carmelite nuns were also present, as were, of course, both Do-a Juana and her husband. A few other close acquaintances of Teresa had come; and finally there were four young ladies whose faces fairly beamed with tranquil excitement. The neighbourhood received another surprise when Teresa gave these four young ladies the nun's habit.

'A convent!' one of the neighbours exclaimed.

'Yes, and in our very midst!' exclaimed another.

'Wonderful!' said a third under his breath.

After the ceremony, the neighbours dispersed in an eagerness to spread the good word. Teresa was so overcome with joy to have finally established a convent that she entered a deep state of prayer.

The joyous news spread rapidly throughout Avila, but within two hours the town notables changed the rejoicing to apprehension. They were indignant that a nun -- a woman! -- should have the audacity to found a new religious house without their knowledge. The masses are masses everywhere: the same ones who had been rejoicing a moment earlier, now rose on the reverse wave of enthusiasm and began to complain: 'How can we afford to support another religious house in this town! No, it must be closed down. Save our children's bread!'

Almost simultaneously, Teresa fell from ecstasy to an agony of despair. She had not sought permission to establish the convent through the proper channels in her Order. Even the prioress of the Convent of the Incarnation knew nothing about it. Would the authorities order the new convent to be dissolved? Even if they didn't, would the townspeople give these poor nuns food to eat? All sorts of doubts and misgivings assailed her.

After God had given her the command to found a convent two years earlier, she had sounded out the Provincial of her Order, the nuns of the Incarnation, and others; the result had been disastrous. All had ridiculed her, and the nuns of the Incarnation had been especially indignant. 'What! doesn't she think we're good enough for her? There are plenty of nuns here who lead a much holier life than she does, yet she wants to bring discredit on us by founding a convent based on the primitive Rule! First let her learn to live up to the Mitigated Rule!' So she had to proceed in secrecy, in conspiracy with her confessor, a few loyal friends and the Bishop of Avila. Her sister Do-a Juana had selected and purchased the house of the future convent in her own name to ensure secrecy. Teresa had also the invaluable encouragement of St. Pedro de Alcantara, as well as frequent instructions and inspiration during ecstasies from God and Christ, the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, and St. Clare of Assisi. Most important, she had had her own indomitable courage: 'I saw clearly that I was about to fling myself into the midst of a fire, for Our Lord had told me so... and yet, in spite of all this, I was even then so full of joy that I couldn't contain my impatience to begin the fight.' Was this the same woman who had once been taken for dead? Even now she vomited every day, suffered from

almost constant headaches and frequently from fever.

Now, against unbelievable odds , Teresa had finally succeeded in founding a convent which would follow in all strictness the primitive Rule (actually the modified Rule for Europe of 1247). But for the first time she began to worry over the possible consequences of her actions: for the past two years she had been too anxious to fulfil the commands of God to give much thought to possible failure.

'But the Lord didn't allow His poor servant to suffer long: in all my tribulations He has never failed to succour me. So it was here.' Her soul was once again flooded with light. 'What was I afraid of? I asked myself. I had been wanting trials, and here were some good ones; and the greater the opposition I endured, the greater would be my gain.' Her fears were conquered. She turned over in her mind the lines she had composed and written on a bookmark in her breviary:

Let nothing disturb thee;

Let nothing dismay thee;

All things pass:

God never changes.

Patience attains

All that it strives for.

He who has God

Finds he lacks nothing:

God alone suffices.

Teresa had to leave the four novices at St. Joseph's and return to the Incarnation the same day. Later a town council was convened in an attempt to disband the nascent reform, but nothing came of it and all opposition died down in time. Early in 1563 she was authorised to go and live at St. Joseph's with her spiritual daughters. On her way there, she stopped at a shrine to the Virgin Mary and removed her shoes for the last time: Do-a Teresa de Ahumada of the Mitigated Carmelite observance was dead: Teresa of Jesus, founder of the Discalced Reform, took birth from her ashes.

* * *

Morning, five o'clock. It was still dark when St. Joseph's awoke to the ring of a small bell. In a moment the silence was again broken: 'Praised be Jesus Christ, praised be the Virgin Mary, his Mother! To prayer, Sisters! Let us praise the L-o-o-o-r-d!'

Then from another part of the cloister: 'Praised be Jesus...' And yet another: '... To prayer, sisters!...'

After rousing each other and gathering in the chapel the nuns practised mental prayer,

then prayer in common, followed by Mass. After breakfast, which was at nine o'clock, they went to their respective duties.

'The cell was quickly swept and put in order,' writes Marcelle Auclair, one of Teresa's modern biographers who visited all the original foundations of the Reform. 'The straw pallet, which the planks scarcely raised above the level of the red-brick floor, was shaken and the thick frieze which did duty for bed-linen put back in place. The warm brown colour looked well against the white-washed wall whose only decoration was a large cross. The rough wood door formed a brown mass, the window a patch of blue. In a corner stood the blue and white earthenware pitcher and basin in use everywhere for one's ablutions at that time. On a narrow piece of board stood a few books. On the floor was a cork mat which did duty as a seat. That was all. Nothing more. But the "nothing" was so clean that it positively shone.'

There, any nun who had no special office worked at her spinning to support the convent. As poverty formed half of the cornerstone of St. Joseph's, they supported themselves by the work of their own hands and by unsolicited donations; as solitude formed the other half, there was no common workroom: that would give pretext for chatter and gossip. At work the only sound was the soft hum of the spinning wheel. Poverty, solitude, silence.

Before the bell was given for lunch, each Sister spent a short time in examination of conscience. For self-knowledge was a supporting pillar at St. Joseph's. Was she progressing in the love of God? What was she doing which hindered her progress? Such questions each asked herself in order to see whether she was growing: and if not, why not, so that she could remove the inner hindrances to growth. But Teresa was a master psychologist who knew that in over-scrupulous nuns too much self-examination could create a morbid sense of shame which would drive the soul away from the all-merciful God rather than guide it to union with Him. So she used to warn them that 'this bread [of self-knowledge] must be eaten in moderation,' and 'the understanding must be ennobled in order that self-knowledge doesn't rob us altogether of our courage.'

Self-knowledge fostered humility, a second pillar supporting St. Joseph's. But what a virile humility it was that Teresa instilled in her nuns. 'Humility is to keep within the bounds of truth. The truth is magnificent: we are nothing, but God dwells in us and God is everywhere.' 'Let us beware of the false humility which refuses to recognise the gifts which God has so generously bestowed upon us...' 'If an insignificant peasant girl married the King, would not their children be of royal blood? When Our Lord gives a soul the great grace of uniting Himself to it... what fruit, what heroic acts will not be the result!' To Teresa's mind, humility meant loving submission to God's will, reverent acceptance of God's presence in the soul, openness to His voice as spoken through one's superiors and religious sisters; it meant acceptance of God as Truth, renunciation of ego as distortion.

Nor did her humility have any room for sentimentality. 'From foolish devotions may God deliver us,' she said. Again, 'I should not like you to be [effeminate], or even to appear to be that, in any way, my daughters; I want you to be strong men. If you do all that is in you, the Lord will make you so manly that men themselves will be amazed at you.'

After examination of conscience, a bell called the Sisters to the refectory for lunch. 'Along the white walls', writes Marcelle Auclair, 'the Carmelites sat on wooden benches [before narrow tables]... From a pulpit constructed in the recess in the wall formed by one of the windows, a sister read aloud, her black veil standing out against the blue of the Avila sky... White: wall and coif. Brown: the habits, the woodwork. Red: the tiles of

floor and roof. Blue: a few pieces of earthenware, the sky. Such are the only colours found in these Carmels. And over all that, the sun of Spain.'

They depended for their daily food on public generosity. There was a turn in the outer wall of the convent in which people could put gifts of food, which then could be swung inside. Teresa, an excellent cook since her youth, would take her week in the kitchen just as the other nuns, making of every meal a treat. 'If your job is in the kitchen, don't forget that Our Lord is there in the midst of the pots and pans!' Teresa was true to the spirit of her advice. One day a nun found her before the stove in ecstasy. 'My Lord! Mother will spill on the fire the little oil we've got!' she thought. But, though her mind was rapt in God, this saint's feet were planted firmly on the earth, and nothing was lost.

The nuns of St. Joseph's were completely enclosed: no visits home, no going to see friends, and no receiving of visitors either. In a life of such intensity, recreation was a necessity. Hence there was a regular recreation time when the nuns gathered to talk and laugh amongst themselves. Teresa used to insist that merriment, service and love for one another were just as important as contemplation, and St. Joseph's was limited by Teresa to thirteen nuns, so that they could live together with the intimacy of a loving family.

Poverty and solitude: the twin cornerstones. Self-knowledge, humility, and love for one another: the pillars supporting the roof -- contemplation -- which sheltered them from the wind and rain of the world. Everything at St. Joseph's was aimed at making possible and fruitful the loving contemplation of God.

After more common prayer, the Sisters retired to their rooms after 11.00 p.m., kneeling on the threshold to receive the Prioress's blessing as she passed through the cloister. Then 'the browns, blues, the russet red, the white even, all the colours of Carmel become indistinguishable in the darkness.'

But light continued to burn in Teresa's room. She was writing her now famous books: first her Life, and then The Way of Perfection. She had no wish to write, but her spiritual directors had commanded her to. Rather than take time from her duties, she took time from the little sleep she had in order to fulfil her obligations. The result has made her famous as one of the greatest Spanish writers ever, alongside Cervantes.

These years at St. Joseph's were years of contemplative tranquillity and joy. Teresa's mind never went beyond the confines of St. Joseph's cloister, in supreme forgetfulness of the world. She finishes the account of her life as one who has packed her bag and baggage, and awaits the Great Deliverer to take her to her Beloved forever:

"As I am now out of the world, and my companions are few and saintly, I look down upon the world as from above... [The Lord] has given me a life which is a kind of sleep: when I see things, I nearly always seem to be dreaming them. In myself I find no great propensity either to joy or to sorrow. If anything produces either of these conditions in me, it passes so quickly that I marvel, and the feeling it leaves is like the feeling left by a dream..."

Not the dream of an uncritical sound sleeper, but the tenuous shadowy dream of one who continues to see the dream though he is on the verge of waking, and knows it. The restlessness of mind which gives reality and depth to the world was stilled in her, and earthly objects appeared as empty shadows, playing in the field of her awareness, but

making no impression on the mind.

Addressing herself to the priest who had ordered her to write the Life she continues: "It is thus, dear Sir and Father, that I live now. Your Reverence must beseech God either to take me to be with Him or to give me the means of serving Him."

Perhaps Teresa expected that God would release her from the bonds of flesh and take her to Himself. Little did she realise that He had chosen to give her the means of service and that her active life was only now about to begin. (to be continued)

Reprinted from Prabuddha Bharata, July 1980

The Vision is Divine

Desire for nothing known in my maturer years
When joy grew mad with awe at counting future tears;
When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunderstorm;

But first a hush of peace, a soundless calm descends;
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience ends;
Mute music soothes my breast -- unuttered harmony
That I could never dream till earth was lost to me.

Then dawns the Invisible, the Unseen its truth reveals;
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels --
Its wings are almost free, its home, its harbour found;
Measuring the gulf it stoops and dares the final bound!

Oh, dreadful is the check -- intense the agony
When the ear begins to hear and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again,
The soul to feel the flesh and the flesh to feel the chain!

Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less;
The more that anguish racks the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of Hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald Death, the vision is divine.

Emily Jane Bronte

Book Review

That Alone The Core of Wisdom

by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Published by D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi

This book has the sub-title "A Commentary on the One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction of Narayana Guru." Narayana Guru (1854 -- 1928) is regarded by his followers as a seer and reviver of ancient wisdom. He composed a number of mystical texts, the best known of which is the Atmopadesa Sakatam or 'Hundred verses of Self-Instruction'. This composition serves as a framework for the present book. It embodies a holistic philosophy embracing all aspects of existence and consciousness.

Guru Nitya (1924-1999), the author of this book, was a sannyasin in the ancient Indian tradition. He travelled all over the world, studying and teaching the most profound thoughts of major philosophers of both East and West. He found his vocation with the Narayana Gurukula, where he devoted himself to the transmission and interpretation of the philosophy of Narayana Guru. His writing combines rare insight and profound wisdom with an ability to communicate in terms readily understandable by students everywhere.

A very good example of Narayana Guru's teaching is to be found in the Foreword.

Narayana Guru once asked a young novice, "Do you know Vedanta?"

The young man answered, "No. What is there to know about it?"

"Do you know what water is like?" replied the Guru.

"Yes."

"Do you know what wave is like?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that water and wave are not two?"

"Yes."

"That is all."

"If Vedanta is so simple, why do people spend so much time studying it?"

"Because people forget the wave is water."

"Why do we forget?"

"Because of maya."

"How do we get rid of maya?"

"By knowing that wave and water are not two."

"What is the use of knowing they are both the same?"

"So you won't put such questions!"

From this sample of his teaching one can see that the approach is that of pure Advaita Vedanta. The method consists of self-examination, asking such questions as "Who is the knower?" "What is knowledge?" and "What is known?"

This is a wonderful book for anyone who is intrigued by such questions and seeks to find the ultimate truth. It is a book for every philosopher and speculator on the mystery of being and personal existence. It embodies the ideal of the lone seeker who experiences the "flight of the alone to the Alone."

John Phillips