

Vivekananda Review

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6 • DECEMBER 2014



Institute for Vivekananda Studies

A unit of the Vedanta Society of Toronto

VIVEKANANDA REVIEW

*A bimonthly publication dedicated
to the study of Vivekananda's ideas*

V. Kumar Murty – Chief Editor
Andrea MacLeod – Production & Layout Editor
Pamela Brittain – Editorial Assistant
Thomas Loree – Copy Editor
Karthik Venkataraman – Circulation Manager

Published by the Vedanta Society of Toronto

Call for submissions:

*Manuscripts to be submitted in Word
(.doc) format to the Editor-in-Chief
(murty@math.toronto.edu)*

© Vedanta Society of Toronto, 2014

The views expressed in the articles
are those of the authors and do not
necessarily reflect the views of the
Vedanta Society of Toronto.



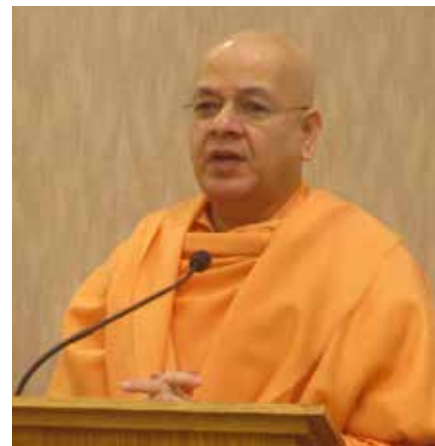
The Vivekananda Review

SWAMI KRIPAMAYANANDA

In this issue, we have an article by Prof. Ram Murty on the Bhagavad Gita as “a masterly synthesis of all philosophical views through the concept of yoga”. Using this perspective, he offers an analysis of and response to some views expressed in Amartya Sen’s recent book *The Idea of Justice*.

Prof. Kumar Murty presents an article on “Sri Ramakrishna and the Indian renaissance” which continues the historical thread that he initiated in the previous issue. In this article, which begins by analyzing some of the causes and focal points of the social ferment in India in the nineteenth century, continues by asserting that “The religious, educational, social, cultural and political rejuvenation that eventually brought India her independence were greatly stimulated, if not started, by Sri Ramakrishna”. The article concludes by asserting that Sri Ramakrishna’s ideas have yet to be realized in their fullness.

This issue introduces a new feature, namely a section on “Letters to the Editor”.



*Swami Kripamayananda is a monk of the
Ramakrishna Order and President of the Vedanta
Society of Toronto.*

Photo Credit: Abhijit Bhattacharya

Swami Kripamayananda • Vedanta Society of Toronto, 120 Emmett Avenue, Toronto, ON, Canada
M6M 2E6 • kripamayananda@gmail.com

“... there is a great opening for
Vedanta to do beneficent work both
here and elsewhere.

Swami Vivekananda
(Complete Works, Volume 3, p. 194)

Letters to the Editor

Leaders Should Think as World Citizens

EDITOR — The article on the Revolt of 1857 (VR, October 2014) included an interesting account of Churchill's attitudes and actions (and more generally, those of the British) that contributed to famine in India. I note that there were other leaders who loved their countries and contributed a lot to the welfare of their homeland, but who acted in perhaps less than honourable ways when it came to the welfare of other countries and other peoples.

De Gaulle, for example, fresh from the French liberation in 1944 and German defeat in 1945, was eager to reclaim all French ex-colonies, including Vietnam. He made a deal with the English to replace them in disarming the Japanese in Vietnam.

In early 1945, Vietnam was under the rule of the French and divided into 3 parts: the North, the Middle and the South. There was still a Japanese military presence in the south of the country. [From] the end of 1944 to early 1945, the French in Vietnam began to hoard rice in preparation for any upcoming battle. Similarly, the Japanese ordered the Vietnamese farmers to replace rice fields with some industrial plants for war efforts. The end result of these actions was the biggest famine in Vietnamese history. My parents and all Vietnamese people of that generation still remember the horror of those days. [According to] most historians, at least one-tenth of the North area population, or 1.5 million, died.

The world is smaller now and people are thinking more like world citizens. I hope that someday people might look at each other as fellow human beings and not as pawns. I hope they won't forget their high ideals when they see people who are different from them. I hope that as they want great things for their country and their people, they understand that all human beings want the same things.

LIEM MAI

Toronto, Canada

EDITOR'S NOTE — In his lectures in America, Swami Vivekananda said: "*When I came to this country and was going through the Chicago Fair, a man from behind pulled at my turban. I looked back and saw that he was a very gentlemanly-looking man, neatly dressed. I spoke to him; and when he found that I knew English, he became very much abashed. On another occasion in the same Fair another man gave me a push. When I asked him the reason, he also was ashamed and stammered out an apology saying 'Why do you dress that way?' The sympathies of these men were limited within the range of their own language and their own fashion of dress. Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is caused by this prejudice. It dries up their fellow-feeling for fellow men. That very man who asked me why I did not dress as he did and wanted to ill-treat me because of my dress may have been a very good man, a good father, and a good citizen; but the kindliness of his nature died out as soon as he saw a man in a different dress.*" (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Volume 1, p. 65)

Religious Rituals Teach Us Discipline

EDITOR — Mano Murty's presentation 'Science and Human Values' (VR, October 2014) is crisp. It is well said: "Moral and ethical values form the basis of our thoughts and actions. They keep the mind clear so that we may concentrate on the subject at hand. No knowledge of any science can be obtained unless we follow a systematic approach and concentrate our minds. A disciplined lifestyle ensures that our minds are kept clear. By 'discipline,' I mean avoiding extremes and practising moderation in everything we say and do."

And I have been saying that our religious rituals teach us that discipline. If I follow a certain routine for getting ready for the *tiruvadhanam* of our household deity twice a day, I get automatically into the discipline of keeping things under control and time management becomes child's play. I have even had relations asking me: "Will the Lord accept your prasada only if you cook it wearing a nine yards *madisaar* after your bath?" They little realise that in a world which is fast losing all kinds of discipline, even this little bit does help in sustaining the Dharma. Personally speaking, leading a traditional life has never come in the way of my reading, writing or lecturing. In fact, I have been helped by the discipline.

You have written on a subject ('The Revolt of 1857', VR, October 2014) close to my heart. After reading Veer Savarkar's book in 1954, I have always referred to the 1857 occurrence as our First War of Independence. I remember my brother (elder to me by three years) and myself arguing with friends about how we should never, never use the term 'mutiny' or 'revolt' for 1857.

I will never tire of reading about this heroic saga, and so your detailed, clear and Swami Vivekananda-connected presentation was most welcome. Subhadraji's "Jhansi ki rani" is a favourite poem and Karunamayee Abrol, a wonderful singer in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi, taught us to sing it with verve and force, especially when we came to the line "*Khub ladi mardaani vo tho jhansiwali ranee thi*". "What does mardaani mean?" I asked her. "Man-like" was her answer. "She fought like a hero." I was happy to know that this famous song has its origin in Bundeli folk literature.

I will be looking forward to the continuation of this saga in Indian history, as promised in your conclusion. With renewed thanks for doing such wonderful work for the Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda movement and with good wishes,

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

Srirangam, India

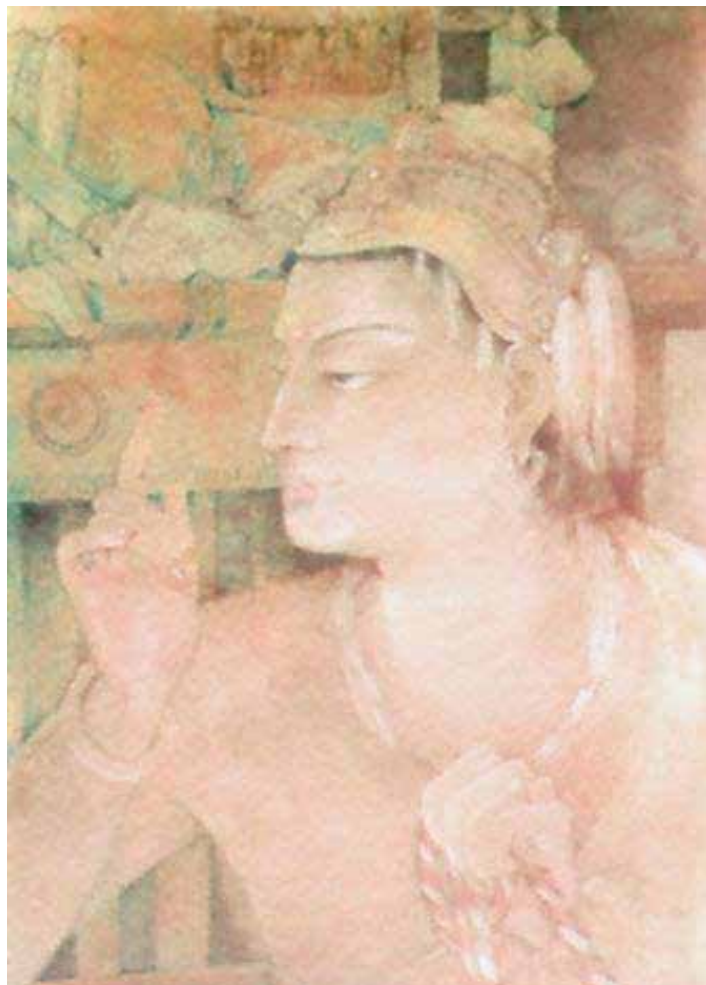
The Gita and Sen's Idea of Justice

M. RAM MURTY

In his recent book *The Idea of Justice*, Amartya Sen discusses the main message of the Bhagavadgita, as he understands it. He writes: “On the eve of the battle that is the central episode of the epic [the Mahabharata], the invincible warrior, Arjuna, expresses his profound doubts about leading the fight which will result in so much killing. He is told by his adviser, Krishna, that he, Arjuna, must give priority to his duty, that is, to fight, irrespective of the consequences.”⁷¹ Sen goes on to say “that famous debate is often interpreted as one about deontology versus consequentialism, with Krishna, the deontologist, urging Arjuna to do his duty, while Arjuna, the alleged consequentialist, worries about the terrible consequences of the war.”⁷² To unpack this quotation, let us begin with the meaning of the words ‘deontology’ and ‘consequentialism’. The former refers to the philosophical study of duty; by contrast, the word ‘ontology’ refers to the metaphysical study of the nature of being. Consequentialism means the doctrine that the morality of an action is to be judged solely by its consequences. Sen continues: “Krishna’s hallowing of the demands of duty is meant to win the argument, at least as seen in the religious perspective. Indeed, the Bhagavadgita has become a treatise of great theological importance in Hindu philosophy, focusing particularly on the ‘removal’ of Arjuna’s doubts. Krishna’s moral position has also been eloquently endorsed by many philosophical and literary commentators across the world.”⁷³

In this paper, we will argue that Sen’s interpretation of the Gita is narrow in focus and misses the Gita’s central thesis, namely, a masterly synthesis of all philosophical views through the concept of yoga, interpreted in the widest possible way. It may begin with deontology in chapter 2 but quickly moves into ontology from then onwards until the end of the text. The Gita is a psychological and spiritual treatise and is universal in its message. Though in the context of the epic, it is addressed to Arjuna, in reality, it is addressed to every human being. Sen’s essays fail to do justice to the Gita’s essential message about how to deal with the battle between our good and bad impulses — the battle within — and how to transcend this duality and harness our energies to attain enlightenment. Given Sen’s celebrity status⁴, it is likely that many Western readers (and some Eastern ones too) are being introduced to the Gita through his writings. Thus, it is all the more urgent that we address his apparently narrow and potentially contentious views.

To begin, the Bhagavadgita is set on the battlefield and addresses Arjuna’s hesitation and despondency, which overwhelm him at the eleventh hour. This is the content of the opening chapter. To lift Arjuna out of his despondency, Krishna initially tries to snap him out of it, as it were. “Cast off this petty faintheartedness and arise, O oppressor of the foes!”⁷⁵ This admonition seemingly has no effect since Arjuna replies that “it is better to live the life of a mendicant than to slay these honoured teachers,”⁷⁶ thus rationalising his position. Confused, he submits: “I am thy pupil, please teach me.”⁷⁷ Then Krishna moves into a philosophical view of life highlighting the immortality of the soul. Summa-



Sketch of Krishna by the artist Nandalal Bose.

Photo Credit: chitrogupto, Photobucket.com

rizing the quintessence of Samkhya philosophy, he says to Arjuna:

You grieve for those for whom you should not grieve. The wise do not grieve either for the dead or the living. Never was there a time when I was not, nor you, nor these people here. Never will there be a time when we shall all cease to be. The drama of life is a process of growth. Just as one grows in this body from childhood, youth and old age, even so, one moves from death to birth, by taking on another body. The sage is not perplexed by this.⁸

To understand Krishna’s immediate reference to Samkhya, we must understand the origins and central tenets of this philosophy, attributed to Kapila. It is perhaps the oldest system of philosophy.

Vivekananda writes that Samkhya “is the basis of the philosophy of the whole world.”⁹ He adds,

There is no philosophy in the world that is not indebted to Kapila. Pythagoras came to India and studied this philosophy and that was the beginning of the philosophy of the Greeks. Later, it formed the Alexandrian school, and still later, the Gnostic. It became divided into two, one part went to Europe and Alexandria, and the other remained in India and out of this, the system of Vyasa was developed. The Samkhya philosophy of Kapila was the first rational system the world ever saw. Every metaphysician in the world must pay homage to him. I want to impress on your mind that we are bound to listen to him as the great father of philosophy. This wonderful man, the most ancient of philosophers, is mentioned even in the Shruti, ‘O Lord, Thou who produced the sage Kapila in the beginning.’ How wonderful his perceptions were, and if there is any proof required of the extraordinary power of the perception of the Yogis, such men are the proof. They had no microscopes or telescopes. Yet, how fine their perception was, how perfect and wonderful their analysis of things.¹⁰

The Samkhya philosophy is a philosophy of evolutionary dualism. It begins with the axiom that there are two universal and indestructible principles whose inter-relation is the cause of the universe. These are *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, or Pure Awareness and Creative Energy. The Sanskrit word *prakriti* and the English ‘procreate’ are cognates. In Indian mythology and Tantra philosophy, these two principles are often represented as *Shiva* and *Shakti*, and their inter-relation, represented as *Ardhanarisvara*. *Prakriti* is said to consist of three modes of energy, called *gunas*. These are *tamas* (or inertia), *rajas* (activity), and *sattva* (equilibrium). These concepts are essential for an understanding of the Gita.

The idea of reincarnation and the immortality of the soul is central to the Samkhya view. Kapila viewed reincarnation as the immediate consequence of the principle of causation (or the law of *karma*). It is thus natural that Krishna gives this as his next argument for Arjuna to engage in the battle. When this does not work, he reminds him of his duty and how his reputation will be damaged and that it is his responsibility to engage in battle. After having spoken thus, he gives a brief exposition of Karma Yoga. “To action alone you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof.”¹¹ This is not a lesson in “doing one’s duty irrespective of consequences.”¹² In fact, the concept of karma is all about cause and effect. Krishna’s teaching has to be taken in the context of the Yoga philosophy he is expounding. The core teaching of this philosophy relates to how to train the mind in concentration. When the mind is distracted by concerns of selfish gain, it is unable to perform its duty. Thus Krishna teaches: “Fixed in yoga, do thy work, abandoning attachment, with an even mind in success and failure, for evenness of mind is called

yoga.”¹³ With a focused mind, one must do one’s best, without worrying about the outcome, since worry only saps the individual of energy that is better used in the performance of the task at hand. Moreover, there are other factors that determine the outcome.

Vivekananda gives his personal view on this matter:

I have been asked many times how we can work if we do not have the passion which we generally feel for work. I also thought in that way years ago, but as I am growing older, getting more experience, I find it is not true. The less passion there is, the better we work. The calmer we are, the better for us, and the more the amount of work we can do. When we let loose our feelings, we waste so much energy, shatter our nerves, disturb our minds, and accomplish very little work. The energy which ought to have gone out as work is spent as mere feeling, which counts for nothing. It is only when the mind is very calm and collected that the whole of its energy is spent in doing good work ... The man who gives way to anger, or hatred, or any other passion, cannot work; he only breaks himself to pieces, and does nothing practical. It is the calm, forgiving, equable, well-balanced mind that does the greatest amount of work.¹⁴

Such a teaching is all the more relevant in this modern society in which many people are driven by success. We strive for success and measure others by this metric, and alas, we measure ourselves by it too. Krishna’s philosophy is pure pragmatism: do your work with a concentrated mind, free of distractions and attachments. It is this notion of attachment that many do not understand. The astute reader will observe that after expounding the view of Samkhya, Krishna gives the view of Yoga (or more precisely raja yoga, the yoga of psychic control). In the practice of raja yoga, the problem is one of *samskaras*, or subconscious impressions. It is very much tied to causation, or *karma*. With every action, with every thought, with every breath, we are creating karma, a never-ending process of creating more and more impressions. We thus become automatons trapped in the mechanical maze of subconscious impressions and tendencies. Just as a caterpillar spins its own cocoon and becomes trapped in it, so also the human being spins the web of karma and becomes trapped in the cycle of birth and rebirth. The traditional yogic response to this problem is to renounce the world and

Krishna’s philosophy is pure pragmatism:
do your work with a concentrated mind,
free of distractions and attachments.

its works and retreat, if only figuratively, to the solitude of a Himalayan cave or a forest retreat. But Krishna shatters this approach and introduces the revolutionary idea of the science of work, or *karma yoga*. “Do thou thy allotted work ... with the mind fixed in the Higher Self, free from selfish desire, egotism and mental fever.”¹⁵

In his book on karma yoga, Swami Vivekananda amplifies this message. He writes:

The world's wheel within wheel is a terrible mechanism; if we put our hands in it, as soon as we are caught we are gone. We all think that when we have done a certain duty, we shall be at rest; but before we have done a part of that duty, another is already in waiting. We are all being dragged by this mighty, complex world machine. There are only two ways out of it; one is to give up all concerns with the machine, to let it go and stand aside, to give up our desires. That is very easy to say, but it is almost impossible to do. I do not know whether in twenty millions of men one can do that. The other way is to plunge into work and learn the secret of work. Through proper work done inside, it is also possible to come out. Through the machinery itself is the way out.¹⁶

This is one of the remarkable contributions of the Bhagavadgita to the history of human thought.

The Sankhya philosophy is a philosophy of evolutionary dualism.

Sen sees this teaching differently. He writes:

Krishna argues that Arjuna must do his duty, come what may, and in this case, he has a duty to fight, no matter what results from it. It is a just cause, and as a warrior and a general on whom his side must rely, he cannot waver from his obligations. Krishna's high deontology, including his duty-centered and consequence independent reasoning, has been deeply influential in moral debates in subsequent millennia.¹⁷

This is a hasty and superficial view of the grand philosophical discourse on the battlefield. Sen adds: "It is, I suppose, a tribute to the power of pure theory that even the great apostle of non-violence, Mohandas Gandhi, felt deeply inspired by Krishna's words on doing one's duty irrespective of consequences (and quoted Krishna from the Gita quite frequently), even though the duty in this case was for Arjuna to fight a violent war and not to shrink from killing others, a cause to which Gandhi would not normally be expected to warm."¹⁸ It does not seem to have occurred to Sen that Gandhi's example casts doubt on Sen's own interpretation of the Gita. Why would Gandhi write, "When disappointment stares me in the face, and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavadgita. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the middle of overwhelming tragedies — and my life has been full of external tragedies — and if they have left no visible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagavadgita."¹⁹ Why would Gandhi bestow such praise on the Gita if Sen's view were right? Not only Gandhi, but a vast succession of first-rate scholars and sages has analysed and commented upon the Gita, and it has withstood the test of time.

Several things about Sen's view are objectionable. For one thing, he fails to see that Krishna is not advocating a "consequence independent reasoning." Rather, he is addressing the fundamental problem of

the human psyche, namely the *samskaras*, or latent tendencies. It is often said that history repeats itself, i.e., that the world makes the same mistakes again and again, and the reason is that the human psyche is stuck in the quagmire of habit. The way to free the mind from this rut is to become "detached". This does not mean refraining from work, since inaction too is a kind of action that leads to the creation of *samskara*. Rather, we must engage in work but be detached at the same time. That is, the mind must not be preoccupied with the expectation of results while it is engaged in work since that expectation distracts it from doing its work well. Meanwhile the mind creates new psychic impressions that only perpetuate the problem. Thus, what Krishna is offering is a means to eliminate the root of the problem so that it does not sprout again. It is a profound metaphysical discourse. Sen's trouble is that he sees the problem in rigid categories of 'black' and 'white' or 'good' and 'evil' or 'violence' and 'non-violence', all of which is suggestive of an Abrahamic perspective.

Sen writes that "Krishna's moral position has also received eloquent endorsements from many philosophical and

literary commentators across the world; and admiration for the Gita and for Krishna's arguments in particular, has been a lasting phenomenon in parts of European intellectual culture."²⁰ In a footnote, he refers in particular to the nineteenth-century naturalist Wilhelm von Humboldt who wrote that the Gita was "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue."²¹ Then he writes, "Christopher Isherwood translated the Bhagavadgita into English and T.S. Eliot explicated Krishna's reasoning and encapsulated his main message in poetry."²² Oddly, Sen puts a footnote after Isherwood to indicate in a miniscule part at the end of his book that Isherwood had "co-authored" the book with Swami Prabhavananda.²³ The fact is that Swami Prabhavananda gave lectures on the Gita and these were transcribed and edited by Isherwood. In such a case, no scholar would attribute the authorship to the scribe. But Sen's omission of Swami Prabhavananda and his highlighting Isherwood as the lead author is curious to say the least. Perhaps he is looking for "English" commentators of the Gita since he refers also to T.S. Eliot's poem "The Dry Salvages", which encapsulates the message of the Gita in the verse 'And do not think of the fruit of action./ Fare forward. Not fare well,/ But fare forward, voyagers.' The error here is that Sen superimposes Eliot's poetic versification of parts of the Gita as its main message. This type of superimposition is a common error in academic circles.

Krishna emphasizes that the work we do is determined by our nature and functioning as well as our psychological disposition. From street cleaning to scholasticism, all works are important and equally valid in the spiritual journey of the individual. Even from Sen's perspective, one can foresee greater horrors if Arjuna were not to fight, because a soldier is one who is appointed to defend the weak and the helpless, who have no other recourse to defend themselves against tyranny. Aurobindo elaborates on this aspect of the Gita's message. He writes:

The Gita is ... addressed to a fighter, a man of action, one

whose duty in life is that of war and protection, war as a part of government for the protection of those who are excused from that duty, debarred from protecting themselves and therefore at the mercy of the strong and violent ... Although the more general and universal ideas of the Gita are those which are important to us, we ought not to leave out of consideration altogether the coloring and trend they take from the peculiar Indian culture and social system in the midst of which they arose. ... To the modern mind, man is a thinker, worker, or producer, and a fighter all in one and the tendency of the social system is to lump all these activities and to demand from each individual his contribution to the intellectual, economical and military life and needs of the community without paying any heed to the demands of his individual nature and temperament. The ancient Indian civilization laid peculiar stress on the individual nature, tendency, temperament, and sought to determine by it the ethical type, function and place in the society. Nor did it consider man primarily a social being ... but rather as a spiritual being in process of formation and development and his social life, ethical life ... as means and stages of spiritual formation.

There are other excellent commentaries in English on the Gita that predate the Isherwood-Prabhavananda edition. For instance, in 1785 Charles Wilkins, who helped William Jones establish the Asiatic Society to conduct research of Indian antiquity, did the first English translation. But the famous “Minute on Indian Education” of T.B. Macaulay in 1835 made English the medium of education in all Indian schools and colleges and put Protestant missionaries in charge of all philosophical education, thus putting an end to any positive reception of the Wilkins translation.²⁴ Furthermore, the intellectual elite headed by James Stuart Mill (father of the more famous John Stuart Mill) extinguished any English admiration of Gita or Indian philosophy, largely through Mill’s shoddily written *History of British India*. But there are other reliable translations of the Gita with excellent commentaries in the period between Wilkins and Isherwood/Prabhavananda, the most notable being the one by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Sen does not seem to be aware of these translations.

The difficulty with Sen’s exposition is two-fold. On the one hand, his understanding of the discourse is myopic in that it fails to include chapters 3 to 18 in the discussion. Instead, Sen focuses only on the initial three arguments Krishna offers to Arjuna in the immediacy of the moment. He fails to understand the deep metaphysical discourse. The second difficulty is that many who have not studied the Gita, are first learning about it through Sen’s book, motivated, as they are, by his celebrity status. All this leads to a great deal of confusion. To add more mist to the fog of confusion, Sen writes that “Arjuna ultimately concedes defeat, but not before Krishna backs up the intellectual force of his argument with some supernatural demonstration of his divinity.”²⁵ Sen is evidently referring to the 11th chapter on the *Visvarupadarsana*, the vision of Krishna’s universal form. The Gita does not end with chapter 11 but moves into bhakti yoga and higher yogas for another seven more chapters. So it is misleading to say that Arjuna “concedes defeat” after Krishna shows his universal form.

Again, Sen misses the point. Arjuna does not “concede defeat”

since there was no argument. At the opening of the Gita, Arjuna says “I am thy pupil, please teach me.”²⁶ It is a philosophical discourse that is taking place on the battlefield, not an argument or debate. After having learned the elaborate and subtle teachings of Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga, as well as of the spiritual goal of raising one’s level of awareness, Arjuna asks if he can have this universal vision, a perspective that Krishna evidently has. It is not to convince Arjuna of the correctness of his position or even to reveal his divinity that Krishna bestows on Arjuna a vision of his universal form. Rather, the dialogue makes a nice transition into Bhakti yoga, or the yoga of devotion. Human beings are unable to think abstractly, however hard we may try. As long as we are embodied beings, we are apt to think in terms of name and form. Vivekananda humorously writes: “If the buffaloes desire to worship God, they, in keeping with their own nature, will see Him as a huge buffalo; if a fish wishes to worship God, its concept of Him would inevitably be a big fish; and man must think of Him as a man.” Thus it is in the nature of human beings to worship through forms and images. The Gita does not end at chapter 11, after Krishna shows to Arjuna his universal form; it continues for another seven more chapters, expounding a multi-layered philosophy moving from non-dualism to dualism in the twelfth chapter, and then to pluralism. The thirteenth chapter is an exposition of Samkhya’s worldview with two eternal principles called *Purusa* and *Prakriti*. Simply put, this is Pure Awareness and Creative Energy, or as Krishna explains it, the Knower of the Field (*ksetrajna*) and the field (*kstera*). This then merges into the three-fold view of nature, with the operation of the three modes (or *gunas*) elaborately explained till the eighteenth chapter. Finally, Krishna says to Arjuna that the philosophy he has explained is the highest philosophy — his philosophy — and that he may now do as he wishes, thus giving Arjuna free choice. *Yatha icchasi tatha kuru*, Krishna says.

But there is a larger dimension to the message. It is true that war leads to destruction and death, but Arjuna’s argument that if the Kauravas had their way, there would be less destruction or persecution is doubtful. In life, we are always confronted with choices, few of which are black or white. Often we find ourselves choosing the lesser of two evils. In this context, let me highlight another objectionable aspect of Sen’s essay. He quotes the famous episode of J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was in charge of the Manhattan project, which developed the first atomic bomb. When the bomb was first tested in the Los Alamos desert, Oppenheimer reportedly quoted the Gita, especially the description of the universal form. “If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the splendour of that exalted Being.”²⁷ Oppenheimer then quotes incorrectly a later verse as “I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” This last quotation is repeated every year in newspapers around the world to mark the anniversary of the first atomic test on July 16, 1945. I have pointed out in my book *Indian Philosophy* that the correct translation is “I am Time, the devourer of worlds.” It is unfortunate that Oppenheimer’s erroneous translation is repeated *ad infinitum* and goes uncorrected. Referring to this episode in Oppenheimer’s life, Sen writes:

Just like the advice that Arjuna, the ‘warrior’, had received from Krishna about his duty to fight for a just cause, Oppenheimer, the ‘physicist’, found justification, at that time, in his technical commitment to develop a bomb for what was

clearly the right side. Later on, deeply questioning his own contribution to the development of the bomb, Oppenheimer would reconsider the situation with hindsight: ‘When you see something that is technically sweet, you go ahead and do it and you argue about what to do about it only after you have had your technical success.’²⁹

Sen’s suggestion is that Oppenheimer, in hindsight, would not have carried out the atomic bomb project and that he was drawn to it because it was ‘technically sweet’.

In my view, this analysis is erroneous and over-simplified. The ethical dilemma of Arjuna is in many ways similar to the ethical dilemmas faced by the nuclear physicists involved in the research to build the bomb. Teachers, students and researchers who had earlier worked together found themselves on opposite sides during the Second World War. This is amplified in several notable personalities, most specifically Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr and Robert Oppenheimer. Niels Bohr was very much the teacher figure, and his relation to Heisenberg is well-documented. During the war, Heisenberg seemed to sympathize with the Third Reich. The play titled *Copenhagen* dramatizes this dilemma. It depicts the volatile meeting between Heisenberg and Bohr in 1941 and the conflicts that emerged in Denmark, which was then occupied by the Nazis. Apparently, Heisenberg was troubled until the end of his life about this strange circumstance and position. He tried to explain it this way: “Under a dictatorship active resistance can only be practised by those who pretend to collaborate with the regime. Anyone speaking out openly against the system ... deprives himself of any chance of active resistance.”³⁰ Heisenberg insisted, till the end of his life, that the world community had misunderstood him. His position seemed similar to that of Karna in the Mahabharata.

The message of the Gita is not a ‘consequence independent deontology’ but rather a psycho-spiritual treatise of ontology amplifying the spiritual destiny of the human being.

Many deep-thinking scientists found themselves in different camps and were confronted with existential dilemmas. Some scientists foolishly believed atomic weapons would end all wars. It was widely known that the Germans were already building an atomic bomb, with Heisenberg as their lead scientist. Oppenheimer was well aware of this. Thus, even though he may have been motivated by the desire to pursue what is “technically sweet”, the fact remains that if the Americans had not built the bomb, some other nation would have. We now know that Heisenberg miscalculated and that this mathematical error prevented the Germans from building the bomb.³¹ Referring to this, Einstein later said: “If I had known that the Germans would not succeed in constructing the atom bomb, I would never have lifted a finger.” Sadly, such wisdom and hindsight, lofty as it sounds, does not prevent someone else from building the bomb and using it for destructive purposes. Whenever new energies are discovered by science, our ethical responsibility is that they must be utilized for the good of the human race and not a particular nation. We

must rise above nationalities and embrace internationalism.

This message is best understood if we delve into the causes of the world wars. Several scholars suggest that the root causes of these wars were racism and colonialism. After the dominant European nations had carved up Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas, some of them decided to expand their empires into Europe and prey on each other. This, combined with the pernicious pseudo-scientific view of social Darwinism and the “survival of the fittest”, enabled them to justify slavery and colonialism. And at the time of the world wars, this viewpoint seems to have degenerated into ‘ethnic cleansing’ of the population of the European countries. Both world wars appear to be rooted in such racist ideology. In these wars, the populace of the colonies was also recruited to take the beating in the trenches and the frontlines.³² Even today, we have not learned from such destructive ideas of world domination and supremacy. To avoid self-destruction, we must move from competition to co-operation. In the modern context, this means that ‘nationalism’ should be replaced by ‘internationalism’. We are already seeing a movement in this direction in the global efforts to deal with ecological and health issues. From this view, the message of the Gita is universal and applies to any age. The modern ideal of the democratic process tries to approximate this universal view.

In his essay, “The World Community”, Radhakrishnan writes: In World War I, of the ten million people who were killed, 95 per cent were soldiers and 5 per cent, civilians. In World War II, over 50 million were killed of whom 52 per cent were soldiers and 48 per cent civilians. In the Korean War, of the nine million killed, 84 percent were civilians and 16 per cent soldiers. In these circumstances, it is difficult to believe that war has degenerated into the mass murder of the defenceless, non-combatants, women and children, is a legitimate instrument of politics.³³

This raises the question of the ethical application of science. I don’t think one can prevent scientific advances for fear that they will be used for diabolical purposes. Humanity must learn to make ethical use of its discoveries. James Franck was the first physicist to insist to the U.S. government that the atomic bomb could be demonstrated in an unpopulated area instead of a populated one. The War Department rejected his recommendation, which in turn led many scientists to reflect on the question of ethical responsibility. Franck: “Scientists in general are cautious and therefore tolerant and disinclined to accept total solutions. Our very objectivity prevents us from taking a strong stand in political differences, in which the right is never on one side. So we took the easiest way out and hid in our ivory tower. We felt that neither the good nor the evil applications were our responsibility.”³⁴

Similar views may have been held by Oppenheimer. Again, if his team had not developed the bomb, some other group of scientists *would* have. Sen writes that

Later on, deeply questioning his own contribution to the development of the bomb, Oppenheimer would reconsider

the situation with hindsight: ‘When you see something that is technically sweet, you go ahead and do it and you argue about what to do about it after you have had your technical success.’ Despite that compulsion to ‘fare forward’, there was reason enough for Oppenheimer also to reflect on Arjuna’s concerns (not just to be thrilled by Krishna’s words): how can good come from killing so many people? And why should I only do my duty as a physicist, ignoring all other results including miseries and deaths that would follow from my own actions?³⁵

This dilemma uncovers the fundamental problem of discovery. Sen seems to suggest that one should not discover things for fear that evil people will make use of them. The good or evil does not reside in the discovery but rather in how human beings use that discovery. We are a long way from the collective responsibility of ensuring peaceful and constructive uses of nuclear energy rather than political or destructive uses.

As mentioned, the background of both world wars is rooted in the scourge of racism. When people were being exterminated by despotic governments, the Western nations felt powerless. It is interesting to see that the virus of racism as practised in Asia and Africa through colonial expansionism did not seem to be a global injustice to the European nations. It was only when a few European nations began preying on other European nations in their expansionist objectives that it dawned on the Western nations that colonial expansionism was evil. It took the shock of two world wars, together with the mushroom cloud of nuclear armaments, to make them realize as much.

Reflecting on this modern malaise, Radhakrishnan writes:

My one supreme interest has been to try to restore a sense of spiritual values to the millions of religiously displaced persons, who have been struggling to find precarious refuges in the emergency camps of Art and Science, of Fascism and Nazism, of Humanism and Communism. The first step to recovery is to understand the nature of confusion of thought which absorbs the allegiance of millions of men. Among the major influences which foster a spirit of scepticism in regard to religious truth are the growth of the scientific spirit, the development of a technological civilization, a formal or artificial religion which finds itself in conflict with an awakened social conscience, and a comparative study of religions.³⁶

The twentieth century has raised fundamental questions about science and ethics and the role of the scientist. The scientist should not absolve himself or herself of any responsibility on how their discoveries are used. Rather he/she should engage in ethical uses. Undoubtedly, this is a complex issue. In many ways, the ideal of democracy attempts to ensure that power does not reside in a few individuals but rather, in the people. But true democracy is when the collective wisdom of all humanity can be combined for the welfare of all. It can only be fostered in a climate of mutual respect and understanding. When new forms of energy are unleashed by science, their use must be regulated and employed in a constructive way. This means that the individual, especially the one in power, must act responsibly. Power and responsibility must

go together.

In summary, the message of the Gita is not a “consequence independent deontology”, as Sen insists in his book, but rather a psycho-spiritual treatise of ontology amplifying the spiritual destiny of the human being. The earlier we come to this realization, which fosters mutual respect and co-operation rather than competition and confrontation, the greater is our chance of survival. Scientists predict that our galaxy will collide with the Andromeda galaxy in about three billion years. Can the human race survive for three billion years? Is it possible to combine the light of our collective wisdom so that it shines brighter than a thousand suns? That is the only way.

M. Ram Murty • Department of Mathematics, Queen’s University, 99 University Avenue, Kingston, ON, Canada K7L 3N6 • murty@mast.queensu.ca

NOTES

- 1 See page 23 of Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, Penguin Books, 2009.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 4 Sen won the Nobel Prize in economics in 1998.
- 5 See Bhagavadgita, Chapter 2, verse 3.
- 6 *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, verse 5.
- 7 *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, verse 7.
- 8 *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, verses 11-13.
- 9 See p. 445 of Volume 2 of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 445.
- 11 See verse 47 of Chapter 2 of the Gita.
- 12 See A. Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, p. 209.
- 13 See Bhagavadgita, Chapter 2, verse 48.
- 14 See *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 293.
- 15 See verses 8 and 30 of Chapter 3 of the Gita.
- 16 Volume 1 of *Complete Works*, p. 115.
- 17 See Sen, p. 209.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 19 See S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 10.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 210, footnote.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 23 See the endnote for Chapter 10 on page 434 of Sen’s book.
- 24 See page xiv of *Indian Philosophy in English*, edited by N. Bhushan and J.L. Garfield.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- 26 See Bhagavadgita, verse 7, chapter 2.
- 27 See p. 273 of S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*.
- 28 See M. Ram Murty, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 93.
- 29 See Sen, p. 211.
- 30 See Robert Jungk, *Brighter than a Thousand Suns*, Victor Gollancz Ltd. and Penguin Books.
- 31 See p. 9 of P.L. Rose, *Heisenberg and the Nazi Atomic Bomb Project*, a study in German culture, 1998, University of California Press.
- 32 See p. 36 of P. Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire*, Penguin.

- 33 See S. Radhakrishnan, *The World Community*, p. 305 in *The Basic Writings of S. Radhakrishnan*, edited by R.A. McDermott.
- 34 See Jungk, *Brighter than a Thousand Suns*.
- 35 See p. 212 of A. Sen, *The Idea of Justice*.
- 36 See p. 14 of *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, edited by P.A. Schlipp.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bhushan, N., & Garfield, J. L. (2011). *Indian Philosophy in English*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jungk, R. (1958), *Brighter Than a Thousand Suns*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- McDermott, R. (2008). *The Basic Writings of S. Radhakrishnan*. Mumbai: Jaico.
- Mishra, P. (2012). *From the Ruins of Empire*. London: Penguin.
- Murty, R. (2013). *Indian Philosophy, An Introduction*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (1973). *The Bhagavadgita*. New York: Harper Colophon Books.
- Schlipp, P. (1952). *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*. La Salle: Open Court.
- Sen, A. (2010). *The Idea of Justice*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Vivekananda, S. (1983). *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Calcutta: Advaita Ashram.

Sri Ramakrishna and Indian Renaissance

V. KUMAR MURTY

By the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, certain sections of Indian society were asking questions about customs and traditions that were prevalent in the subcontinent at the time. In some quarters this questioning went further to a call for action and a sense that there was an urgent need for the reform of society in certain fundamental ways. Both Indian nationalists as well as Imperial apologists were caught in this tumult. The outcome of this questioning and churning was an Indian renaissance.

What is a renaissance? Literally, it means a rebirth. But there is more to it. “A Renaissance is not only a rebirth but a purification as well. A Renaissance involves a sorting out process in which the old is purged of its dross or its impurities so that only that which is the best is carried over to make up the new.”¹ The ‘newness’ is an essential aspect

of a renaissance, but historians are divided on whether it is to be seen as representing ‘a sudden flowering’ or as a maturing of ideas of a previous age.² This seems to be largely a semantic issue as even an unscheduled or unexpected flowering suggests the germination of seeds planted earlier. Moreover, according to Bronowski and Mazlish, the renaissance itself occurs on at least two levels or stages, namely “what we have called an aristocratic, idealistic stage and a more popular, empirical one”.³

According to philosopher Donald Bishop, there are three causes of a renaissance. “A Renaissance in a given culture or nation is a result of internal conditions which can no longer be tolerated. It is a result of that culture or nation being confronted by ideas, beliefs, or practices different from its own which come in from the outside. And it stems from new conditions which have come about because life itself is constantly undergoing change and history is itself a process of coming into being and going out of existence.”⁴

There are diverse opinions of the focus of that rebirth. Swami Vivekananda’s view is very clear that it was centered on the spiritual personality of Sri Ramakrishna. In a talk given in Kolkata in 1897, he said “Our heroes must be spiritual. Such a hero has been given to us in the person of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round his name. It does not matter who preaches Ramakrishna Paramahansa, whether I, or you, or anybody else. But him I place before you, and it is for you to judge, and for the good of our race, for the good of our nation, to judge now, what you shall do with this great ideal of life.”⁵

In this article, we begin by analyzing some of the causes and foci of the social ferment of the time, and study Sri Ramakrishna’s role in the renaissance. We suggest that his main contribution was in his ability to harmonize divergent points of view by pointing out hitherto unrecognized common ground. He applied this in theological questions, but also in social matters and in the relation between the two. The harmony of life taught by Sri Ramakrishna was a positive and constructive force, which formed the foundation for the spiritual humanism of Mahatma Gandhi.

The British Occupation and Social Reform

It has become almost a truism to say that India’s contact with western thought (through the British occupation of India) was the main external factor contributing to social reform movements. Bishop writes “As to the external causes which brought about the Renaissance, the major one is well known to us. It was, of course, the impingement of the West and the introduction in India of nineteenth-century British liberal-



Photo Credit: Anonymous, Public Domain

Sri Ramakrishna, Studio of Bengal Photographers (December 10, 1881)

ism or liberal philosophy along with Christianity in both its orthodox and Unitarian forms. That liberalism emphasized individual liberty and rights, democracy as a political institution, the concept of equality, freedom of choice, and the inherent dignity and worth of all persons. John Stuart Mill was the chief architect of this liberalism and his works became widely read by Indian intellectuals in this period. Rammohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, the Tagores, and others admit to the influence of this philosophical liberalism and humanism.”⁶

Bishop is by no means alone in holding this point of view, as we find similar sentiments expressed in the analyses of several authors. While exposure to Mill and other thinkers may have played some role, it seems that Bishop’s point of view fails to take into account several aspects of daily reality about the British presence in India. It is important to distinguish between what was espoused in certain aspects of western social philosophy and religious outlook and what was the common experience of the Indian population with respect to the British occupation.

In the first place, the British in India lived apart from the ‘natives’. If Indian society was divided into numerous castes, to the British all Indians were untouchables. The ‘individual liberty and rights’ referred to above were for the British and a different standard applied to the natives. There was no democracy as a political institution in British India as the ‘natives’ had no say in the formulation of laws, or in the election of any form of representative government. In fact, British India was largely governed from London.

... his main contribution was in his ability to harmonize divergent points of view by pointing out hitherto unrecognized common ground.

Similarly, ‘the concept of equality, freedom of choice, and the inherent dignity and worth of all persons’ did not apply to the Indian population. From this point of view, the most important external factor that stimulated the Indian renaissance may have been the derisive treatment of all sections of Indian society by the British.⁷ It is quite possible that being treated by the British as ‘pariahs’, those social leaders and thinkers who enjoyed a privileged position in Indian society were forced to rethink the entire structure.

If there was a view that Indian society stood in need of reform, there was no movement in this regard from the British government. Initiatives by a succession of Viceroys largely focused on administrative improvements. Even the efforts of Macaulay to ‘reform’ education in India were largely based on the needs of the British administration.

If the argument is made that despite British practice in India, it was British (and more generally western) liberal thought and writings that inspired Indian intellectuals to advocate social change, there may be some truth in this. However, we have to remember that these intellectuals were also well versed in Indian thought. Nehru writes, “While they drank from the rich streams of English literature their minds were also full of ancient sages and heroes of India, their thoughts and deeds, and of the myths and traditions which they had imbibed from their childhood.”⁸ For example, there was already a tradition of enlightened rule in the concept of ‘*ram rajya*’, namely that of a benevolent ruler ever ready to sacrifice himself or herself for the well being of the people. Note that the historicity of

Rama is irrelevant for this discussion. The ideal or concept existed and was eloquently and elaborately described in the epic Ramayana. It was an image that Mahatma Gandhi often drew upon.

We also find in the Mahabharata many instances of monarchs sacrificing themselves for the good of their people. Moreover, in terms of the involvement of the population in the formulation of the laws by which they are governed, there was an active village governance system based essentially on an elected village council, which had been operational long before the British occupation of India, and even before the advent of the Moghuls. Shukracharya’s tenth century work *Nitisara*, describes village government in some detail. Nehru writes:

“The village *panchayat* or elected council has large powers, both executive and judicial, and its members were treated with the greatest respect by the king’s officers. Land was distributed by this *panchayat*, which also collected taxes out of the produce and paid the government’s share on behalf of the village. Over a number of these village councils there was a larger *panchayat* or council to supervise and interfere if necessary.

Some inscriptions further tell us how the members of the village councils were elected and what their qualifications and disqualifications were. Various committees were formed,

elected annually, and women could serve on them. In case of misbehavior, a member could be removed. A

member could be disqualified if he failed to render accounts of public funds. An interesting rule to prevent nepotism is mentioned: near relatives of members were not to be appointed to public office...

The king was to act in accordance with the opinion of the majority of the people. ‘Public opinion is more powerful than the king as the rope made of many fibres is strong enough to drag a lion’.”⁹

A succession of Moghul rulers acknowledged this functional village government and worked with it, rather than against it, to govern effectively. Moreover, the system of village councils was not a relic of the past, but an active institution that was functioning in the India of the 19th century.

In addition, there was a tradition of social justice and equality in the teachings of many spiritual luminaries. Amongst them was the founder of the Vishishtadvaita system of philosophy, the great teacher Ramanuja. Swami Vivekananda, as a keen student of history, remarked, “Did not Ramanuja feel for the lower classes? Did he not try all his life to admit even the Pariah to his community?”¹⁰ On another occasion, he said about Ramanuja “He felt for the downtrodden, he sympathized with them. He took up the ceremonies, the accretions that had gathered, made them pure so far as they could be, and instituted new ceremonies, new

methods of worship, for the people who absolutely required them. At the same time he opened the door to the highest spiritual worship from the Brahmin to the Pariah. That was Ramanuja's work."¹¹

And at least partly inspired by Ramanuja's spiritually focused social inclusiveness, Swami Vivekananda formulated various aspects of the Ramakrishna Mission. As Prema Nandakumar describes, "When the Mission was started, Vivekananda wanted to send a message on the organization's approach to caste-ism and untouchability. When the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 22nd of February 1898, he invested fifty non-brahmins with the holy thread and gave them initiation with Gayatri mantra. This was a bold gesture indeed, but he had firm faith in the path shown by Sri Ramanuja... Perhaps he spoke to them of what he had heard about the great Acharya who had re-named the dalits as 'Thiru-kulathaar' ... Perhaps he also spoke to them of one of the Alwars, Tiruppan, who was a Dalit and had sung some of the sweetest Tamil songs on Lord Ranganatha, the residing deity of Srirangam."¹²

And underpinning all of this was a profound spiritual philosophy, as embodied in the Upanishads, that taught the divinity of all life, and indeed of all existence. If Ram Mohun Roy, Keshab Chanda Sen and the Tagores speak of the influence of Western liberal thinkers, they also speak of the influence of the great Indian traditions mentioned above. As a keen student of history, Vivekananda points out that in the history of the world, significant social reform was often the outgrowth of a spiritual movement. He says "Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and Luther may be instanced as the great waves that stood up above their fellows (with a probable lapse of five hundred years between them). Always the wave that is backed by the greatest purity and the noblest character is what breaks upon the world as movement of social reform."¹³

If the criticism is made that Indian thought was different from the practice of Indian society of the day, then the same criticism has to be leveled at the schism between the thought of liberal British intellectuals and the practices of the British government. It is therefore naïve at best to ascribe the cause of the Indian renaissance to the introduction of western liberal thought in India.

It is also worth noting that thinkers like Mill were not universally accepted in England itself. Undoubtedly, there was an influence exerted by the works of the Utilitarians from Bentham to Mill. Several Indian intellectuals, including Vivekananda as a young student, studied the writings of Herbert Spencer. Regarding Herbert Spencer, another liberal philosopher of the time, Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote "... he influenced us more than he influenced the people of England, America or other western countries."¹⁴ However, it is not clear that any of this could be characterized as the influence of British liberalism, nor even that there was any such thing as British liberalism. Utilitarianism was one of several competing schools of thought.

On the other hand, there was a flow of Indian ideas to the rest of the world. The views of Goethe, Schopenhauer and other thinkers in which they praise Indian literature and philosophy are well known (though it must be added that there were other thinkers who held exactly the opposite view).¹⁵ It may be argued that international recognition and appreciation of Indian achievements may, in fact, have played a greater role in stimulating an Indian renaissance than the influx of European ideas into India. The tremendous success of Swami Vivekananda at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 and in subsequent lectures throughout America and England was closely followed in India. The tumultuous

welcome that he received on his return to India is well documented. Around the same time, Jagdish Bose's discoveries in such diverse areas as botany and wireless communication, were also being recognized in Europe. These and other similar events may have had a profound effect in stimulating the Renaissance.

Moreover, Swami Vivekananda points out that the influence of Indian thought has been taking place even when without attribution, and in a silent manner: "Those who keep their eyes open, those who understand the workings in the minds of different nations of the West, those who are thinkers and study the different nations, will find the immense change that has been produced in the tone, the procedure, in the methods, and in the literature of the world by this slow, never-ceasing permeation of Indian thought."¹⁶

While there were certainly those who felt that for India to stand on its feet, everything Indian had to be rejected, if we are to go by Vivekananda's view, Indian thought had already permeated and profoundly influenced world thought. Moreover, in the context of the Indian social and political ferment of the nineteenth century, there was a strong current being created by those who started to reveal the depth and originality of Indian thought.

This work was also not without its challenges. It had to be initiated by minds with great insight, for otherwise there was the risk of equating orthodoxy with vision. In a culture as old as that of the Indian subcontinent, there were bound to be accretions that sometimes masqueraded as essentials. Still, in one of his fiery speeches on his return to India, Vivekananda said that he would rather err on the side of orthodoxy than to unthinkingly embrace European attitudes. He said,

"There are two great obstacles on our path in India, the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilization. Of these two, I vote for the old orthodoxy, and not for the Europeanised system; for the old orthodox man may be ignorant, he may be crude, but he is a man, he has a faith, he has strength, he stands on his own feet, while the Europeanised man has no backbone, he is a mass of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random from every source – and these ideas are unassimilated, undigested, unharmonised. He does not stand on his own feet, and his head is turning round and round. Where is the motive power of his work? – In a few patronizing pats from the English people. His scheme of reforms, his vehement vituperations against the evils of certain social customs, have, as the mainspring, some European patronage."¹⁷

The Birth of Sri Ramakrishna

It was in this context of a debate between the Indian approach to life, society and the world versus the approach of Europe, that we encounter Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In 1836, in the village of Kamarpukur in rural Bengal, Sri Ramakrishna was born. He entered the world oblivious of the social, cultural and political tumult in which India was engulfed. It was the time when Macaulay was trying to overhaul the educational system so as to undermine the faith of young Indians in their own cultural and spiritual history.

From beginning to end, Ramakrishna's life represents the antith-

esis of Macaulay’s cynicism of everything Indian. His parents gave him the name “Gadadhar” and he was called “Gadai” for short. There is an interesting story behind this name. Before Gadadhar was born, his father, Khudiram, was visiting Gaya, a very holy place of pilgrimage. There, one night, he had a dream in which Vishnu appeared holding a ‘gada’ (mace) and said that he would be born as Khudiram’s son. ‘Gadadhar’ means one who holds or uses the mace. Roughly at the same time that he had this dream, his wife Chandra Devi had an unusual experience in Kamarpukur. She was visiting the local Siva temple and she felt that an intense light originating in the temple entered into her body. The light was so intense and the experience so real that she felt overwhelmed and fainted. Thus, we see that the very birth and naming of Ramakrishna is steeped in traditional theological terms.

Gadadhar was born on February 18, 1836. He was a very fun-loving boy, but also deeply devotional from his childhood. He had an excellent memory and could remember almost anything that he heard even once. When he heard devotional songs or plays, he would be able to sing and act them out afterwards.

About his mother, Sri Ramakrishna later said that she “... was the personification of gentleness. ... People loved her for her open-hearted-

ness.” About his father, he said, “He spent much of his time in worship and meditation, and in repeating God’s name and chanting His glories.” Khudiram was extremely truthful and sometimes this got him in trouble. But people also had great respect and admiration for him.

When Gadadhar was 7, his father died. He became very close to his mother and tried to help her in all matters. The responsibility for the family fell on Gadadhar’s elder brother Ramkumar. When Ramkumar managed to get a job in Calcutta, he asked Gadadhar to join him, hoping that in this way, Gadadhar would get over the loss of their father and also learn a skill by which he could earn his livelihood. But Gadadhar was already so attracted to God that he could not become interested in ordinary learning. He found that people studied not for knowledge sake, but for their stomach’s sake. He bluntly said ‘I am not interested in a bread-winning education’. The questions that most interested him were ‘Is God real? If so, is it possible to see God?’

His Spiritual Practices

At that time, Rani Rasmani, a wealthy landowner, decided to build a temple dedicated to the Divine Mother in the form of Kali. The temple



Dakshineswar Temple.

Photo Credit: Asis K. Chatt, Wikipedia Creative Commons

was built at great expense at Dakshineswar, a village about six kilometers north of Calcutta. The main temple is dedicated to Kali, but there is also a temple for Radha-Krishna and twelve smaller Siva temples. There are also several ponds, gardens and secluded groves. The entire temple complex is on the banks of the Ganges and there is a large bathing ghat attached to the complex.

Now that the temple was built, a priest was needed to perform the daily worship in the Kali temple. Ramkumar was appointed. At that time, the priest in the Radha-Krishna temple was moving the image when he slipped and fell. The leg of the image was broken. The orthodox pundits said that the image had to be thrown away and a new one made and installed. The Rani felt troubled by this and somehow it came to Gadadhar's attention. When he was asked what should be done, he answered, 'Suppose the son-in-law of the Rani broke his leg. Would she discard him and get a new one? Would she not rather arrange for his treatment? Why not do the same in this case? Repair the image and worship it as before.' Everyone was delighted with this solution, and Gadadhar himself repaired the image. This incident shows that though he was steeped in tradition, he had an insight and originality that allowed him to translate the traditional perspective into a highly practical way of interacting with the world. At first, it seems contradictory that one could harmonize tradition and practicality, and yet he himself is the example that shows that it is possible. Not only is it possible, but it is also exactly the perspective that could respond to the pummeling of the Indian ethos by the new social forces at work.

Soon afterwards, he was asked to be the priest in the Radha-Krishna temple and he agreed. Some years later, he became the priest in the Kali temple. But he was an unusual priest. He wanted to know whether the Divine Mother that he was worshipping was really present. As his love for God became deeper, he would forget all the formalities of worship and sit for hours in meditation or endlessly sing devotional songs, putting all his heart and soul into them. He would sometimes cry earnestly 'Are you real Mother, or is it all fiction? If you exist, then why do I not see you? Is religion a mere fantasy?' He gave up food and sleep and spent all his time in prayer and meditation. Soon, his spiritual disciplines became fruitful, and he had a direct experience of the Divine presence. It is, of course, difficult to ascertain what that exactly means, but what was clear is that in his mind, the question of the reality of God and the ability of the human being to experience that reality had been solved. God is real and can be experienced.

But not being satisfied with experiencing the Divinity in only one form, he practiced many different paths in Hinduism, as well as the paths prescribed by Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. In all cases, he was able to reach a direct experience of the Divine. This led him to formulate one of his fundamental teachings: all religions are paths to the same goal. And this fundamental discovery he spoke of to everyone who would listen to him.

Harmony as a Unifying Theme

The importance of this teaching of the harmony of religions was that it recast the case for social and religious reform from an either/or perspective to an inclusive and organic perspective. But his concept of

harmony went far beyond the harmony of religions. He was able to offer a harmonized perspective on theological and epistemological questions that gave new direction to such reformers as Keshab Chandra Sen. It might be argued that it also strengthened the foundation of Gandhi's spiritual humanism.

The harmony of life taught by Sri Ramakrishna was a positive and constructive force, which formed the foundation for the spiritual humanism of Mahatma Gandhi.

An example of Ramakrishna's ability to find harmony in the context of apparently contradictory perspectives is the debate concerning the worship of God through form. The Hindu approach to God presents the aspirant with a multitude of forms that represent various aspects of the Divine reality. It was fashionable to decry the worship of such forms as being 'heathen' or 'pagan' or just plain superstitious. These were strange labels to use for a tradition that had produced a galaxy of saints and sages whose love for God and depth of spiritual wisdom influenced and inspired millions. Mahendranath Gupta, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a schoolteacher by profession, once remarked to Ramakrishna that one should educate people that the clay image they were worshipping is not God. We find the following conversation between them¹⁸:

M: "Sir, suppose one believes in God with form. Certainly He is not the clay image!"

Master (interrupting): "But why clay? It is an image of Spirit."

M could not quite understand the significance of this "image of Spirit". "But, sir," he said to the Master, "one should explain to those who worship the clay image that it is *not* God, and that, while worshipping it, they should have God in view and not the clay image. One should not worship clay."

Master (sharply): "That's the one hobby of your Calcutta people — giving lectures and bringing others to the light! Nobody every stops to consider how to get the light himself. Who are you teach others?"

In this passage, he not only introduces harmony between form and formlessness through the idea of an 'image of Spirit', but also expresses his view that one should stay focused on discovering truth for oneself before one tries to educate others. The views being expressed by M are probably indicative of what some social reformers of the day were saying about religion.

In his own spiritual practices, Ramakrishna took the help of many forms. But he was also able to say, "form and formlessness belong to one and the same Reality".¹⁹ On another occasion, he said that as one approaches God, names and forms disappear and light remains. In the end-

less theological debate on form and formlessness, he thus discovered a position that could harmonize the two apparently contradictory positions.

Much later, a ruler of a princely state told Swami Vivekananda that he did not have much faith in the images that were worshipped. To this, Vivekananda replied by asking that a framed picture of the ruler be brought down and placed on the floor. Once this was done, he asked those present to spit on the picture. When they reacted in horror and refused to do so, he explained to the ruler that though the picture is not he in flesh and blood, it evokes the memory of and respect for the ruler as if it really were him. Similarly, those who worship God in an image are not claiming that the image is God, but rather that it is a likeness that reminds them and inspires them to think of God.²⁰

Beyond such philosophical or theological questions, Ramakrishna's concept of harmony applied also at the social level and about the relationship between the secular and the sacred. He was both a monk and a householder at a time in history when those were regarded as opposed to each other. He believed that one had to rise above the demands of the body in the process of experiencing spiritual truth, but at the same time, he said 'there is no religion for an empty stomach'.²¹ He believed in truthfulness and considered it to be an essential spiritual discipline of this age.²² At the same time, he taught that one should speak with concern and compassion. He believed in adhering to one's principles but he also taught that one should behave in a manner that is appropriate to the time and place. His mind was absorbed in high spiritual planes but his room was neat and organized, so much so that he could find any of his few possessions even in the dark.

Ramakrishna had the ability to synthesize apparently contradictory viewpoints and communicate them to others, including many who were involved in the Indian renaissance. This gave them a positive and constructive perspective, rather than the negative and destructive vantage point at which most reformers tend to congregate.

It is not clear when and how Gadadhar became 'Ramakrishna'. Some people think that it was one of his teachers, perhaps Totapuri, who gave him that name. The general population referred to him as 'the Paramahansa'. This is a title given to people of very high spiritual attainment. And, 'Sri' is a respectful prefix, somewhat like 'Sir'. Thus, he became known as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

His impact on Indian Society of that Time

Ramakrishna had a significant impact on the society of his day. At a popular level, it is said that he was the talk of the town in Kolkata. At the level of thinkers and leaders, many came to visit him and one can trace the influence of Ramakrishna's thought through their writings. A particular case in point is of course the Brahma leader Keshab Chandra Sen.

In some sense, one might say that it was because of Ramakrishna's life and teachings that the 'real' India was able to survive. We have seen how the British had slowly entered India and then began to dominate it first economically and then politically. But there was another aspect that they were attacking, and this was culture and religion. With the merchants and soldiers came Christian missionaries and social reformers who knew or understood nothing about India. They came with the arrogance that they would give religion and civilization to the 'barbaric heathens'. The missionaries openly ridiculed the images of Hinduism and the teaching of the Vedic sages.

Many of the intellectuals of India were convinced that the British and the missionaries were right in regarding them as uncivilized and without religion. They felt that adopting western education and social customs were the only way for India to move forward. The very foundation of what India stood for was being challenged. Could it be true that more than 5,000 years of religion and civilization were totally wrong and had to be discarded?

In 1836, Lord Macaulay wrote a letter to his father in England gloating that the British in India were so successful that no educated Indian had any faith in the traditions and customs of his race or country. But, it was in that very year that Sri Ramakrishna was born. By his life, guided entirely by the teachings of the sages and the devotees of India, and his complete rejection of all the things that had been introduced by the British, Sri Ramakrishna proved that India had not made a mistake and that not only was not wanting in religion, but in fact had the principle, namely the harmony of religions, that could bring light to the whole world.

Slowly, educated young men and intellectuals started coming to visit Sri Ramakrishna and through him, came to learn about the real teachings of the Indian saints and sages. They were able to take his simple words and express them in language that everyone could understand and appreciate. One of these, perhaps the deepest and most eloquent amongst his students, was Narendranath Datta, who later became Swami Vivekananda.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Sri Ramakrishna brought a wounded India back to life. The religious, educational, social, cultural and political rejuvenation that eventually brought India her independence were greatly stimulated, if not started, by Sri Ramakrishna. Moreover, it gave that process a positive, inclusive and regenerative direction.

From Ideas to Action

Ramakrishna's thought was communicated to a wide variety of social and religious leaders who came to Dakshineswar to hear his words. But he also communicated through a small band of disciples, foremost among whom was Swami Vivekananda. In Vivekananda's hands, the ideas of Ramakrishna were fashioned into powerful tools for growth, both spiritually and socially, both individually and collectively.

Especially in the Indian context, Vivekananda tried to focus the debate on such issues as caste so as to be progressive and relevant and not based on denunciation. About his own work, he said²³:

"Thus there is a great opening for the Vedanta to do beneficent work both here and elsewhere. This wonderful idea of the sameness and omnipresence of the Supreme Soul has to be preached for the amelioration and elevation of the human race here as elsewhere. Wherever there is evil and wherever there is ignorance and want of knowledge, I have found out by experience that all evil comes, as our scriptures say, relying upon differences, and that all good comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and oneness of things. This is the great Vedantic ideal. To have the ideal is one thing, and to apply it practically to the details of daily life is quite another thing. It is very good to point out an ideal, but where is the practical way to reach it?"

Here naturally comes the difficult and the vexed question of caste and social reformation, which has been uppermost for centuries in the minds of our people. I must frankly tell you that I am neither a caste-breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have nothing to do directly with your castes or with your social reformation. Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another man or another caste. It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe. For nearly the past one hundred years, our country has been flooded with social reformers and various social reform proposals. ... but it is quite a patent fact that this one hundred years of social reform has produced no permanent and valuable result appreciable throughout the country. Platform speeches have been made by the thousand, denunciations in volumes after volumes have been hurled upon the devoted head of the Hindu race and its civilisation, and yet no good practical result has been achieved; and where is the reason for that? The reason is not hard to find. It is in the denunciation itself. As I told you before, in the first place, we must try to keep our historically acquired character as a people. I grant that we have to take a great many things from other nations, that we have to learn from outside, but I am sorry to say that most of our modern reform movements have been inconsiderate imitations of Western means and methods of work, and that surely will not do for India; therefore, it is that all our recent reform movements have had no result.

In the second place, denunciation is not at all the way to do good. ... I do not, therefore, want any reformation. My ideal is growth, expansion, development on national lines. As I look back upon the history of my country, I do not find in the whole world another country which has done quite so much for the improvement of the human mind. Therefore I have no words of condemnation for my nation. ... Great things have been done in the past in this land, and there is both time and room for greater things to be done yet. ... Therefore let us go forward and do yet greater things, that is what I have to tell you. ...

Had I the time, I would gladly show you how everything we have now to do was laid out years ago by our ancient lawgivers, and how they actually anticipated all the different changes that have taken place and are still to take place in our national institutions. They also were breakers of caste, but they were not like our modern men. They did not mean by the breaking of caste that all the people in the city should sit

down together to a dinner of beef-steak and champagne, nor that all fools and lunatics in the country should marry when, where, and whom they choose and reduce the country to a lunatic asylum, nor did they believe that the prosperity of a nation is to be gauged by the number of husbands its widows get. I have yet to see such a prosperous nation.”

Vivekananda’s propagation of Ramakrishna’s ideas of harmony and universal acceptance as the basis of society and of religion, and the divinity of all life, formed the bedrock of the Indian renaissance.

It is in this context that leaders such as Gandhi, Tilak and others were able to formulate and take into action a path of national regeneration based on non-violent social and political movements.

Tilak was a great advocate for non-cooperation as a means of bringing about change. What we observe in Tilak’s statements is the discovery of a new strength, both internal and external, to bring about social change without resorting to violence. We know how this discovery grew into a powerful current of social change in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi and others. What was this strength? It was rooted in a spiritual perspective. And this perspective found its clearest and most far-reaching expression in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and in their analysis and exposition by Swami Vivekananda.

Though non-violent, it was not by any means a passive approach and it was capable of producing significant results. Tilak writes, “There is a great difference between asking and petitioning ... Your industries

Ramakrishna’s concept of harmony applied also at the social level and about the relationship between the secular and the sacred.

are ruined utterly, ruined by foreign rule; your wealth is going out of the country and you are reduced to the lowest level which no human being can occupy. In this state of things, is there any other remedy by which you can help yourself? The remedy is not petitioning but boycott.” Thus, he advocates action that is both nonviolent and proactive.

Tilak continues, “We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott. We have perceived one fact that the whole of this administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. ... Every Englishman knows that they are a mere handful in this country and it is the business of every one of them to befool you in believing that you are weak and they are strong. This is politics. We have been deceived by such policy so long. What the new party wants you to do is to realize the fact that your future rests entirely in your own hands. If you mean to be free, you can be free; if you do not mean to be free, you will fall and be for ever fallen.”²⁴

We also note that the language Tilak uses, namely the phrase “If you mean to be free, you can be free...” is very reminiscent of the great Vedantic work Ashtavakra Samhita which states that ‘he who thinks he is free is free, he who thinks he is bound is bound’. Sri Ramakrishna also often repeated this profound teaching.

A Continual Process

Bishop concludes his paper by asking, “Is the Renaissance a completed event in India’s history, or is it a process which continues today and which must continue for many days to come if the goals of its leaders are to be reached?”²⁵ This rhetorical question has the rhetorical answer that indeed, it is a continual process of growth and revitalization. Ramakrishna’s deep and profound ideas have yet to be realized in their fullness though very significant progress has been made. We conclude with a remark by historian Arnold Toynbee that if the world is to survive, it has to follow the Indian way which consists of Ramakrishna’s harmony of religions and Gandhi’s principle of non-violence.

V. Kumar Murty • Department of Mathematics, University of Toronto, 40 St. George Street, Toronto, Canada M5S 2E4 • murty@math.toronto.edu

NOTES

- 1 Bishop (1988), p. 154.
- 2 Jacob Burckhardt’s treatise *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* published in 1860 emphasizes the ‘sudden flowering’, while later authors have emphasized antecedent events.
- 3 Bronowski and Mazlish (1960), p. 5.
- 4 Bishop (1988), pp. 154-155.
- 5 *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Volume 3, p. 315.
- 6 Bishop (1988), pp. 156-157.
- 7 In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, pp. 666-667, the following passage describes a meeting on Saturday, December 6, 1884 between Sri Ramakrishna and Bankim Chandra Chatterji, a well-known literary figure of the time whose works included the rallying nationalistic song *Vande Mataram*. A deputy magistrate and common friend named Adhar introduced Bankim to Sri Ramakrishna “Sir, he is a great scholar and has written many books. He has come here to see you. His name is Bankim Babu.” Sri Ramakrishna, playing on the meaning of ‘bankim’ as ‘bent’ or ‘curved’, asked him smilingly “Bankim! Well, what has made you bent?” To this, Bankim replied, “Why, sir, boots are responsible for it. The kicks of our white masters have bent my body.” Though apparently spoken in a light vein, Bankim’s words are probably representative of the experience of many Indians in both high and low positions. It is interesting that Sri Ramakrishna is able to instantly turn the conversation to a spiritual level by saying that, in fact, it is a higher state of devotion that causes the body to be bent as in the case of Sri Krishna.
- 8 Nehru (2010), p. 376.
- 9 Nehru (2010), pp. 266-267.
- 10 *Complete Works*, Volume 3, p. 219.
- 11 *Complete Works*, Volume 3, pp. 265-266.
- 12 Nandakumar (2014), p. 32.
- 13 *Complete Works*, Volume 6, p. 134.
- 14 Bhagwat and Pradhan, (2008), p. 243.
- 15 Nehru (2010), p. 163 writes “There is a tendency on the part of Indian writers, to which I have also partly succumbed, to give selected extracts and quotations from the writings of European scholars in praise of old Indian literature and philosophy. It would be equally easy, and indeed much easier, to give other extracts giving an exactly opposite viewpoint. The discovery of the European scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of Indian thought and philosophy led to an outburst of

admiration and enthusiasm. There was a feeling that these filled a need, something that European culture had been unable to do. Then there was a reaction away from this attitude and criticism and skepticism grew. This was caused by a feeling that the philosophy was formless and diffuse, and a dislike of the rigid caste structure of Indian society. Both of these reactions, in favour and against, were based on very incomplete knowledge of old Indian literature. Goethe himself moved from one opinion to the other, and while he acknowledged the tremendous stimulus of Indian thought on Western civilization, he refused to submit to its far reaching influence. This dual and conflicting approach has been characteristic of the European mind in regard to India.”

16 *Complete Works*, Volume 3, p. 109

17 *Complete Works*, Volume 3, p. 151.

18 *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 81. Mahendranath Gupta represents himself modestly as ‘M’ in these conversations, and represents Sri Ramakrishna as ‘Master’.

19 *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 370.

20 *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Volume 1, p. 269

21 *Complete Works*, Volume 6, p. 254.

22 *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 312.

23 *Complete Works*, Volume 3, pp. 194-196 in the essay “The Mission of the Vedanta”.

24 Bal Gangadhar Tilak, “The necessity for a militant nationalism”, a speech delivered in Calcutta in 1907 and reproduced in Ramachandra Guha (2010), pp. 126-127.

25 Bishop, (1988), p. 162.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. K. Bhagwat and G. P. Pradhan, *Lokamanya Tilak: A Biography*, Jaico Publishing House, Mumbai, 2008.

Donald Bishop, Ramakrishna and the Indian Renaissance, in: *Studies on Sri Ramakrishna*, ed. Swami Lokeswarananda, pp. 154-162, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, 1988.

Jacob Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition*, Harper and Row, 1960. (Reprinted by Dorset Press in 1986).

Ramachandra Guha, *Makers of Modern India*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2010.

Mahendranath Gupta, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, (tr. Swami Nikhilananda), 7th Printing, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1984.

Prema Nandakumar, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramanuja, *Vivekananda Review*, 2(2014), 30-32.

Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Signet Press, Calcutta, 1946. Reprinted by Penguin Books, London, 2010.

Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Volumes 1-8, 1989, Volume 9, 1997.

Eastern and Western Disciples, *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 Volumes, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, 1979.

VIVEKANANDA REVIEW

Volume 2, Issues 1–6

ISSUE 1 — FEBRUARY 2014

Rina Chakravarti, *Pan-American Congress of Religion and Education in Toronto 1895*

M. Ram Murty, *What is Civilization?*

Vikraman Balaji, *The Body of the Atman in the Katha Upanishad*

ISSUE 2 — APRIL 2014

Swami Kripamayananda, *Understanding Swami Vivekananda: Opportunities and Challenges*

Reid B. Locklin, *Personality Integration Through Personality Disintegration: A Christian Perspective*

V. Kumar Murty, *Discovery of the Source of the Nile*

Prema Nandakumar, *Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramanuja*

The Vivekananda Graduate Prize

ISSUE 3 — JUNE 2014

M. Ram Murty, *The Gnostic Gospels and Vedanta*

Vikraman Balaji, *Translation of Some Hymns from the Rig Veda*

Abhishek Banerjee, *Grace and Strength Amidst Calamity*

Vivekananda Graduate Scholarship in Mathematics

Menaka Rajasingham, *Vivekananda Dinner 2014*

ISSUE 4 — AUGUST 2014

V. Kumar Murty, *Integration of Personality According to Vedanta*

Trilochan Sastry, *Vivekananda and Modern Development*

Holly Pelvin, *Life Lessons and the Pursuit of Dreams*

Ivan Livinskyi, *Mock Modular Forms*

ISSUE 5 — OCTOBER 2014

Mano Murty, *Science and Human Values*

V. Kumar Murty, *The Revolt of 1857*

Chander Khanna, *Seminar on “Science and Human Values”*

ISSUE 6 — DECEMBER 2014

Letters to the Editor

M. Ram Murty, *The Gita and Sen’s Idea of Justice*

V. Kumar Murty, *Sri Ramakrishna and Indian Renaissance*



CONTENTS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6 • DECEMBER 2014



Letters to the Editor.....	81
M. Ram Murty , The Gita and Sen's Idea of Justice	82
V. Kumar Murty , Sri Ramakrishna and Indian Renaissance.....	89

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF TORONTO

120 Emmett Avenue
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M6M 2E6

Visit us online at:
www.viveka-institute.org

