THE PHILOSOPHY
OF
SWĀMĪ RĀMA TĪRTHA

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to

THE GREAT SPIRIT

of

SWĀMĪ RĀMA TĪRTHA
PREFACE

The recent past of Indian Thought appeared to Radhakrishnan as marked by 'lethargy of philosophic impulse'. But Swāmī Rāma Tirtha, one of those dynamic saints of modern Indian Renaissance who having themselves risen to ideal heights were out to inspire and wake up others, one and all, had observed all such 'lethargy' as 'surely breaking'. His own great contribution to the regeneration of Indian Thought may, by itself, be cited as a proof of the correctness of his observation. Philosophic awakening in India has always been marked by spiritual freshness and, unlike the west where philosophy has greatly been reduced to a handmaid of the logicians, in India it has continually returned to be an intimate and faithful thought-medium of the supra-logical saints. That philosophical study has to open itself to the influence of the spiritual wisdom of the saints, is fortunately being felt to be the need of our reorientation. Hence the justification of this work which is practically a late reproduction of my doctoral thesis on the philosophy of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha. Herein, again, my apology for undertaking the present study.

My apology is all the more strong for the fact that the thoughts of Swāmī Rāma have, rather indifferently, been neglected by students of philosophy as well as the writers on contemporary Indian Thought and Renaissance. Mr. Puran’s ‘Story of Swāmī Rāma’ is mostly a lyrical expression of his personal impressions about the saint, and Pt. Sharga’s ‘Swāmī Rāma : His Life and Legacy’ is a book of mainly biographical interest, itself based upon the biography written by Sri R. S. Narayana Swāmī in Hindi and Urdu for the first part, and mostly a reproduction of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha’s own writings for the second part. This, I strongly feel, does not satisfy the demands of a sustained philosophical study, complete and systematic.

My venture in the present study is to give a constructive, comprehensive and systematic account of Swāmī Rāma’s thoughts. Criticism and sympathy, I believe, are equally required for a constructive assessment, and comparison, with all caution against volume, is proposed just for representative elucidations.
What really necessitates a sustained study of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha’s philosophy is also the difficulty thereof. His thoughts are versatile, bright and inspiring, but scattered and unevenly stressed. His writings are full of illustrative parables, suggestive figures, rich and varied quotations, emphatic self-convinced assertions and buoyant exclamations, but, in his own words, ‘fragmentary, introductory and not a systematic treatment or exposition of the philosophy of Vedānta’ (G.R. VI, p. 50). The topics of his lectures greatly overlap one another, their import quickly shifting from theory to value and value to practice and practice to theory, this way or that. Over and above that, his reader is as if swayed by his powerful sentiments and the whole attempt at critical systematization is naturally defied. His entire philosophy is at once the metaphysic and the poetry of the soul to flood into glory the whole of man’s life. The present study is thus, almost an adventure, with thrill as well as risk, in applying philosophical system to his poetic convictions.

The sources of my study of Swāmī Rāma are his complete works published by the Rāma Tirtha Publication League, Lucknow (now Rāma Tirtha Pratiṣṭhānā), in English, Hindi and Urdu languages. I tried my best to contact, personally and postally people and institutions in India as well as in America to find if anything unpublished could be available to supplement my data. There were a few stray verbal references made by persons like late Goswami Ganesh Datt and Prof. Hiralal Chopra that there were good many things about Swāmī Rāma which had not received publicity, the latter claiming to have owned and lost on the partition of the Panjab, ‘a heap of letters and articles of Rāma’. It is told that Swāmī Rāma himself threw away into the sea quite a lot of cyclostyled copies of his own speeches while returning from America. But there is no written material to serve as an unpublished document now. The lost being lost, I have had to base my study on whatever material is available, some of it being now out of print. The president and the secretary of the Rāma Tirtha Pratiṣṭhānā, as well as Swāmī Hari Tirtha, the only surviving disciple of Swāmī Rāma have all corroborated that there is nothing from the pen of Swāmī Rāma now left unpublished.

I am greatly thankful to the Rāma Tirtha Pratiṣṭhānā, Sri Mahatma Shantiprakash, the president and late Sri R. S. Sinha, the Secretary of the Pratiṣṭhānā, for their cordial and unreserved permission to see and study the material available in their custody and to freely use their library. I am equally thankful to the Ramāshram Library, Rishikesh, for extending to me the use of its books.
My gratitude is due to Dr. B. G. Tiwari, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt., under whose encouraging supervision I carried on this research study. But for his keen interest, sympathetic guidance and constructive suggestions my work could not have easily found its completion. I have my reverential gratitude in remembrance of late Dr. S. K. Maitra, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Hindu University, Varanasi, who had always shown to me an inspiring affection encouraging my philosophical studies. I express my respectful indebtedness to Dr. B.L. Atreya, Rtd. Head of the Department of Philosophy, Hindu University, Varanasi, who was the first to enthuse me for my present undertaking and had been showing a helpful interest in all its progressive stages, giving me, most unreservedly, the advantage of his close study of Śrīmad Rāma. I am also deeply obliged to Dr. T.R.V. Murty, Rtd. Head of the Department of Philosophy, Hindu University, Varanasi, for some critical suggestions I received from him through his scholarly and sharp discussions on some vital issues.

I have to express a very sincere appreciation of the noble disposition with which Shri Radhey Mohanji, of Shiva Lal Agarwala & Company, readily offered to publish this book without any prior negotiations or formalities. We only chanced to meet in a bus-travel and our casual introduction brought us closer for common moorings. It was out of his sheer love and good taste to bring to light the wisdom of the saints that he showed his initiative to take up the present publication believing that it would reflect Śrīmad Rāma Tīrtha.

The purpose of the present work would be served if it attracts its readers to a closer study of the philosophy of saints.

Mohan Kunj, Dampier Nagar, Mathura.

H. MAHESHWARI

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ait.  Aitrareya Upaniṣad.
Br. Su.  Brahma-Sūtra,
Brh.  Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad.
Chān.  Chāndogya Upaniṣad,
                   (1st edn., containing his eleven note books.)
                   In Woods of God Realization, Vol. I. (7th edn.)
                   Vol. II. (7th edn.)
                   Vol. III. (5th edn.)
                   Vol. IV. (7th edn.)
                   Vol. V. (7th edn.)
                   Vol. VI. (6th edn.)
                   Vol. VII. (6th edn.)
                   Vol. VIII. (6th edn.)
                   Vol. IX. (Aug. 1948.)
                   Vol. X. (1948.)
G.R.  Heart of Rāma.
      I.  Iṣa Upaniṣad.
      II.  Kaṭha Upaniṣad.
      III.  Kena Upaniṣad.
      IV.  Kāliyat-e-Rāma, Vol. I, II or III (Urdu.)
      V.  Śrīmā Rāma: His Life and Legacy.
      VI.  Māndūkya Upaniṣad.
      VII.  Mundaka Upaniṣad.
      VIII.  Praśna Upaniṣad.
      IX.  Poems of Rāma.
      X.  Rāma Patra (Hindi.)
K.R. (I, II, or III)  Rāma Varṣa, Vol. I or II.
L.L.  Story of Rāma.
P.R.  Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad.
Praśna.  Taittiriya Upaniṣad.
Chapter 1

Introduction

SWĀMĪ RĀMA TĪRTHA: HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER, HIS INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENTS

Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha is a name that ranks with theirs who are credited with the spirit of Indian Renaissance and who, whether or not they worked in the same field of activity, political, social or cultural, have been individually and yet, perhaps, jointly in spirit, instrumental in awakening afresh the spirit of India from its dogmatic slumber of thought and dullness of life into an essentially virile enlightenment and vital vigour. In the nineteenth century there arose an intense vibration of life and light, and India throbbed with a stir in the very depth of her being. Struggle for political freedom, religious reorientation, revolution of thought, moral revaluation, social reforms and cultural revival characterised an all-round awakening in Indian Consciousness and, even in the teeth of adverse conditions, she began thinking in terms of herself, as if her past glory once again pushed her into a New Hope. Rājā Rām Mohan Roy and Justice Rānāde, Swāmī Rāma Kṛṣṇa Paramahamsa and Swāmī Dayānanda, Swāmī Vivekānanda and Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, Tilak and Besant, Tagore and Gāndhī, Sri Aurobindo and Raman Maharṣi are some of those shining stars who have shed their heavenly light not only on the national frame of India, but upon the wide world and have left a message of hope and happiness to humanity at large. Their visions of Truth and universal love will guide and inspire man for centuries to come.

SHORT LIFE-SKETCH

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime;"
Swāmī Rāma’s life is exceptionally inspiring. He was born a son to Hirānand of Gosain family claiming descent from Vaśiṣṭha, the preceptor of Shri Rāma Chandra, on October 22, 1873 at Murāriwālā a village in Gujranwālā district of the then Panjab. From his horoscope his grandfather prophesied his great future but a short life. His family name was Tīrtha Rāma. While an infant he lost his mother and was brought up by his aunt and sister.

His schooling started at the age of six years. He was abnormally studious and reverent to his teachers. While only a boy of 10 years, he had his marriage, and soon after he was put in a High School at Gujranwālā. There he had a local guardian-preceptor in Bhagat Dhanna Rāma¹ who was a friend of his father—a person with ordinary education but endowed with some spiritualistic powers. Student Tīrtha Rāma regarded him as God-incarnate for a number of years, and made a complete surrender of himself to him, until he matured into a ‘vedāntic’ mind himself. Gosain Tīrtha Rāma passed his Entrance Examination in 1888 in the first division and had an intense desire for further studies. But his father was not quite willing to give him university education for reasons of poverty.

Despite, however, his father’s discouragement he managed to join the Mission College at Lahore and had to face most unfavourable circumstances—unhealthy lodging, insufficient food, want of money for books, etc. His will to study and his love for knowledge were, however, indomitable. At the Intermediate Examination in 1890 he obtained a meritorious position and won a scholarship. On his joining the B.A. class his father became angry for he wanted him to earn rather than study. It is said that his father withdrew all help and even billeted his wife on him.² But he was undaunted, and, even though half-fed, and at times even starved, he fought with courage and confidence against all the odds in the way of his studies. His letters of that period speak of his unshakable faith in God, his ascetic attitude towards pleasures of life, his religious attitude towards studies, his hard labour, denying to himself even the recreative rest of summer vacation, his austerity and cautiousness, his love for books—all the ideal qualities of Indian studentship.

¹ A short life-sketch of Bhagat Dhanna Rama is given in R. P. by R. S. Narayan Swami.
² It is curious that his letters to Dhanna Bhagat which speak of even the most insignificant events of life, do not refer to such an atrocity shown to him by his father.
He had a very great liking for Mathematics and was exceptionally sharp at it. At his B.A. examination in 1892 he failed in English although his aggregate marks were the highest in the university.

His failure naturally threw him into still greater stringencies. But for the mysterious Providential help through some kind-hearted people, in some cases even anonymous, there appeared no chances of his getting further education. He was, however, himself quite up and doing, and took up some private tuitions for making the two ends meet. His hard work, austere life, unassuming nature and simple habits brought him an unusually bright success at the Degree Examination in 1893 with first class first position and a Gold medal-prize plus two scholarships for his further studies. He then shifted to the Government College Lahore for his post-graduate studies in Mathematics.

All along his college-life Tirtha Rāma had to face acute financial difficulties, both because of his stringent circumstances as well as his exceptionally kind and generous temperament. For many a day he could not even get two square meals, for he would save a pice for his midnight lamp and study. He had a passion for learning and would study even for eighteen hours a day. His keen and intense desire, undaunted will and unsparing application for the attainment of knowledge is typically illustrated in an incident that he once set himself to solving a difficult mathematical problem in the evening with a cruel vow that if he did not get the solution before day-break he would put an end to his life. He worked all the night up and did not get the solution. He got up and took a knife to cut his throat, but just on the point of piercing it he saw the solution in golden figures in the void of his vision.³

³ Based on Swāmī Rāma’s own narration (G.R., Vol. II., pp. 205-06).

⁴ R.P. (Hindi).

The period of Tirtha Rāma's university education marks also an important course of his psycho-moral and religio-spiritual development. His life-stream assumed wide expanses and deep currents to defy a mere superficial narration. His letters of this period, written to Bhagat Dhanna Rāma show how sincerely he had taken to strenuous self-discipline through ascetic practices and devotional consecration to God, and how fast he was developing religious consciousness for a mystic immersion in God.⁴ They speak, so frequently, of virtues like purity of heart, renunciation, and prayerful dependence
on God. He had started making effective study of great books like the *Gitā*, the *Yoga Vāśiṣṭha* and saint-authors like Tulsī and Kabīr, Ḥāfez and Śādi.

He passed his M.A. in 1895, and had to face the problem of unemployment. On his Principal's offer to nominate his name for Provincial Executive Service he remarked, "I have not toiled so much for selling my harvest, but for distributing it. I would prefer being a teacher to being an executive officer." For some period he engaged his time in public activity through *Sanātana Dharma Sabha*. His public lectures on religion as well as nationalism greatly moved people. Soon he joined the Foreman Christian College, Lahore as Junior Professor of Mathematics, and only after a month became Senior Professor of Mathematics in 1896.

In this period of life his religious faith intensified into deep mystic love for Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. He took to isolated walks, and would simply pine for the Divine Communion. His pangs gushed forth into tears and his speeches of that period were all wet. He ran to Vraja, the place of the Beloved and wandered mad, his love burning into songs now and sinking into trances then.

In 1897, he chanced to meet the then Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya Shri Madhva Tirtha of Dwārakā Peetha who initiated him into *Advaita Vedānta* to realize that the devotee in him was his own Love. Consequently he took to *Vedāntic* studies, solitude, and silent contemplations on *Vedāntic* truths, and cultivated virtues of self-reliance, peace, quietude, serenity and tranquillity of the mind to gradually transcend all the limits of the empirical self to the realization of his inner Godhead, the 'body Rāma' being 'sold to the Lord Rāma.'

Soon after, Tīrtha Rāma came in contact with Śwāmī Vive-kānanda, and was greatly influenced by his dynamic personality. He got an inspiration from him to lead a monk-life preaching *Vedānta* in practice. His letters of this period show his own progress in self-silencing, and will-lessness of the mind, *nirvikalpa-vasthā*, and a self-contained poise. He formed *Advaita Amṛta Varṣini Sabha* in February 1898 with *Vedāntic* studies as its main activity.

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5 L.L., p. 57.
6 Pratt maintains that such an emotional phase in our religious life is due to adolescence. Tīrtha Rāma's religious consciousness, however, always remained emotional.
7 There is no trace of the *Advaita Amṛta Varṣini Sabha* now.
His advaitic initiation at the hands of Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya Shri Mādhva Tīrtha and the great impetus for a practical life of Vivekānanda-Vedānta did show a great effect on the life of Tīrtha Rāma, and his letters of that duration give the impression as if he had realized the divine glories of the Self higher than which there could be no other joy. Enamoured of the Vedānta, he wrote: "If, there is any truth in the world, it is the Vedānta Śāstra." But by nature he happened to be primarily emotional and the poet in his person persisted to be the dominant master to inspire and govern the metaphysician or the reformer in him. His passionate aspiration for communion with the Beloved Kṛṣṇa found a vent in his violent determination to stake his life on the realization of the Self—‘turiya’, on the bank of the Gangā near Brahmāpurī (about six miles away from Rishikesh in the summer vacation, 1898, of which he himself wrote an extremely poetic account.\(^9\)

He starts therein with a self-hushing, a self-silencing poem in Persian: “In the presence of the Beloved there is no speech, no sin or sorrow, no dualities. The Beloved is met transcendentally.” This transcendence is also a joy of intense love (the intensity of the emotion overwhelms all thought and defies a critical judgment). Rāma the restless seeker speaks of his own pangs to the Gangā, the mountains, the nature around him. Nothing but a realization would satisfy him, and he determines to have either the Beloved All or a complete self-extinction. It is said that he actually threw himself in the Gangā and his body was washed on to a rock by the current.\(^10\) What followed was a series of his mystic visions of the Self as identical with God the All, itself the centre of all glory and power and the whole of nature as a manifestation of the same Divine. The expressions of his visions are peculiarly poetic and full of ecstatic self-rejoicing in a supramundane setting where his family bondage and social and worldly ties are loosened into a transcendental freedom of spiritual unity.\(^11\)

These experiences are regarded to be his spiritual illumination. In the words of Rāma himself...“I have embraced that Beloved whose veil could hardly disclose now a foot, then a hand, now an

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\(^8\) L.L., p. 80.

\(^9\) K.R. II—Chapter II. The whole of the chapter is a religious poetry (translated in English ‘Face to Face with Reality’ in L.L.).

\(^10\) L.L., p. 93.

\(^11\) L.L., pp. 94-95.
eye, then an ear. Naked is He, so am I. Breast on breast. Get away you heart and liver! Don’t stand between us. Duality! Vanish. Distance! Perish. Separation! Be off. I Beloved. Beloved! I! Is it joy? Or is it death in joy?"\(^{12}\)

Again, while probably it was raining he wrote: “Is it showers (of scented water) at the marriage or is it the mourning at the mind’s death? This is the last rite of rites. Desires are dead. Sorrow and Poverty? They have vanished as darkness before light. Sunk has the fleet of actions—good and bad."\(^{13}\)

Still further he describes his experience as “The third person turned out to be the first one.” “The dolls of egoism and intellect are burnt.” His identity with the Supreme finds a dramatic expression:

“Run away, run, O Beloved if thou canst. Where wilt thou go? Up the sky? I am there. To Kailash? There too am I. Into the ocean? I precede thee there. In the fire? It is my own mouth. In all the bodies, in all the forms, in all the shapes, in all the names am I. Nay these bodies, names and forms are verily I. Who to speak, who to talk? Sweets in a dumb mouth. How can it be described!

I myself am the Lover, myself the Beloved. Lover or the Beloved? I am Love......”\(^{14}\)

There is a great wealth of elational exclamations expressive of Rāma’s spiritual exuberance and impressive of the mystic visions he had of his Godhead—his Śivoham-spirit, full of lordship and majesty over the world and nature.\(^{15}\)

In 1899, he resigned from Christian College and got a readership in Government Oriental College, Lahore. The professor in him was inspired by his inner Vedāntic spirit, and his life started magnetising others into Vedāntic contemplation. Nārāyaṇa Dās (later R. S. Nārāyaṇa Svāmī) came in his contact and became his devout disciple. In 1900, an Urdu periodical entitled the ‘Alif’ was started at the instance of Prof. Tirtha Rāma wherein he himself wrote a number of ‘illuminating’ articles on Vedānta (now collected and published in

\(^{12}\) L.L., p. 93.

\(^{13}\) L.L., p. 93.

\(^{14}\) L.L., pp. 94-95.

\(^{15}\) K.R., II, pp. 148-160, 166, 170, 171-175, 191, 192, etc. (They are not being quoted because they are too abundant to be proportionate here.)
Kul-Rāma by the Rāma Tirtha Publication League). He had an extraordinary enthusiasm and self-confidence for effecting a transformation in the life of people through his Vedāntic writings in the ‘Alif’.

In 1901, he embraced monkhood (sannyāsa) and inverted his name from Tīrtha Rāma to Rāma Tīrtha (Swāmi), indicating a reversion of the course of his life from ‘pravṛtti’ to ‘nīvṛtti’. Soon he became a dynamic preacher of Vedānta addressing people in religious conferences and wielding an enchanting influence on them by his brilliant ecstacies. In August 1902, he left for Japan on the request of the Prince of Tehri to represent Indian Religion at the then contemplated conference of All World Religions in Tokyo. The proposed conference at Tokyo, however, did not come off and the Swāmi addressed a few meetings there organised by the club of Indian students on topics of practical interest in the light of Vedānta, and attracted great many admirers out of whom some like Puran became his passionate devotees.

Then without any pre-plan he left for America at the request of Circus Master Chhatre of Poona to accompany him. In the way he made a magic-charm on some of his co-travellers by his gay, informal and witty chats. In America, after staying for sometime with Prof. Chhatre, he became a most agreeable guest of Dr. Albert Hiller who offered him a lonely cottage on the Shasta Springs for a quiet living. He stayed there for about one and a half year, and besides his beneficent work of preaching Vedānta he showed surprise-feats of standing first in climbing the Shasta peaks (14,161 feet high) and also in a thirty mile race. There also occurred a few miraculous incidents in which some sufferers received supernatural relief and regarded Rāma as ‘living Christ.’ His happy smiles, ecstatic laughters, and peculiar Om-chants gave comfort to the ailing persons as much as to the spiritually distressed.

He spoke at many places, in the universities, churches and other institutions on Vedānta the ‘universal Truth’ and received an extraordinary appreciation from people and press. He propounded Vedānta-Truths on scientific principles and called it the ‘Religion of Nature’ to offer sound bases for an international culture to embrace all humanity, beyond borders of country and colour, creed and caste. Reports and impressions about Rāma published in the then local papers admired him in angelic terms\(^\text{16}\). They praised so

\(^{16}\) Story of Rāma by Puran ; L.L., p. 293 onwards.
richly all his qualities—his spiritual gaiety, his sharp intellect, his universalised patriotism, his reformative zeal, his magnetic philosophy, his poetic love for nature, his sweetness of temper, his simplicity of living, his purity of heart, his invigorating enthusiasm, his childlike cheers and smiles of beauty.\textsuperscript{17} He formed in America a few study-circles like Hermetic Brotherhood, etc.,\textsuperscript{18} which provided for a sustained study of the Vedānta under his able guidance. His universal appeal attracted a good many friends, admirers and devotees some of whom he inspired to come to India and serve her people with love, sympathy and reverence. He prepared a touching appeal to America on behalf of Indians and gave it personally to the then President of America in which he had made a detailed analysis of Indian maladies, social, political and educational, and expressed his keenness for an Indo-American co-operation for the service of great humanity.

From America Swāmī Rāma Tirtha returned to India in 1904, via Egypt where he addressed in Persian a Muslim gathering in a mosque. In India he travelled from place to place, awakening her people from ignorance, superstition, and mutual disharmony into knowledge and love of the spirit. He was conscious that he had some very great service to render to the nation and specifically said that he had set himself to a thorough study of the old Śāstras as well as Modern Thought and to make independent researches which he would utilize for the service of the motherland.

He took to silent contemplative hours of solitude to study and plan for a nationwide reconstruction on principles of the widest application. His physical health, however, was not standing him in good stead and his great passion for redeeming India of her great miseries was now only a heartfelt directive to encourage others, intimately like Nārāyaṇa and Puruṣottama, Swāmī Sūryānanda (Mrs. Wellman) and Shivagūṇācārya, etc., to take up his work and become Rāma, each one, to serve the motherland. Himself, he was now almost sunk in complete self-relaxation unto the Providence, and then exuberantly intoxicated with the divine glory of the Self, now

\textsuperscript{17} Some of the reports, however, distorted his person as well as his mission in America. He was, for example reported to be a priest or a Professor of Natural Philosophy, etc., out to arouse a sympathy for India and beg for American help for her socio-political reforms.

\textsuperscript{18} Of them now none is traceable.
silent and resigned in transcendence and then in danceful communion with nature.\textsuperscript{19}

"Peace immortal falls as rain-drops,
Nectar is dropping in musical rain.
Drizzle! Drizzle! Drizzle!
My clouds of glory they march so gaily!
The worlds as diamonds drop from them.
Drizzle! Drizzle! Drizzle!
My breezes of Law blow rhythmical rhythmical,
Lo! Nations fall like petals, leaves.
Drizzle! Drizzle! Drizzle!
My balmy breath, the breeze of law,
Blows beautiful! beautiful!
Some objects swing and sway like twigs,
And others like the dew drops fall.
Drizzle! Drizzle! Drizzle!
My graceful light, a sea of white
An ocean of milk, it undulates.
It ripples softly, softly, softly;
And then beats out worlds of spray!
I shower forth the stars as spray!
Drizzle! Drizzle! Drizzle!"\textsuperscript{20}

Swāmī Rāma’s body grew weaker and weaker on account of his sickness and medicine worsened its condition. He consequently retired to a solitary place, \textit{Vaśiṣṭha Ṭhārama}, for restoration of health, where he also contemplated to produce his \textit{magnum opus}—a complete work on Veda and \textit{Vedānta} Philosophy.\textsuperscript{21} His mental state during this period of solitude at the \textit{Vaśiṣṭha Ṭhārama} was, rather peculiar in that he assumed the serenity of a resigned \textit{sannyāsin} of \textit{Advaitic} attitude and also aspired for a mystic communion with the Lord of all. His story-writer Puran even describes his condition as that of a ‘benumbed spirit.’ His youthful, energetic inspirations which used to thrill his associates made way for silent resignation.

\textsuperscript{19} His letters of this period : L.L., pp. 338-348.
\textsuperscript{20} P.R., pp. 170-172.
\textsuperscript{21} In his days Indian Philosophy was either a private concern of some \textit{Śaṁskṛta} scholars or a matter worth no attention to the general western scholar. Max Muller was, perhaps, the first honest scholar to make a sincere study thereof. Nothing to say of the Indian masses, even to the educated few their own treasure of \textit{Vedānta} was lying uncovered. Saints like Swāmī Rāma were, thus, the pioneers of our present revival of philosophical understanding.
from all activity into an unusual calm. His rare messages of that period are heavy with the pathos of a sinking soul. 22

On the 17th of October 1906, the Dīpāvali-day, Śwāmī Rāma left his mortal coil by drowning in the Gangā.

The version of his cook who was an eye-witness to the fateful incident shows that his death was accidental as his weak body was helplessly carried away by the swift currents of the Gangā, his stamina being completely exhausted in swimming and struggling against the downflow of the river. His “Address to Death” 23 written on the last page of his last article “Self-Intoxication the Bond of Progress,” however, has led many to believe that Śwāmī Rāma had a premonition of his death. Another view, probably based upon the fact that his dead body was found floating in a yogic-posture, is that he died a choice-death and took jala-samādhi. The last view has been regarded to bear consistency also with Rāma’s challenging utterances about death. 24

The masterly tone of Śwāmī Rāma’s life, his writings and speeches, does leave an impression that a saint of his spiritual calibre could not possibly meet an utterly helpless and unforeseen death, for, is it not recognised to be an ordinary feature of yogins and saints to have some control over the elementals? And yet the circumstances of his death do not at all prove either his self-invited death by a voluntary offer of his body to his dear Gangā or his premonition of the accident. His challenging address to death, it is interesting to note, had also found a much earlier expression in almost the same terms in English in his Note Book III. 25 It is, therefore, quite evident

23 “O Death! blow up this one body. I have enough bodies to use. I can wear those divine silver threads, the beams of the moon and live. I can roam as divine minstrel, in the guise of hilly streams, and mountain brooks. I can dance in the waves of the sea. I am the breeze that proudly walks and I am the wind inebriated. All these shapes of mine are wandering shapes of change. I came down from yonder hills, raised the dead, awakened the sleeping, unveiled the fair faces of some and wiped the tears of a few weeping ones. The nightingale and the rose both I saw and comforted them. I touched this, I touched that, I doff my hat and off I am. Here I go and there I go; none can find me.” (English rendering from L.L., p. 404).
24 For example “Even death will die if it comes without my consent.”
that his last challenge was only a reappearance of a mood or attitude towards death. Conclusively speaking, he was fearlessly prepared to welcome death any moment of his life, but he did apparently meet an uninvited as well as an unapprehended death.\(^26\)

Another view may also be taken that Swāmī Rāma’s accidental death was a natural fruition of his not-improbable desire to be free from the worn-out body of his last days. The fact that the greatest people may meet the most ordinary death does not encourage the outer form of the event of death to be regarded as also the essence of its inner significance and hence the possibility of even a deeper significance of Swāmī Rāma’s apparently helpless and accidental death.

**HIS GREATNESS**

This is the sketch of the lustrous life of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, short like a spark and yet so wide and great in its glow. He was a keen student, a profound scholar, a sterling ascetic, an aspirant sādhaka, a lover of nature and a mystic, a poet and a thinker, a seer and a prophet, and then a consistent patriot and reformer, a humanist and a Vedāntic evangelist.

Although a student of Arts, his writings show his close understanding of natural sciences wherein he peculiarly reads even moral and spiritual laws of life. His studies were vast and varied, in sciences, philosophies and religions—old and modern, Indian as well as European. His thoughts were original and fresh, with the rare merit of an independent interpretation of the great minds.\(^27\) He knew English, Sanskṛta, Persian, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu and his writings are so rich with quotations from each literature.

Like a great authority he declared the Vedas to date back at least eight thousand years before Christ on the basis of his researchful study of the Vedas and Mathematics called by him as internal evidence.\(^28\) Of his Vedāntic studies his praise for the Yoga Vaiśīṣṭha

\(^{26}\) At one place, in his note-book, is written without any pre or post link “Sāṅwat 1962 last day A.B.” (11 N.B., p. 397) which may give a possible clue to his premonition as he died in that very year.

\(^{27}\) There are dozens of important authors from the West as well as from the East, scientists, philosophers, mystics, social thinkers, historians whom he refers to in his writings. His references to the Indian classics are also abundant.

was superlative, although he quoted from the *Upaniṣads* much more frequently. Like a great historian he declared from his studies that the task of history is to make man read a spiritual purpose in life. He observed the periodicity of the pulsation of the Great Hindu Thought to range from one thousand to fifteen hundred years.

As a *sādhaka* Swāmī Rāma's life was characterised by self-denying ascetic vows and a prayerful submission to God. He loved solitude and silent contemplations on spiritual truths rather than waste time in the ordinary rut of a social life, at times his tone growing even cynical, although he regarded his life of renunciation (*sannyāsa*) to be of use to all social life just as ‘the water of the reservoir’ ‘having no vegetation about it,’ is used for irrigation for the harvest of the fields.

The life of the enlightened or *Vedānta*-realized Rāma was characterised by his heavenly freedom, divine glory, lordly joy, an utter self-sovereignty and a mystic self-cosmicisation. He would, every now and then, pour forth supreme self-delight in love with nature. His mystic realization of identity with God was eloquent: “The soul opened out into the Infinite and there was a rushing together of the two worlds, the inner and the outer. It was deep calling unto deep—the deep within being answered by the unfathomable deep without, reaching beyond the stars...God surrounds me like the physical atmosphere. He is close to me than my own breath. In Him I live and move and have my being.” The most striking feature of his writings and lectures, his letters and poems is that he speaks like a King and does actually regard himself as the Master of the Universe, and identical with the whole Nature, the entire cosmos being his dance. Almost every writing of his is eloquent of his ecstacies of a self-divinised majesty. Even his overt behaviour, his tone of addressing people in his speeches or writings, his expressione about himself and his surroundings became so peculiar and abnormal that if Swāmī Rāma’s life and his philosophy were written

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31 Oh Mother Earth, Father Sky, Brother Water, Sister Wind, Sweet Heart Light, .........And all delusions vanished.
32 11 N.B., p. 329.
completely in his own words, the whole thing would look to our common normal mentality as eccentric. He addressed, for example, his audience as “My own Self in the form of ladies and gentlemen”, etc.

Swāmī Rāma talked his Vedānta to and through nature—brooks and flowers and hills and trees and birds and beasts and the moon and stars. His letters and sketches are laden with elation appreciation of nature’s beauty, signifying to him all that Vedāntic principles would inspire. Most of his poems34 have the thrill of spiritual ecstacies occasioned by one or the other impulse from nature. More than often would he burst into the joy of an expansion into Cosmic Consciousness and identity with the manifest All. His expressions at many a place are mystically erotic: “The blue heavens are my cup and the sparkling light my wine.”35

The life of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha being a flowering of his personality into spiritual splendours through an utterly personal endeavour, his outlook on life breathes all freedom of faith and conviction. He is a self-reliant advocate of his ‘Universal Vedānta’, the ‘Religion of Nature’, and proclaims to all their birth-right of freedom in religion and spirituality. He denominates his total philosophy as ‘Self-reliance’,36 and imparts a universal appeal to what he so fondly calls ‘Vedānta’. He expounds Truth-Eternal on personal authority and pleads for a researchful, experimental and practical adventure into its fresh discovery. His approach to the ultimate problems of life is dynamic and his metaphysics has an intimate bearing on practical life. He calls his Vedānta as ‘Practical Vedānta’ and maintains that it does not encourage inaction or escape from life. His mission is not a mere personal salvation but a collective emancipation of humanity and the establishment of ‘vedantic community’ of men—a divine kingdom.

Consistent with his dynamic Vedānta, the socio-political life of his nation deserved and did receive his most sincere attention. His mystic realizations and monistic philosophy were so intimately in harmony with his patriotic love for his nation—‘positive nationalism’ in the words of Sri Brij Nāth Shargha37—promoting a universalism of

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34 More than a hundred poems were written by him in English, Hindi, Urdu and Panjabi published as “Poems of Rāma” and Rāma Varṣā (Two volumes).
36 H.R., p. 198.
37 G.R., Vol. X., p. 44.
the highest order rather than shutting itself to narrow-minded separatism. His God-realization was not a mere personal fulfilment, but a powerful inspiration to make others free and happy. Consequently he regarded his Vedāntic accomplishments as essentially inseparable from his nationalism. His identification with his country is worth a note:

"Let me feel I am India—the whole of India. The land of India is my own body. The Comorin is my feet. Himalayas my head. From my hair flows the Ganges, from my head come the Brahmaputra and the Indus. The Vindhyāchals are girt round my loins. The Coromandel is my right and the Malabar my left leg. I am the whole of India, and its east and west are my arms and I spread them in a straight line to embrace humanity. I am universal in my love. Ah! such is the posture of my body. It is standing and gazing at infinite space; but my inner spirit is the Soul of all. When I walk, I feel it is India walking. When I speak, I feel it is India speaking. When I breathe, I feel it is India breathing. I am India, I am Shankara, I am Siva. This is the highest realization of patriotism, and this is Practical Vedānta."  

Swāmī Rāma’s attitude towards British Imperialism was naturally that of fearless, uncompromising and yet constructive criticism. His esteem for the Indian National Congress was not very high. He believed that sacrifice and sufferance at the cruel hands of the oppressive rulers would unite the nation much more effectively. strongly and quickly than thousands of lectures, probably supporting thereby a hot agitation against the British rule in India, although he was himself an apostle of peace and love.

Swāmī Rāma’s contribution towards our socio-religious reconstructions cannot be over-estimated. He made a thorough analysis of our maladies and inspired an all-round reform in our social structure on the basis of noblest religious truths. He tried to bring about a harmony and unity of religions and free the essentials of

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38 G.R., Vol. VII., p. 60.
39 “Christians, Arya Symajis, Sikhs, Hindus, Parsis and Mohammedans, all those whose flesh and bones and marrow are made of the foodgrains and salt of my Ishta Deva, the land of Bharat, are my brothers, nay my own self. Go and tell them that Rāma is theirs. I embrace them all. I exclude none. I will rain love on earth. I will bathe the earth in joy, if any one opposes me, I shall accord him a hearty welcome. Since I rain love, all societies are mine. Since I shall raise floods of love, every power is mine, be it high or low. Bravo! I will rain love.” L.L., p. 328.
religion from its dogmatic ritualism. He had a plan of starting a "Life Institution" for religious reforms through Vedānta, having both theoretical as well as practical aspects. He framed the guiding principles also of the Sādhārana Dharma Sabha, proposed to be started by Śivagūḍhācārya. He had also an idea of establishing a Vedānta Colony. His reformatory ideas covered almost every aspect of our community life.

So, these are the wide ranges of such a short life that was Rāma's. If all the tributes paid to his greatness were collected, it would form a volume of superlatives. 40 Granted that most of such tributes come from reverential hearts, to make an impartial and critical assessment of his religious and spiritual attainments would demand standards of judgment which are not very easy. Peace and tranquillity of the mind and ecstatic self-exaltations are both regarded to be the marks of spiritual awakening. To place one of them higher than the other would itself involve a third criterion and hence a still greater difficulty. The present study is intended to make a constructive survey of his philosophy rather than a presumptuous evaluation of his spiritual status.

It is, therefore, relevant to see how far Śvāmī Rāma Tīrtha could be regarded as a philosopher. The trend of regarding philosophy, exclusively and strictly, as a rational examination of epistemological problems and a conceptual and critical investigation of metaphysical validities, has led to a general verdict that Indian philosophers are theologians and not philosophers, with only a few exceptions. 41 Such a verdict, one might feel, is all the more true about the whole bulk of recent saints and religious reformers like Śvāmī Rāma Kṛṣṇa Paramahamsa, Śvāmī Vivekānanda and Śvāmī Rāma Tīrtha, etc. But while it is true that the 'darśana' of Indian spirit exceeds the scope of logic and rational speculation, it is never anti-rational or illogical. Truth as truth may well afford to be supra-rational and as such beyond the province of our reasoning intellect. What is, therefore, more important to the Indian mind is Truth than the logic of or to it, whereas the modern western bias behind the view in hand is more for the logic of Truth than for Truth itself. 42 The mentality that led to

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40 (i) Puran's 'Story of Swami Rama' contains a wealth of them.
(ii) Vol. X of 'In Woods of God Realization' is a homage to Rama.
41 A.R. Wadia: 'Can Indian and Western Philosophy be Synthesised,' Philosophy East and West, Jan. 1955.
42 Damle : 'Metaphysics as Logic' (Philosophical Essays, pp. 71-72).
labelling of Indian Philosophy as pessimistic sometime back seems, now, out to disparage it as mere theology. Swāmī Rāma for one, was never a theologian, nor a dogmatic preacher of *Vedānta*. His free and fearless condemnation of scholastic preoccupation, his revolt against dogmatic traditions, his appeal to rise above all ritualistic religiosity, his declaration of the personal experience as the highest authority, his universal interpretation of what he called ‘*Vedānta*’ as the dynamic life and truth and beauty, his love for first-hand discovery of the secrets of life and nature, his comprehension of the unifying principles underlying the variety of religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and all, his penetrating vision to read spiritual principles behind scientific laws—physical, biological and others—his catholic criticism of antagonistic philosophies like Realism and Idealism to be harmonised into his eclectic ‘*Vedānta*’, his broad synthesis of the varying forms of Indian and Western idealisms—all these stand to say that he was a thinker, truly in tune with the Indian spirit and, as such, far from being a mere preacher-theologian. Of course, he was something more than a mere speculative philosopher, but none the less a philosopher, for, the more here includes the less. He was ‘one of the builders of Modern Indian Thought’ in the words of Dr. B. L. Atreyā.43

The spirit of Rāma’s philosophy is obviously inspirational and pragmatic (not in the modern American sense of the term) in that philosophical wisdom, religious piety and dynamic life of serviceable activity in the world go hand in hand without any Bradleyan privation,44 much less, a misconceived opposition between them.

43 Atreyā B.L.: Practical *Vedānta*, p.5.
44 Damle: Standpoint of Philosophy (Philosophical Essays, pp. 11-12).
Epistemological Views

Before entering into the realms of metaphysics and making an estimate of Swāmī Rāma’s ontological views, it is necessary to know about his epistemological position. Although he has made only casual references to the problems of knowledge, its sources, possibilities and limits, the criteria of truth and error, in the course of his talks and writings, his statements do indicate his epistemological attitude. It must, however, be reserved that his observations concentrate more on metaphysical epistemics, i.e., on the problem of the metaphysical Reality rather than on ordinary empirico-speculative knowledge of the perceptible or conceivable things.

Swāmī Rāma maintains a distinction between spiritual knowledge, i.e., Truth-realisation and ordinary knowledge comprising sense-perceptions, conceptual thinking or book-learning, and holds that the latter is far inferior to the former. He uses terms like ‘wisdom’, ‘realisation’, ‘jñānam’, ‘vision of Truth’, etc., etc., for spiritual knowledge. All learning is simply worthless as compared to the knowledge of Reality, having attained which all is attained.¹ Such a distinction echoes the Upaniṣadic distinction between the ‘parā’ and ‘aparā’ vidyā which refers not only to higher and lower levels of cognitive validity or the wider and narrower extents of our intellec-
tion, but is also intimately significant of our values of life. Spiritual Wisdom is not only the highest knowledge, but, as the Gita says,

¹ Compare the Upaniṣad : वेदांशृष्टिः प्रथमम भवत्यस्मतं मतमविश्वातं बिजातिमि
² (a) Mund. 1-1-4,5. (दै विचल वेदितथः......पराचावापराण) प्राची VI-1-13.
(b) Ranade : Constructive Survey of the Upaniṣadic Philosophy, pp. 326-327.
also the Highest Good.\textsuperscript{3} Lower knowledge, i.e., ordinary learning is stale, superficial and empty whereas higher knowledge, i.e., spiritual wisdom is fresh and intimately essential, and sustains our highest aspiration for the ideal goal. "Learning and Wisdom" writes Swāmī Rāma "are not identical. Learning looks backward to the past and wisdom looks forward to the future."\textsuperscript{4}

**LIMITATIONS OF PERCEPTION AND REASON**

Knowledge in the ordinary sense is derived from sense experience, inferential reasoning, authoritative words and the like. Dependence and emphasis on any one or more of the various sources of ordinary knowledge have led to a variety of epistemological theories, some of which have occupied very important place in philosophical thought. Rāma refers to a few of them here and there and regards them all as insufficient and even valueless for the purpose of Truth-realization. Sense-data, first of all, are meagre in his opinion and give no sure ground to apprehend the Reality. "We cannot know the Infinite through the Senses."\textsuperscript{5} Sense perceptions, he says, are confined to forms and appearances of things and reveal to us nothing of their essential reality. The so called facts are mere "illusions of the senses," he writes, and a reliance on them leads to frustration."\textsuperscript{6} "That dupe of the senses who counts on what are called facts and figures and rests on the foundation of forms builds on the foam and sinks."\textsuperscript{7} Our empirical ways cannot lead to the realm of the spirit.

Not only bare sense-perceptions but even organised sense-data, formulated into positive sciences and abstracted into speculative systems do not give us the knowledge of the Reality. What Comte regards to be the barriers of human knowledge as such\textsuperscript{8} are declared by Rāma to be the limits of all positive science. "Positivism does not know the unknowable," writes the Swāmī, "It recognises its existence."\textsuperscript{9} Not only positive sciences, but even abstract sciences like mathematics fail to probe into the mystery of metaphysical

\textsuperscript{3} यःसःसः कृप्या होक्षसःभुवत् । गीता ६१
\textsuperscript{4} G R., V, p 68.
\textsuperscript{5} G.R., VI, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{6} G.R., II, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{7} G.R., III, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{8} Falckenberg, R.: *History of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 553-55.
\textsuperscript{9} C.W., p. 269.
Reality. In this he assumes a Kantian attitude in maintaining that all our phenomenal knowledge obtained by sense and reason falls short of comprehending the noumenal reality, the existence of which it undeniably implies. "The trio of Time, Space and Causation can hold the phenomena of the world, but cannot grasp what is behind it."\textsuperscript{10} It is like a pair of tongs that "can pick up this and that and other things but cannot turn back and grasp the hand which holds and guides them."\textsuperscript{11} Intellect, the chief faculty implied in all phenomenal knowledge, cannot apprehend the Reality. It only realises or recognises its necessity, but fails to see it, know its nature and experience its essence. It is like a person with blind-folded eyes compelled to recognise the presence of someone who has blind-folded, but is unable to see or know him.\textsuperscript{12}

Formal arguments and logical proofs as the chief methods of the Intellect cannot apply to Truth of the Reality, nor can they lead to it. The whole idea reflects the Upaniṣadic view that Reality is that from which words and thoughts return without grasping it, which is beyond the approach of senses and the mind.\textsuperscript{13} Logic and reason, he says, do not help conviction and they are very weak instruments, "crutches of the limping soul."

Although reason has been considered to be the characteristic distinction of man without which he is declared to remain only an animal, and in his quest for knowledge he has relied so greatly on this faculty of reason, yet Rāma holds it as a very imperfect guide, for the purpose of Truth-knowledge. It has to be exceeded or even abandoned for receiving the Light of Truth. "Reason," he says, "is said to be the crown of man; it is, rather, the collar of the serf. It is the sign of imperfection, the acknowledgement of ignorance."\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY}

Science and Philosophy are the two marvels of the human intellect with their own methods and merits, one concentrating itself more on objective facts and the other on systematic conceptualisation,
both relying on the power of Reason. Both of them, however, fall short of an essential comprehension of Reality.

"All attempts of Philosophy or Science to pry into the Ineffable have failed helplessly. Time, Space and Causality contemplated either from the subjective or objective point of view, defy all efforts to discover their nature. The ultimate nature of Matter, Motion, Force or Energy presents insurmountable difficulties to the enquiring mind. Atomic theory is beset with contradictions. Boscovich's theory of Centre of Force in the long fared no better. All the dogmatic theologies of the world have more or less of superstition stamped on their face. One system of philosophy explodes the other, the latter in its turn spares no pains to return the compliment. From this it is apparent that the interior of Nature will for ever remain a mystery to the mind and that it is not given to human intellect to sound the depth of cosmos."

The very fact that science starts with a self-shutting limitation to a particular branch of experience renders it impossible for it to give us a complete picture of the all-inclusive Reality.

"The method of Science, as of all mundane knowledge is that of limitation. The views of science are like the views of a mountain; each is only possible as long as you limit yourself to a certain standpoint. Move your position and the view is changed. In science you select certain details and isolate them from the rest. But in supposing such isolation you suppose what is false and therefore vitiate the conclusion. A man seeing a very small arc of a very vast circle easily mistakes it for a straight line."

Scientific methods of analytical observation of what the limited sense-faculties are capable of perceiving, making a superficial classification and relating things with chance-hypotheses that may work for a long or short while, etc., cannot serve with success our search for a synthetic knowledge and integral experience of the Eternal Truth.

"Most of the classifications of Science and Philosophy are like classifying people by their boots. The method of Science is best called the method of ignorance." 

Swâmi Râma Tîrtha, thus, regards the methods of science as inadequate in the realm of Truth-Reality particularly because they

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16 C.W., p. 18.
17 Ibid., p. 28.
are differential, relational and superficial, while Truth is an Integral whole. In spite of the fact that scientific methodology has so greatly influenced human understanding and scientific knowledge, has so victoriously unravelled the mysteries of existence—a fact of which Swāmi Rāma Tīrtha is not only quite conscious but even an admirer—he reserves the domain of Real knowledge to only supra-scientific approach. To a modern mind his attitude may look as having a dogmatic or reactionary bias, but that would itself be, rather, a biased reading about him. He truly represents the idealistic line of thinking to which important thinkers, ancient as well as modern, have been adhering for similar reasons.

Philosophy, in spite of its recent leanings towards positivism and logicalism, has greatly retained its unique synthetic character and is so far saved from being reduced to mere science itself. And it appears from his observations about science as if Swāmi Rāma Tīrtha would grant philosophy a probe into the realm of Truth. But he unreservedly points to certain limitations of even philosophy, particularly, for the fact that it tends to be exclusively conceptual, and shows that even philosophy falls short of the Real-knowledge.

Philosophy, although it aims at a complete understanding of life and the universe, employs for its purpose the imperfect instrument of reason and proceeds on grounds which Reality in fact transcends. There are pre-supposed laws of thought and categories of understanding to which speculative philosophy enslaves itself and consequently fails in its great adventure to comprehend Truth.

It looks, rather paradoxical that an epistemological viewpoint, being itself a part of philosophy, should see or point out to the limitations of philosophy as such. What is that philosophy, one might ask, which sees limits to philosophy? But such a paradox and such a question would necessarily imply that human understanding cannot be self-critical. A Kant would then be wrong in declaring the limits of knowledge and an Upanisad self-contradictory in maintaining the Truth to be super-conceptual (acintya). All dialectic would then be impossible—dialectic which in the words of Dr. T.R.V. Murti is “at once the consciousness of the total and inevitable (antinomical) conflict of reason and the resolution of it by rising to a higher plane of consciousness.”¹⁸ Swāmi Rāma Tīrtha is least a dialectician and his approach to epistemics is neither sustained nor

¹⁸ Central Philosophy of Buddhism, p. 294.
profound. Yet his observations clearly show that our conceptual knowledge even with its fine philosophical developments is limited and meagre. He seems to regard all speculative philosophy as ‘ordinary philosophy’ and debars it from what ‘intuitive knowledge’ reveals in a higher plane of consciousness. He says:

“Ordinary Philosophy is like a hound hunting its own tail. The more he hunts, the farther he has to go. We travel on a journey that was accomplished before we set out. The real end is gained when we stay still (शापिता).”

It is one thing to form a theoretical view or build a concept of reality by intellectual abstractions and logical deductions and quite another to experience it, know it first-hand and see it. Philosophy being primarily a mental pursuit has to depend on the logic of reason and hence remains inadequate for a comprehensive realization of that which transcends the mind.

Science and Philosophy, even though they have their own tradition and every research or system may be shown to have some bearing, direct or otherwise, on its previous theories, are comparatively free and independent pursuits of human mind, whereas scholasticism, tradition and belief, especially as regards ultimate truths are carefully loyal to the authority of the word, and a seeker of truth is quite often required to submit unreservedly to the traditional belief and scriptural injunctions. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, by his teaching and life shows every respectful regard for great scriptures, and recommends their thoughtful study; his praise and admiration for Indian, especially Hindu scriptures like the Gītā and the Yogavāśīṣṭha, etc., has its own eloquence. But he is indubiously emphatic in maintaining the spirit of freedom and independent search of the seeker without which belief and studies are insufficient.

“Philosophy advances”, writes Swāmī Rāma, “not so much by the answers given to difficult problems as by the starting of new problems, and by asking questions which no one else would think of asking”.

LIMITATIONS OF SCHOLASTICISM

Belief has its own important place in life and works as a propelling force in our acts, but Truth is to be known and not to be

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19 C.W., p. 312.
20 C.W., p. 303.
believed on authority.\textsuperscript{21} Rāma denounces, in unequivocal terms, scholastic tendencies and maintains that Truth is not dependent on texts and a mere study of the scriptures is useless for the knowledge of the Supreme. His remarks about Śrī Śaṅkara and other commentators are characteristic of his attitude against scholasticism. He writes:

“The great mistake of the great Śaṅkara was that he did hide his light beneath a bushel. Why waste his time in torturing the old texts to squeeze out the truth which was to him a matter of personal realization, than which there can be no higher authority? Others came and took the same helpless words and forced out their own meanings from the very same texts, the march of truth being hindered rather than accelerated by this well-meant effort”.\textsuperscript{22}

He considers it as a sin of wrong education in which the “natural order is reversed and the living self is made a slave of the ghosts of the old books,” and where “study of books is placed higher than the study of facts”.\textsuperscript{23} The long tradition of writing commentaries on the scriptures Swāmī Rāma does not seem to compromise with and likens the ever so many Bhāṣyās to ‘patches and stitches to the old garments’.\textsuperscript{24}

“Truth, he writes is nobody’s monopoly. Everyone under the sun can discover and rediscover and rediscover it for himself.”\textsuperscript{25} In praise of the Vedānta which he uses almost as a synonym for universal truth, he proclaims, “It is the Truth that belongs to everybody like the sunshine,” without any slavery or submission to any authority or teacher or scripture. Authority cannot establish Truth, just as a little lamp cannot show the sun. “Does a simple mathematical truth gain a whit more weight if Christ, Muhammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Vedas and all come and bear testimony to it?”\textsuperscript{26}

Rāma’s attitude regarding scriptures and testimony, belief and authority is not sceptical at all. He thinks that “scepticism writing on belief is like blindness laying laws of optics.”\textsuperscript{27} Of course he

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 339.
\textsuperscript{22} G.R., V, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{23} G.R., V, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 88.
\textsuperscript{25} G.R., VII, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{26} G.R., V, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{27} C.W., p. 342.
unmistakably distinguishes hearsay from direct knowledge and belief from realization. Reading of books and learning is one thing and to realize Truth is quite another. Truth is a matter of personal experience and intuitive realization and hence independent of authority. His view here has the upaniṣadic spirit. 18 "Theology", he has equated with "Reason put in chains forced to grind the philosophical mill and bring out the orthodox dogma." 29

TRUTH TRANSCENDS SUBJECT-OBJECT-DUALITY

Such an attitude is very much similar to the spirit of enlightenment of the Modern Western Philosophy, tearing itself away from the past authority into a self-sufficient freedom of enquiry, except that Swāmi Rāma puts a reliance not on an all-adequacy of reason and intellect but on the infallibility of the intuitive vision of the spirit. Like most of the idealists he maintains that Truth transcends intellect and reason. All mental knowledge implies subject-object-duality which Reality transcends. The vedāntic approach that all distinction between the subject and object is empirical and not essential and that, therefore, Truth is something beyond all empirical knowledge is regarded by him as the correct approach. Our intellect by its very nature is incapable of fathoming the depths of the Reality, and "turns back from it in dismay." It sounds as if Reality is unknowable. But Rāma upholds the Vedāntic position that Truth is unknowable only so far as the mind and its analytical knowledge with subject-object-duality goes. To the non-dual spiritual vision Truth reveals in self-identity. 30 Perfect knowledge is knowledge by identity in which subject-object-duality is resolved into universal unity. 31

While referring to the 'Vedāntic theory of perception', 32 which, Swāmi Rāma believes, reconciles the opposite views of idealism and realism, he makes almost the same observations as Kant does about all phenomenal knowledge born of sense experience, put into the forms of reason. But he departs from Kant's agnostic position into the Vedāntic approach of drawing a distinction between empirical know-

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28 (a) G.R., Vol. VI, pp. 146-147.
29 (b) नायिकायार्य प्रकृतियें सच्चे न भास्करे न बहुता भुलेत । Kaṭha-11-23
31 G.R., VI, pp. 25-27.
32 C.W., pp. 272-326.
33 G.R., Vol. VI (Idealism and Realism Reconciled).
ledge and intuitive knowledge and of treating the former as almost illusory as compared to the latter in which the empirically Unknowable becomes a matter of direct knowledge by identity. Such a distinction, however, he refers to as relative and not absolute; of degree and not of kind, implying a progression and not a mutual exclusion.33 “Knowledge and ignorance are the ascent and descent upon the same ladder.”34 Such a view of Rāma marks his departure from the traditional advaitic way of treating knowledge and ignorance as mutually opposed, and an advance towards the views of Sri Aurobindo who regards the two even as complementaries to each other.35

Considering the three states of experience, viz., waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, Rāma argues that questions of knowledge and ignorance can be justly answered only when we give due weightage to each one of them, for to exclude any is to put an unwarranted and undue reliance on the rest and hence making the whole game arbitrary and epistemologically unsound. The duration and extent of sleep-experience, he says, is almost equal to that of waking experience and hence both of them should be treated on par; rather, susupti-experience deserves greater reliance for valid knowledge.36 In so doing Swāmi Rāma is in line with the advaitic tradition which regards dreamless sleep-experience to be nearer truth than the waking or dreaming experience, possibly because it is helpful in proving the undifferentiated non-dual consciousness of the self.

One would, however, wonder how sleep experience could be epistemologically treated on par with the waking experience. Is not the whole problem of knowledge a problem of a waking mind? Is not even nature of sleep experience, with or without dreams, understood by a waking consciousness? Will not all considerations of the sleep-experience be waking considerations? Is not our reliance on the sleep-experience a reliance of the waking mind? The whole problem, its implications, all considerations of the value and weightage of the different states of experience are matters of waking consciousness, and it seems too much to regard sleep-experience on the same epistemolo-

33 G.R., VIII., pp. 53-54.
34 G.R., VIII., p. 53.
35 Misra R. S., “Integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo”, Chapter VII.
logical footing as the waking one, howsoever important it may be to analyse and understand it.

THE MYSTIC WAY

Rāma’s alignment with the vedāntic position in respect of the three levels of experience, however, provides only an argument in favour of the non-dual character of the Absolute Consciousness. Epistemologically speaking, the Truth transcends our intellect, reason and logic, but it is not utterly Unknowable. Spiritual self-vision and subject-object-transcendent-self-identity reveals it naked and complete, to which faith and religion can profitably lead. Religion and faith being primarily approaches of the heart are recognised by Rāma as securer than approaches of the reason. Reason, holds Rāma, cannot be understood apart from the reasoning process and reasoning is itself a psychological process preceded and determined by predisposed feeling. “Change the feeling”, “he says in an individual and his whole method of thinking will be revolutionised.”37 “It is not logical but psychological accuracy that convinces;” “not the age of reason, but the sage of faith that carries the day.”38 Quoting H. Spencer, Rāma agrees with him that intellect is the servant of feelings.39 Truth is not only what the head falteringly seeks to conceive of but what the heart capably yearns to feel and realize.

“There is a point where thought dies away into feeling, intelligence loses itself in rapt indentification...and all sense of individuality is absorbed in that absolute transparent unity where no division is.”40

That which is beyond all intellectual apprehension and scientific description or philosophical construction as the very soul of knowledge, is possible of religious experiences, which, Rāma again, agrees with James, “are as convincing as any direct sensible experience can be, and they are, as a rule much more convincing than results established by logic ever are.”41 Rāma asserts that ‘in the realms of metaphysics’ the ‘only way is the way of realization, of love, feeling and faith.’42

37 C.W., pp. 28-29.
38 Ibid., p. 338.
39 G.R., VII, p. 43.
40 C.W., p. 386.
41 G.R., VII, p. 44.
42 G.R., VI, p. 121.
Truth, holds Rama, is absolute and eternal, always the same, beyond opposites and above relations. It should not be confused with a particular occurrence.\(^{43}\) As such it does not either depend upon a particular knower or a particular context, nor does it change from object to object.\(^{44}\) Consistently, it cannot be known by a consciousness that suffers from distinctions or relations, or an intelligence that maintains its aloofness from its own objects. It is realizable in and through a consciousness which has entirely exceeded all subject-object-duality into a universal consciousness. The trio of jñāna, jñeya and jñānam must lose into a cosmic self-awareness if Truth has to be known infallibly. In that state of realization the finite individual consciousness is merged into Infinite Consciousness.\(^{45}\)

Thus Truth is revealed in a transcendence of the ordinary consciousness into superconscience and immediacy is its character. Divya drṣti or divine vision alone can be relied upon for Truth-knowledge, and it comes intuitively.\(^ {46}\) Religious experiences and mystic visions being primarily of intuitive character are valid and effective for realization of the Truth Super-conscience has the possibility of all knowledge, and intuition is its unerring way.

THE CRITERION OF TRUTH

As regards the criterion of Truth, Rama accepts the advaitic position of Svatahprāmaṇavāda and holds that Truth is its own test. Truth to be true needs no argument, no confirmation by an authority, but to be what it itself is. Truth is truth because it is truth in itself and its validity is absolute self-validity. Apart from this absolutistic criterion, Swami Rama gives a practical test, and puts ‘Trust of life’ as the ‘final’ touch-stone of Truth.\(^ {47}\) He sincerely believes that logic can give us no sure ground in Truth; we have to trust our life to it, pledge to live it and then only can we know and experience its validity. Thus the whole problem of truth and knowledge is not merely epistemological or logical but equally and integrally practical, moral, psychic and spiritual. Its solution, consistently, is not to be sought through conceptual formulations or rational speculations, but through self-culture and spiritual sādhanā.

\(^{43}\) G.R., V, p. 89.
\(^{44}\) C.W., pp. 247, 287, 332.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., pp. 73, 249, 386, 387; G.R., VI, p. 148.
\(^{47}\) G.R., VIII, p. 140.
‘Trust’ as the test of truth has a very great pragmatic tinge and the transition from svatahprāmāṇya of the absolutist to the practical test may appear, both incongruous as well as abruptly odd. ‘Trust’ may differ from person to person and change from stage to stage for the same person and thus Truth would be reduced to be only a personal and relative consideration without any objective, final and absolute character of its own. Logic demands that it can either be self-valid or dependent on our relative sense of utility, but not both. But a constructive approach to Rāma’s views would be something like the theosophical approach, holding Truth to be Infinite and Absolute and yet seizable in our personal and relative comprehension. Śrī Rāma’s distinctive contribution lies in making Vedanta practical and effective and not leaving it for a metaphysical contemplation alone. In tune with the upaniṣadic spirit he holds that Truth is not merely what satisfies man’s logical intellect, but what redeems his life of its miseries into Perfection and Bliss, and practical ‘trust’ is the typical Indian approach to metaphysical Reality. Truth may be absolutely self-valid and yet progressively realizable through our sādhanā for It. The apparent contradiction between its self-validity and our pragmatic ‘trust’ may be resolved by taking recourse to the logic of the Infinite as propounded by Sri Aurobindo.48

We shall now pass on to Rāma’s views, more aptly his convictions, about metaphysical issues regarding GOD, the World and the Self.

Chapter 3

God

The views of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha about God markedly developed through three stages. His earliest views pertain to his boyhood when he was a school student and used to receive instructions from his preceptor Dhannā Bhagata. They are like the common religious beliefs that God is a Supreme being who has created this world and governs it, who should be adored and worshipped, who is pleased at our ethical purity and is Good and Benevolent. While a university-youth, his views took a devotional turn, and belief made way for emotion. He was warm and wet with an intense love for the Beloved Kṛṣṇa, pining and sobbing for his Divine Communion, and his God was the God of a mystic aspirant. The third and the final stage was marked by his spiritual enthusiasm in which his passionate love and impatient pangs found a consummation in his advaitic assertion of his own Godhead and the Divine Unity of all existence. The following is an attempt to study his final views on God typically vedāntic in character and import.

While studying his writings one is struck with the force of a characteristic conviction with which Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha frequently asserts the existence of God, beyond all possibility or even necessity of its rational proofs. His approach to God is different from a theological approach in that he speaks of God to be a Reality of direct intuitive experience rather than a matter of reasoned out belief. Regarding the necessity of a search into the existence of God, Rāma takes a definitive stand that God is an undeniable Truth. It is a matter of fact which does not even need a verbal affirmation. “God is the most familiar of all facts.”1 “What is God but Truth? To

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1 C.W., p. 272.
contradict it is downright blasphemy.". For him God is an intimate principle of life to disprove which is impossible and to prove which is superfluous.

NATURE OF GOD

Unlike the common theistic notions that God is a Supreme Being who has intelligently created the world without involving Himself, and governs it as its sovereign Ruler with His laws, Rāma speaks of It in Vedāntic terms and maintains that Brahman is the sole cause of the universe. It is the first and the final cause of all creation. It is the efficient as well as the material cause of the world, the Unmanifest cause of all manifestation. "Creation lies before us like a glorious Rainbow;" writes Rāma, "But the Sun that made it lies behind us, hidden from us." Brahman is the Absolute Reality that supports all apparent causation in the cosmos, the 'Kāraṇam Kāraṇānām.' The entire perceptual world of things owes its existence to It.4

The world of objects, outwardly, seems to consist of innumerable forms and shapes bearing so many names, undergoing infinite changes; a perpetual process of transitory becomings. But the Essential Reality underlying all the finite things of forms and names, 'nāma-rūpa' and change and transitoriness is The Permanent Eternal Infinite Brāhmaṇ. It is like the Substance of Spinoza which is the ground and support of all modes, modes that have no existence or significance independent of and isolated from their substance just as a point has no existence apart from the line, or the line apart from the surface, and the surface apart from the solid.5 It is the Being of all beings, the existence of all existence and the Real of all reals in its Supreme Status.6

Brahman is, thus, the substantive or the constitutive cause, the 'upādāna' of all things in the universe. But It is not so merely in the sense of Aristotelian material cause. In fact the expression 'material' because of its etymological derivation from the word matter, would confuse the vedāntic conception implied in under-

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2 C.W., p. 235.
3 11, N. B., p. 100.
5 C.W., p. 393.
standing Brahman to be the ‘upādāna’ of the universe. It is at once the substratum of all things, material as well as non-material. Furthermore it is itself the formal, the efficient and the final cause, as it is the sole reality underlying all existence. The views of Śrīmālī Rāma are in perfect agreement with the classical Vedānta that from Brahman all is born; in Brahman all stays and dwells and unto Brahman all returns to resolve.⁷

Brahman is not only the ultimate stuff of all things, it is also the ground of all forms and shapes. Itself Formless, it is the basis of all forms and the support of all qualities.⁸ The whole of the universe is substantially as well as formally grounded in Brahman. At every stage of its ceaseless becoming the world is fashioned by the qualities that have absolutely no status of their own except in relation to Brahman, which also and ever remains to be the final and ultimate end towards which all creation is moving.

Brahman, again, is the fountain of all cosmic energy and infinite power. All the processes of the universe are ultimately controlled and governed by Its Divine Śakti. All that seems to be caused by temporal and local forces, physical or supraphysical, environmental or psychological, is essentially determined by the Universal Divine Kinesis.⁹ Śrīmālī Rāma says in so many words that all natural phenomena including human activities, conscious or unconscious, are ultimately governed by the same power. Every event takes place because of the Supreme Will. The whole of this Cosmic play is energised by the Divine, without whom there can be no stir and life just as no sound can be produced from a flute unless blown by the flute-player.¹⁰

Brahman is the Omnipotent Supreme Governor of all things and movements. It is the ‘Antaryāmin’ the Inner Controller and the string-holder of the puppet-universe that runs through all beings and in whom the whole cosmos lives and moves.¹¹ Brahman is the

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⁷ Compare जग्माहस्य वत्: Br. Śu. 1-1-2.
⁸ G.R., VI, pp. 33-34.
⁹ शान्तोऽवतत्वेव यत्विचतुष्टयं युज्यते च नः .
   तस्ये भगवानेव कुष्ठे योगमाये || C.W., p. 281.
¹¹ Compare the Gita: ईश्वर: सत्वसुलभानां हृदेषेडज्ञ तिष्ठति || प्रामयन:-
   सत्वसुलभानि याग्नारहस्य मायाय। || Gita 18-61.
Supreme Master of all the laws which maintain and run the working of the universe. Everything moves and every event occurs in conformity with the cosmic design and order and thus unmistakably exhibits the Supreme Governance.\textsuperscript{12} The \textit{Upaniṣad} expresses the same idea as “Out of Its Fear burns the Fire, the Sun glows, gods the Indra and the Air (work) and rushes forth the Death.”\textsuperscript{13} It is expressed by the \textit{Brahma-Sūtra} as ‘\textit{antaryāmyadhipadāvādiśu},’ the Inner Controller of all beings.\textsuperscript{14} The cause of all causes, the ultimate Substance, the Power of powers is, thus, the \textit{Brahman}, which integrally comprehends all that scientific explanation of the world has termed as matter, motion, life and energy, nature and its laws, in all the immensities of the actual and the possible worlds.

That Brahman is the ultimate Substance and ground of all things is only one of Its aspects, viz., that of Eternal Pure Existence, ‘\textit{san-mātra},’ It is also Pure Consciousness, the Supreme Conscient which is the basis and foundation of all intelligence in the manifest universe and behind it in the realms of occult psychic sensibilities and above it as the super-conscient vasts of plenary illumination. It is ‘\textit{cid-rūpa}.’ Further still, It is the unbounded fountain of all joy and bliss and is the only source of all pleasures of all the worlds, earthly as well as heavenly, ‘\textit{ānandamaya}’.\textsuperscript{15} The vedântic expression in the compound word ‘\textit{Saccidānanda}’ is exceptionally suited to convey the essential characteristics of the Supreme Reality, the Lord of lords, the Master of nature and its universe, the Infinite Eternal God, the Creator and the Governor, Sustainer and the End of all beings.

God the Brahman is thus, the One Changeless, Permanent Substance underlying all the changing forms of things in the world, the Infinite and Eternal Being that supports all the finite and transitorybecomings, the Formless behind all the colourful richness of designs, the Essence that indwells all the variety of manifestation, the Cause and Purpose of all things and events in the universe, the Real that permeates all appearances, the power that energises all kinesis, the Governor and Sovereign of the entire eventful nature, the Ever-Existent All-Conscient Blissful one embracing all existence.\textsuperscript{16}

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\textsuperscript{12} U. p. 51.
\textsuperscript{13} प्राणवद्वाः।
\textsuperscript{14} भवाविन्द्रं बायुश्र मृत्युश्रं मृत्युश्रं वंधमः। Kath. 2-3-3.
\textsuperscript{15} Br. Su., 1-2-18.
\textsuperscript{16} G.R., II. p. 188 ; G.R., IV, pp. 100-101.
\textsuperscript{16} See “Infinite in the Finite”, G.R., I, p. 54 onwards.
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From such a conception of Brahman, it naturally follows that Brahman not only exists but verily It is the only Existent; God not only is but God alone is: 'None exists but God.' Rāma upholds a monistic position which, at times, seems to tend towards Śāṅkara Advaitism in that all except Brahman is unreal and at times, looks like the qualified Monism of Rāmānuja in maintaining that all is a manifestation of Brahman. Both ways, however, Brahman is the only Reality. "There is but one Reality," declares Rāma repeatedly.\(^{17}\) The Reality underlying all existence, indwelling everything, comprehending all phenomena and enveloping the whole universe is one and the same. It is the one, that runs through, supports, informs and intimates all the many. The entire empirical multiplicity is founded in the Secondless Essence, all phenomenal diversity is grounded in the 'noumenal' unity. "The 'sattā' (existence) in each and all is God."\(^{19}\) All these ideas bear the upanisadic spirit of advaitism.\(^{19}\)

Brahman is, thus, the only and ever-the-same substratum by which the whole existence is permeated, and without or independent of which nothing abides. It is the Infinite Eternal Omnipresent Reality containing within Itself all the dimensions of the total existence and comprehending in its wholeness all the differential extremes of the universe. It is like the vast ocean which, including all the ripples within it, itself remains ever the one and always the same. It is, to use the expression of Dr. Annie Besant, the "Hidden Life vibrant in every atom, Hidden Light shining in every creature, Hidden Love embracing all in oneness." Its oneness is as integral and undivided as the vitality of an organism.\(^{80}\) Although the basis of all differences, Itself It is the "Undifferentiated Continuum," the same Essential one underlying all the multi-operational many, the Secondless Indivisible Basis postulated by the numerous functions of

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18 C.W., p. 437.
19 Compare: सर्व स्तिथिवर्तं ब्रह्म। छां। सर्वं भूततात् रात्मा रूपं रूपः प्रतिरूपः बहिर्वच।
कठ। दू। १०।
एको वर्ती सर्वभूततात्त्वां एकं रूपं भूत्वा दः करोति।
कठ। दू। १२। १२।
20 C.W., p. 390.
infinite parts of the manifest world, the Integral and the whole Truth identical with Itself.\textsuperscript{21}

The Oneness of the Supreme Reality, holds Rāma, is not only a transcendentual unity of God’s Divine nature but an Integral Oneness of all existence at all its manifest levels. All matter is one and Indivisible, All life is One Impulse. All minds are one Psychic Whole and all spiritual nature is the same Divine Essence.\textsuperscript{22} The entire existence is one homogeneous whole without gaps or breaks, without differences, ‘ākhaṇḍa’, ‘abheda’. This oneness again, is not only a truth of the absolute Status of God, but equally a truth of its Dynamic Power manifest as the cosmic Law. God is the Law of laws and—“all the laws of the world, chemical, biological, psychological and all” are “no more than particular expressions of that One Law.”\textsuperscript{23} God, it should be marked, has been considered by Rāma not as the law maker, or as the Governor with the power of enforcing laws on the governed universe but as Law Itself, not the Dispenser of our destiny calculating reward or punishment for us but itself as the Perfect Law identical with Its own Omniscient Dispensation. Rāma calls it in his stylish fashion the “Law of the ‘Trīśūla’ ” as it pierces and cuts at the very root of all diversity and difference.\textsuperscript{24}

THE TRANSCENDENT ABSOLUTE

Ontologically speaking, therefore, Brahman the Real is absolutely one and admits of no differences. The differences are only apparent and not real, they are only formal or nominal, never essential\textsuperscript{25} The appearance of the differences is due to the subject-object duality implied in our empirical knowledge. All phenomena are born of the contact between subject and object. A keen observation would show the fact of everyday experience that the observing mind and the observed matter in their contacts get transformed in terms of each other, otherwise their mutuality could never be possible. And a spiritual insight would reveal that they are essentially one. It is the same ‘Caitanya’ that observes as the subject and is observed as the object. Mind and matter are not two separates but one identical

\textsuperscript{21} G.R., VI., pp. 44-46.
\textsuperscript{22} G.R., VI., p. 152.
\textsuperscript{23} G.R., III., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{24} G.R., III., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{25} K.R., I., pp. 409, 425, 430.
essence. The duality of mind and matter, of subject and object is thus resolved in an identity of the Absolute Brahman. All is verily the Brahman. In this judgment there is no coupling of the subject ‘All’ with the predicate ‘Brahman’ but a mere demonstration of their absolute identity.

While offering a reconciliation between ‘Realism’ and ‘Idealism’ in the light of Vedāntic theory of perception, Rāma assumes almost a Kantian position in making a critical analysis of the claims of both and observes that, in the realm of empirical knowledge, the phenomenal knowledge to use Kantian expression, both have a right and are legitimately correct in that no perceptual knowledge is possible without either the perceiving mind or the thing occasioning the perception. But, deviating from the Kantian position, he upholds the Vedāntic view that Reality behind the seer and the seen; the ‘draṣṭā’ and the ‘drśya’ is ontologically the same, the duality between subject and object being only apparent, functional and phenomenal and not essential or noumenal. Plato, from Rāma’s point of view, committed the mistake of assigning difference and multiplicity to his world of Ideas just on the basis of mental abstractions of different class-concepts from variety of sense-data. Spinoistic pantheism, treating mind and matter as dependent modes of the same substance finds a frequent expression in Rāma’s treatment of them as two waves of the same ocean. His Brahman, however, is not only the Substantial one supporting and consisting of the modal differences, but the “Absolute which, although the ground of all subject-object-duality, underlying the perceiving mind as well as the perceived world of material objects, transcends them all into its self-identical status of Being, beyond all the relations of knower and the known. It is beyond the diversity of the knower, known and knowledge and transcends the trio of ‘jñatā,’ ‘jñāna’ and ‘jñeya’.

The Non-Dual Brahman is at once the absolute and the

27 G.R., VI., pp. 61-63.
28 G.R., VI., ‘Idealism and Realism Reconciled’.
29 Ibid., pp. 17-23.
30 Ibid., pp. 23-27.
31 Ibid., p. 29.
32 Ibid., pp. 25-27.
33 Ibid., p. 47.
34 C.W., p. 249.
Transcendent. The world of our everyday experience is a world of relations, full of changing shapes and names, liable to innumerable perceptual judgments and multiple opinions, unagreeing considerations divided into subjective and objective extremes, mutually contradicting experiences and an unsettled dispute on facts as against interpretations. Unlike this the Reality revealed through ‘unerring’ Vedântic knowledge is beyond all such limits and limitations. It is utterly free from all the categories of difference and differentiations and lies beyond and above all relations and distinctions.\textsuperscript{35} It is the Absolute beyond all forms and names, beyond all types and classes. It is not a ‘this’ or a ‘that’ but the ‘All’ that transcends every ‘this’ and ‘that’. It is the Vast Illimitable Beyond implied in but transcending every limit, the Eternal Infinite transcending all categories of time, space and causality so that no ‘when’, ‘why’ or ‘where’ could be applied to It.\textsuperscript{36}

Beginningless and endless It is that which betrays all predications, ‘nirviśēṣa’. It falsifies all power of description and is the Ineffable, ‘anirvacaniyam.’ Language is a poor instrument and it utterly fails to hold the Supreme.\textsuperscript{37} Not only words, It escapes all possibility of being contacted by the senses. The eyes cannot see It, nor can the ears hear, the nose cannot smell nor can the tongue taste.\textsuperscript{38} Even mind, the internal sense organ, the master of senesces is incapable of beholding it. Imagination falls short of touching It. It surpasses all limits of intellencion and defeats all flight of thought : it is ‘acintya.’ It is beyond all possibility of intellectual comprehensions and cannot be qualified by any terms. It is, therefore, ‘Nirguna’, beyond all attributes.\textsuperscript{39}

The Transcendent and the Absolute Brahman is not only what the words fail to describe or the thoughts fail to catch, not only what the ordinary terms of empirical relations fail to convey or even endless Time and Space fail to encompass but also what all our ethical or moral categories fail to glorify. It is beyond all moral attributes and

\textsuperscript{35} G.R., VI., pp. 139-140.
\textsuperscript{36} G.R., II., p. 191.
\textsuperscript{37} K.R., I., pp. 17, 395 ; The Upanisad says :—
दोषो वाचो निष्कर्षो | असर्वप्रय वृमसा सदूर् | Tait. II-4.
\textsuperscript{38} G.R., III., pp. 126, 127 ; Compare the Upanisad :—
अस्तित्वस्वाभावः ज्ञातः यथार्थ निर्विचाराध्यवस्था यत् | Kath I-3-15.
\textsuperscript{39} G.R., II., pp. 189-191 ; G.R., VI., p. 122.
no teleological ideals could legitimately be ascribed to It. It is the Self-contained Perfect Being which cannot be vitiated by any moral or immoral qualities. It transcends all polarities of good and evil.\textsuperscript{40}

All religious worship, although mostly concentrated on a personal God, according to Rama, has an unconscious implication of the Supreme as an Unseen Being, the Invisible Beyond. The true religious spirit, free from its dogmatic idiosyncrasy does proceed from a manifest form of the God of worship to the Unmanifest Incomprehensible Being that supports all manifestations.\textsuperscript{41} In tune with the \textit{Gita} he holds that It is the same \textit{Ineffable Infinite} to which all prayers are ultimately offered.\textsuperscript{42} God of religion may, for convenience-sake, be worshipped as a personal deity, but the ontological status implied therein is the Impersonal Absolute. Transcendence of God thus is an indispensable implication of all religions.\textsuperscript{43}

Such a transcendence and absolutism of the Impersonal God is not an issue of mere abstraction. The Eternal is not that which abstracts from the temporal but that which is an \textit{a priori} postulate implied in all temporal relations. The Infinite is postulated by all the finites and the unrelational Absolute is the very basis and foundation on which all relations stand. The absolute Transcendent is, thus, not an \textit{a-posteriori} abstraction, but an \textit{a-priori} Reality. The truth of necessary implication of the idea of the Infinite Absolute behind the idea of relational finites, corresponds to the truth of Its Reality and Existence. Nor is the \textit{Absolute Nirguna} an essential contradiction to all that is relational, although in its Self-status the Absolute and Infinite stands above and annuls the relative and the finite, yet in its annulment the Infinite integrally includes the finite in all its terms and provides to it the scope of self-transcendence into Infinitude. The transcendent God is, thus, not a contradiction to the Immanent but verily includes and comprehends it in Its Absolute Being.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{THE IMMANENT GOD}

\textit{Brahman}, transcendentally existing in its pure status as the Absolute indwells immanently in the whole Cosmic manifestation,

\textsuperscript{40} G.R., VI., p. 123 ; C.W., p. 121.
\textsuperscript{41} G.R., V., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{42} वेदांने देवाः प्रमाणं वजन्ने श्रवणायमिति : ।
\textit{लेख पानिपतानहै} वज्ञतयाविज्ञ नूरियानम्}...\textit{Gita IX-23.}
\textsuperscript{43} K.R., I., p. 176 ; C.W., p. 416.
\textsuperscript{44} C.W., p. 408.
The Divine Idea that lies at the bottom of Appearance. God resides in all that exists and dynamises all that moves. In everything and every movement there is present the Divine. The whole of nature full of life and variety, birds and beasts, earth and heavens, men and gods, is permeated through and through by God the One. The Unmanifest One is verily the manifest many.

With illustrative example of the seed having an inexhaustible potency of germination through its successive generations. Rāma points to the Imperishable Infinite running through all that appears as finite. The whole world, at all its levels, mineral, vegetable, animal and human is permeated by the Divine. Writes Swāmī Rāma:

"God sleeps in the stone, breathes in the plant, moves about in the animal and wakes up to consciousness in man."

Again,

"He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm
Deep in Unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs
And works His Sovereign Will."

The Omnipresent God is, thus, manifest in the multiple forms and shapes of all the things of the world. The ‘Aksara Brahman’ (Indestructible Absolute) is also the Virāṭ Bhagavān (the Universal Form of God). He constitutes everything and everything is His abode, His own manifestation. It is like the same gold as the stuff

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45 C.W., p. 344.
47 The Infinite in the Finite’, G.R., I. The same idea has been beautifully put in Urdu verse, K.R., I., p. 211.
48 G.R., VIII., p. 149.
49 Ibid., p. 247.
50 G.R., VIII., p. 187.
of all its ornaments as much as the various ornaments are its own formations. The Same Real indwells all the apparents like the same Sun-Ray in the manifold spectrum.

“Creating the earths and heavens and birds and beasts
Who enters these as life and soul,
That being clothed in forms and names!
That Self-Same Sat thou art, the Same the Same”. 51

There could be a wealth of quotations from the Gītā and the Upaniṣads that convey the same idea of Immanence of God. Swāmī Rāma has actually quoted quite a number of them here and there, and speaks in tune with the saving and ennobling truth that all is Brahman. 52 The Lord of the Gītā speaks of himself in the Upaniṣadic terms proclaiming his own Immanent Godhead in very elaborate details. 53 There are striking similarities, and quite in abundance, found in the speeches and writings of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha with the Gītā on this point. Rāma almost sings them with elation and always makes a powerful suggestion that the truth that all is God should fill us with life and light spiritual. 54

God’s immanence is not only His all pervasiveness, His full and equal presence in everything, but also His all-informativity, His inspiration in all life. Further still, He is the all enlightening Intelligence in all Consciousness. Writes Swāmī Rāma:

“Through whose power the organs are quickened to perform their own offices? As the One Sun shineth in every country, so the Same Supreme Spirit illumineth every creature. There the ‘when’ is an eternal ‘Now’, the ‘where’ an eternal ‘Here’.” 55

All the variety of things, all diversity of forms, all differences of names and shapes, all distinction of the living and the lifeless, all duality of the subject and the object, all multiplicity of the world, all change and comings, are manifestations of the Same God and

51 G.R., VI., p. 140.
52 मरे खलिवद्वं ब्रह्म...Chan 3-14-1.
53 मया तत्मिदं सबं . Gita IX-4.
रहित्रेति प्रभुः साही...” IX-18.
तपामयहमहं अयं “ IX-19, etc., etc.
54 The whole of the 10th chapter of the Gītā and a large part of the 11th chapter are full of the idea of God’s immanence.
express His Divine Immanence. They are all self-differentiations of
the ever-Undifferentiated One.56

"According to Vedānta all this universe is in reality noth-
ing else but one indivisible indescribable Reality."57

Again,

"Elsewhere is Rāma (God) supremely manifest,
The moon, the clouds and the Air His abodes;
All that exists is verily His form
Look any direction, it is His face."58

THE SYMBOL OM AND THE HINDU GOD-FORMS

God is thus the Absolute Transcendent Being as the ground
and support of all existence as well as the Immanent Supreme pervas-
ively manifest through the whole creation. To use Rāma’s own
choice, the Upaniṣadic syllable ‘Om’ would stand as the best and the
most natural phonetic symbol for God as it comprehensively signifies
the nature of God. It is The ‘Word’ (‘akṣara’) which underlies and
comprehends all phonics and pervading all breath ‘prāṇa’ is the
‘pranava’, an utterly single syllable containing in its integrity of
phones (A-U-M) a unique representation of all the three worlds. i.e.,
the perceptible, the psychic and the unknown.59 The Gitā too uses
the symbol Om for Brahman.60

Rāma has also maintained that the Hindu concept of Viṣṇu as
well as Śiva or Rudra with characteristic descriptions of their forms,
their complexions and countenances, their abodes and their associa-
tions are typically symbolic of the essential nature of God. Viṣṇu
for instance symbolises Infinity, Wisdom, Bliss, Glory, Power, Light,
Immortality, etc. Śiva is a symbol of Purity and Compassion and
Rudra with Triśūla as the Terrible power of catastrophic destruction
and cosmic dissolution.61 All these representative deities, however,
are at bottom the powers of the Absolute One, god-forms of the
Formless, divine personalities of the Impersonal and guises of the
Same Divine Player (‘Bihārīji’).62 Swāmī Rāma believes that these

56 G.R., VI., pp. 23, 24, 32.
57 Ibid., p. 131.
58 Freely translated from his Urdu Verses; K.R., I., pp. 211-212.
8,9,10.
60 ओममोक्षसेवकाङे श्वेत्...etc., Gitā VII, p. 13.
61 C.W., p. 235; G.R., III., pp. 311-312.
62 G.R., III., pp. 8,9,10.
god-forms are of immeasurable help in the religious quest of man, a view similar to that of Śaṅkara. But Personal God in whatever form, with compassion and kindness, love and benevolence, awe and power has a religious value and not an ontological status.

ESTIMATE

Rāma's views about God and his Transcendental absolutism have very close resemblance with Śaṅkara Advaitism and yet his inspirational immanence brings him so close to Rāmānuja-Theism. That Brahman is a pure Being, beyond all relations and qualifications, Ineffable, Secondless, Impersonal, Indivisible, Undifferentiated, and that the world of multiplicity is unreal and an illusory appearance, are very strong Śaṅkara notes in his philosophy, although he never quotes Śaṅkara to be his authority. That the world is a manifestation of the same Brahman, that the underlying substance of all things-empirical is God and the declaration that Hegel's 'Absolute Thought' and Schopenhauer's 'Absolute Will' both are coherently harmonised in Vedānta, strongly suggest that he is in agreement with Rāmānuja-views holding this world to be 'Līlā' of the Divine.

His divinization considerations for practical life in all its social and political setting, directly following from the immanence of God do, indeed, stand as his distinction from Śaṅkara and yet his contentions that the transcendence of Brahman and unreality of the world are almost mutual implications, and that absolute non-dualism of Brahman stands against all empirical multiplicity, retrace his position back to Śaṅkara Advaitism. That the world is verily Brahman is also found to be a clear-visioned view of Ācārya Śaṅkara. While maintaining that Lord Kṛṣṇa was an Incarnate of the Divine Himself, it seems sufficiently convincing that Śaṅkara did not quite oppose the 'saguṇa' aspect of Brahman. This tends to greatly reduce the margin of difference between him and Rāmānuja. But his doctrine of the Māyā as Brahman's magical power creating cosmic illusions, his vīvarta' and 'anīrvacanīyakhyāti' which so indispensably go with his total philosophy, tend to retain his distinction from

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64 G.R., VI., pp. 120-121: C.W., p. 96.
65 G.R., VI., p. 7.
66 G.R., VI., "Māyā or the when and why of the world", pp. 97-142.
67 Viveka Cudāmaṇi, pp. 228-233; Aparoksānubhūti, pp. 49-52.
68 Prabodha Sudhākara, pp. 194-226.
Rāmānuja. Swāmī Rāma, so far as his absolute non-dualism goes, leans very much towards Śaṅkara, and yet quite often like Rāmānuja he regards the world of multiplicity as a manifestation of the Divine.\textsuperscript{69} It seems that his advaitism compels him on the one hand, to recognise the world to be grounded in, caused by, and constituted of the same non-dual Brahman and on the other, the apparent differentials of the world compel him to regard their multiplicity as false.

From his Socratic independence and poetic freedom it is definite that Swāmī Rāma was not a mere scholastic, pledged to a particular text or teacher or line of Vedānta. His views about God are more or less his convictions, proclaimed by him to be based on his own experiences. It seems superstitious to hold on that every thinker must, of necessity, carry on him a stamp of some other thinker, howsoever general it might be in common cases. For, that would logically culminate in utter stagnation of human thought. Similarities of views are not born only of loyal affiliations or imitative attitudes; they may very well be corroborations of independent researches.

His views about God, conclusively, are not strained at a logical absolutism, with the rigour of pure noumenalism, and his Brahman does not seem to utterly contradict the dynamic aspect of Divine creatorship. The two entirely cut off levels of existence characterised as the absolute (paramārtha) and the empirical (vyavahāra) on which Śaṅkara puts his Brahman and Iśvara respectively are not so sharply antagonistic to each other in his system. Rather, he seems to envisage the necessity of a comprehensive advaitism in which the pure status and supreme dynamics of Brahman stand in harmony—a system, perhaps, of the type of Sri Aurobindo’s ‘Integral Advaitism’ in which the terms of Being and Becoming, Existence, Force, Consciousness and Ānanda stand united in THE ONE.
The World

As about God, so about the world, Swāmī Rāma holds his views with what he calls ‘mathematical certainty’ and puts them with his characteristic conviction, quoting scriptures or authors just for pleasure. Instead of adopting the common philosophical tradition of establishing one’s own system after a thorough refutation of others’, through critical examination, he uses his freedom to impart significances of his choice to interpret others’ views, with stray references, too few and scattered to encourage a sustained systematic treatment, holding that in the light of his celebrated ‘Vedānta’ they would all stand reconciled.

EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD ANALYSED.

The world of our ordinary experience is full of innumerable things with variety of forms and relations and an unending chain of events. Our philosophical curiosity as to the ‘whence’, ‘whither’ and ‘why’ of the universe can be answered by a critical examination of the experience itself.¹ Of the ever so many views about the world, Swāmī Rāma evaluates realism and idealism,² probably because they broadly represent two divergent analyses of our experience, adopted in one way or the other by most of the philosophical systems. Experientially speaking, the multiplicity of the world could be fairly reduced to a duality of the knower and the known, an overemphasis on any one of which could take us to a subjective idealism on the one extreme or an objective realism on the other.

Swāmī Rāma observes that the idealist overweighs the impor-

¹ G.R., VI., p. 98.
² G.R., VI., Lecture I (Idealism and Realism Reconciled). He uses the word idealism mostly in the sense of subjective idealism.
tance of the perceiving mind in maintaining that independent of the experiencer there can be no experience of the world, and consequently leans to the extreme subjectivism that everything is the creation of the perceiving mind.\textsuperscript{3} The realist, on the contrary over-argues that since experience is universally occasioned and caused by the thing experienced, it inevitably follows that reality exists entirely objective and independent of the percipient.\textsuperscript{4} Rāma brings in the 'Vedāntic theory of perception' to evaluate their validity and to reconcile their claims and shows, in almost a Kantian fashion, that the world we experience is neither purely objective nor subjective, it is born of a subject-object-contact. The things of our perception are not pure facts of objective existence, for, a change of our sensory constitution or mental attitude would effect a change in our perceptions. Nor are they mere phantoms of the subject-mind, for no amount of our subjective choice could create for us our own perceptions. There is a correspondence between the subject and the object of experience, and we have an easy possibility of taking to idealism or realism if we slightly twist this correspondence into a one-sided dependence, this way or that.\textsuperscript{5}

This subject-object-correspondence, besides being a fact of our ordinary waking experience, is suggested by Rāma to work also on other levels of our experience, viz., the dreaming and the dreamless sleep. The gross material world corresponds to waking experience 'jāgrata' while the psychic or astral world corresponds to the dream-state 'śānapa' and the 'avijñāta' or the unknown world to the 'sūṣupti' or the dreamless sleep-state.\textsuperscript{6} (The reference to the unknown world 'avijñāta jogat', has occurred just casually, without any elaboration whatsoever. Swāmī Rāma Tirtha seems to be going out of the Vedāntic tradition in ascribing a subject-object-correspondence even

\textsuperscript{3} G.R., VI., pp. 9-14.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., pp. 15-16.
\textsuperscript{5} (i) G.R., VI., pp. 17-25.
(ii) By correspondence here, is not meant what the realist advances as a criterion of truth with the implication that our experience takes after and verifies the nature of the object experienced, but an interrelation, an 'interaction' between the subject and the object. It means that the experiencer and the experienced have an interdependence and the experience presupposes their mutuality so that none of them has an absolute status.
\textsuperscript{6} G.R., IV., pp. 63-64.
in the dreamless sleep-state which is marked for objectless presence of the witness-consciousness.) Thus all that we experience as the world while waking or sleeping, is explicable only in terms of a subject-object-correspondence. Every phenomenon that is experienced presupposes a subject-mind and an object-thing in a contact or inter-relation. Removal of either would mean an impossibility of experience.  

**ONTOMETRY OF THE WORLD**

Subject-object-correspondence, however, explains our experience of the world without determining its intrinsic nature. In fact, a critical epistemology would demand even an explanation of this correspondence. The empirical interaction between the subject and the object presupposes a common ground. Swāmī Rāma says, as did Vasīṣṭha, that experiential duality must itself be resolved in some ontological identity in which the subject and the object could meet and without which they would always remain utterly unconnected and incontactible duals. The necessity of subject-object-identity is so commonly recognised by almost all absolutistic philosophies. Multiplicity of the empirical world, thus, analysed into subject-object-duality, has to be traced further to an ultimate non-dual Reality. Swāmī Rāma Tirtha brings home that in all our perceptions the subject and the object act and react upon each other simply because they are essentially akin, their essence being the Same Underlying Absolute Consciousness. This is almost the analysis of perception made in Vedānta Paribhāṣā also. In his stylish fashion he makes an equation of the world as "आज्ञा (Jagat) is the ratio  \[
\frac{प्रामार (प्रामेय)}{प्रामार (प्रामेय)} \] (both numerator and denominator being functions of वैदन्त (Cetana))."

A metaphysical insight thus penetrates into the essentials of outwardly multiformal universe and arrives at the ontological Unity that permeates all diversity. ""Universe=Unity+variety." It is a formal variety of the essential unity, an outward multiplicity of an

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7 K.R., I., p. 381.
10 Vedanta Paribhasa I-44, accepting the substantial identity of the प्रमार (वैदन्त, and विद्य (वैदन्त).
11 C.W., p. 369.
12 C.W., p. 194.
inrunning Identity.\textsuperscript{13} Swâmi Râma Tirtha has, quite often, and traditionally, likened the multiplicity of the world to the multiplicity of ripples in the same ocean or to the diversity of ornaments constituted of the same gold.\textsuperscript{14} The differences of the world, thus, like the differences of the ripples of water or ornaments of gold are relational, functional and phenomenal. Really and essentially the entire universe is one body, a continuous and dynamic whole without ‘gaps or breaks.’\textsuperscript{15} All apparent distinctions of multiple attributes of things are grounded in and supported by the same identical substance.\textsuperscript{16} Matter and energy and life and mind are all relative terms, nominal and formal, and they all melt into the absolute spiritual essence of which they are superficial differentiations.\textsuperscript{17} The idea of an Essential Unity underlying all formal differentiations is so similar to the upaniṣadic views as well as to the modern Western views of Hegel and Bergson, especially with regard to the relational and the finite being included in the dynamic unity of the Absolute Infinite.

The world, again, is a dynamic phenomenon. It is not something fixed and stationary, but full of change and movement. There are cosmic rounds in the cycle of Time and an unending series of becomings in boundless space. Swâmi Râma Tirtha regards the ‘Śeṣa nāga’ as a symbol of the world, its coil after coil representing that everything here repeats “itself by going round and round and extremes meeting.”\textsuperscript{18} It has also been likened to an ever moving wheel, ‘saṁsāra cokra’ of which every part is in constant motion. The Buddhisic view that everything is transitory is so characteristically true of the world of our everyday-experience. There seems to be all flux and impermanence here. The whole of nature and all its phenomena seem to be full of division and mutation, nothing abiding even for a moment.\textsuperscript{19} But Râma makes the Vedāntic distinction between what fleetingly appears and what abidingly exists. Behind and below the apparent change and finitude, lies the Immutable Infinite Essence. All mutation and distinction are like surface emergences of the Immutable All. Change and movement, division and differ-

\textsuperscript{13} G.R., VI., pp. 40-44.
\textsuperscript{15} G.R., II., p. 137 ; G.R., IV., p. 219.
\textsuperscript{16} G.R., IV., p. 75.
\textsuperscript{17} C.W., p. 294.
\textsuperscript{18} G.R., IV., p. 137.
\textsuperscript{19} G.R., VIII., pp. 102-103.
ence, finitude and multiplicity are the terms that may at best describe the functional details of the world. But a synthetic comprehension of its essential nature is quite different. Just as, he says, music cannot be truly understood merely by its analysis into separative notes, so also the essential nature of the world cannot be comprehended by an analytical study of its events in their sequential or cause-effect order and the relative laws aiming at their partial explanation. Swāmi Rāma speaks in almost a Bergsonian spirit, in unmistakable terms and with repeated emphases that the inner nature of things of the world, discoverable through intuitional insight, is spiritual and that there is one Spiritual Essence, one Unifying Principle, God, of which everything is constituted and every movement dynamised.

Human mind has, through scientific adventures, sought to explain the wonderful working of nature in terms of cause-effect-operations in the boundaries of space and time, and we are credited with success in discovering that nature is wrought with a richness of mysterious laws cunningly at work in the vast field of its inexhaustible determinations. But all diversity of form and variety of world-operations have behind them the Unity of a Supreme substance as its sole support and the power of the Supreme Law that secretly governs all the variety of natural laws. Phenomenal diversity is strung in the one Divine and all the outward laws operating in the world are expressions of the Same Universal Law. All the forces and laws that human mind has conceived to be immediately responsible for the complex operations of the universe are, ultimately, sanctions of the same Divine Law.

The world of multiple forms is thus one in its essence, its innumerable names are borne by the Ineffable Same; its rich qualities are all grounded in the same Substance; its dynamic movement and change are all supported by the Unchanging Supreme Status of God; all its laws and forces are expressions of the same Law-Power; all its finitude is inhabited by the Same Infinite; all its temporal determinations are timed by the same Eternal; all subject-object duality of an empirical fact is resolved into an all-comprehending Identity of

20 G.R., I., pp. 71-72.
21 G.R., VIII., pp. 141-142.
22 C.W., pp. 149-151; K.R., III., p. 216.
23 G.R., III., p. 32; Vol. VI., p. 58.
Transcendental Consciousness: all distinctions of body and life and mind and matter are intimations of the Undifferentiated whole.\textsuperscript{24}

At many a place, Swāmī Rāma Tirtha follows, so very closely, the spirit of ‘Kalpanā-Vāda’ and ‘Omnipotence of Thought’ of Yoga-Vāśiṣṭha\textsuperscript{25} in maintaining that human mind is itself the author of all experience. He says, for example, “All objects of this world are the counterparts of the corresponding ideas. Nothing is perceived here without thought,”\textsuperscript{26} and “Thought looks as thing”, etc. His assertions of this type are so frequent and abundant and the way of his putting them so glaring that he looks like a subjective idealist, pure and simple. The world is consequently reduced to a mere subjective appearance as held by the \textit{drṣṭi srṣṭi vāda}.\textsuperscript{27}

But a close and sincere study shows that he is cautious against such a subjectivism. The context and import of his assertions of the above type mostly relate to practical life of spirituality and \textit{vedāntic} morale rather than to metaphysical judgment. He has a poetic inspiration to fill us with \textit{Vedāntic} heroism and self-reliance without meaning to suggest the metaphysic of idealistic subjectivism. His careful observations against Berkeleyan idealism make it clear that in spite of the greater importance of the ‘thought’ than the ‘thing,’ \textit{Vedānta} would not regard the subjective mind or empirical ego to be anything more than an object of experience itself; much less could it be the creator or author of the objective world. The world, he says,

\textsuperscript{24} G.R., VI., pp. 40-45.
\textsuperscript{25} Atrey, B.L. : \textit{The Philosophy of the Yoga Vāśiṣṭha}, pp. 170, 220.
\textsuperscript{26} G.R., IV., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{27} It may be of interest to read here a few of them:—

(i) सब की हरी केरीजात पर कायम है। तेरी कुन की मुहिताज है। etc...
K.R., I., p. 373 ;

(ii) हरिण्ड में हो सुपरर्ष्टि है। \textit{Ibid.}, p. 373 ;

(iii) तुम्रायरा दिखाना और दीखना ही तुनिया पैदा करता है। तुम्रायरे कुन से सब कुछ ज्ञात में आता है। K.R., I., p. 372 ;

(iv) यह सब तुनिया मेरा माज्या है। K.R., I., p. 385 ;

(v) देश काल भी खुद भी दोय...है। K.R., I., p. 384 ;

(vi) औरने माना दहर को हुक हे क्या पैदा हुआ। K.R., III., p. 250.

“All this world is created by your own thought. This is as true as mathematical certainty. It is a bold statement, but it is literally true”, G.R., VIII., p. 74.
is not a creation of either the waking or the dreaming agent, i.e., our mental being, but a creation of the Real Ātman which is identical with God the Absolute. As such, his views have a great resemblance with the Upaniṣadic solipsism.

The contention that the world is utterly a subjective creation and the reservation that it is not so in the Berkeleyan sense, have not been logically processed together with any systematic elaboration by Rāma except that he brings in a self-convinced distinction between the real self and the empirical self, the latter being included in the world itself and hence an effect of the former.

IS IT A CREATION

The world, is thus, ultimately an effect of Brahman or God or the Absolute Self to which all apparent causation seized by our finite minds is finally traceable. Shall we say, 'It is a creation of God the non-dual Reality?' The word 'creation' is to be, rather, cautiously used in Vedānta. Ordinarily speaking, to say that the world is an effect of Brahman or Self amounts to saying that it is caused by It, and it looks like a mere substitution of words to say that it is a creation of God. But it is not so safe as it looks. There have been very important differences in the interpretations of the rich and elastic expressions of the Upaniṣads in this regard given by a host of scholars 'Acāryas' like Śankara, Rāmānuja, Mādhva, Vāllaḥa, Nimbārka and Sri Aurobindo.

While studying Rāma's writings we come across his statements wherein he has expressed that the world is a creation of God and depicts the idea or the mind of its creator just as a hypnotised patient depicts the mind of the hypnotiser. And yet he holds that this creation cannot be rightly understood in ordinary terms. Analogies drawn by our ordinary conceptual mentality with common phenomena of causation have given us the theistic notion that God has created the world with his omnipotent and omniscient ingenuity without involving Himself therein. Swāmī Rāma holds the Vedāntic view that the world is not only something to have received God's designing

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28 G.R., VI., pp. 16-17.
30 C.W., p. 89.
touch of Divine Intelligence, but also contains in its entire constitution the Divine Essence of His Being and thus it is identical with Him. He writes:

"According to Vedanta the whole world is nothing else but God, the whole world is perfect, the whole world is Divinity..........the whole world is one."\textsuperscript{31}

The terms of the empirical world, although they appear to be opposed to the terms of God, owe their existence to God alone. All multiplicity and transitoriness is grounded in the eternal Identity of the Absolute like ripples in the same ocean, rays of the same sun, and forms of the same substance. All the variety of attributes inhere in the non-dual Absolute Essence. Differences are differences in and of the same Undifferentiated. The world of relativity and division is only an expression of the One Indivisible Whole. All diversity is grounded in Brahman-Unity. All things finite carry in them the Ever-Infinite and are themselves formations of the One Supreme God.\textsuperscript{32}

Again, this world is founded in Brahman not only for its constitution, but also for its dynamic movement of perpetual becoming. All activities are God-Activity, all forces are God-Force, all stir of life is God-Will, all powers are God-Power. All laws of the empirical world are 'the Law of the Spirit.'

"I find all the laws of the world—chemical, biological, psychological and all to be no more than particular expressions of the One Law."\textsuperscript{33}

The whole nature is animated by God, and all its beauty is an outburst of Spiritual Joy.\textsuperscript{34}

"When viewed from the standpoint of God-Self, the whole world becomes an effusion of Beauty, expression of Joy, outpouring of Bliss."\textsuperscript{35}

All phenomenal change and becoming is self-creation of the Supreme-

\textsuperscript{31} G.R., II., pp. 143-44.
\textsuperscript{32} G.R., I., Lecture III, 'Infinite in the finite' ; K.R., I., pp. 211, 418, 440 ; C.W., p. 151 ; G.R., VI., pp. 27-32.
\textsuperscript{33} G.R., III., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{34} K.R., I., p. 216.
\textsuperscript{35} G.R., VIII., p. 189.
Potential. The whole universe, full of variety and change, is a self-delighting show of the Changeless Invariable.

"See in this scene of changing shows,
There is a Changeless One that glows,
In seeming death, decay, and pain,
It changes dress but comes again,
One order passed, another came,
In both is He the same,
The sky, the breeze, the river, rose,
Such veils of gauze for self He chose."  

Thus the world is a creation of God in the sense of self-delighted self-manifestation, a dramatic dance of the Divine, comparable to what Sri Aurobindo has styled as the "ecstatic dance of Śiva," a game of the Supreme Player, a 'Līlā' of the Self-contained Eternal, a self-formation of the Formless, a self-differentiation of the Undifferentiated, a self-stir of the Supreme Status.  

Rāma equates the "World" with "realized thought of God." As such, Rāma believes it to be a Self-contained act of the Divine, without any goal other than Itself. It has no design to a purpose, for it is a self-creative free act of the Ever Perfect God. The delight of the Divine is contained and involved in the supreme creation itself rather than to be achieved through it. Absolutely speaking, Rāma does not take a teleological view of the world although he regards all the trans-mundane phenomena as governed by some moral principles that bring about spiritual illumination and freedom to the individual soul. All this has a striking note of resemblance with the Rāmānuja-view of the world and gives a strong impression that the world is really a transformation of Brahma.

THE WORLD AS APPEARANCE

But the writings of Swāmī Rāma are as close to the ideas of Śankara as to those of Ramānuja. He refers to the three levels of our ordinary experience, viz., waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep in the same way as Śankara, and holds that corresponding to the different levels of our experience the nature of existence is different.

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36 G.R., III., p. 3.
38 C.W., p. 344.
39 C.W., p. 121.
The world, consequently, is nothing in itself. It is what is experienced at a particular level of experience; in other words, it is only what appears to the experiencer and hence its existence is only empirical and not real. Change and transformation are the terms that apply to the formal appearance of things and not to what ever-unchangingly abides in its self-same status. The world is not a real becoming of God but an experience of the experiencing mind.

The world is full of distinctions and multiplicity with innumerable forms and relations, which are perpetually changing. No body, no form, no relation, no name, nothing abides permanently; nothing exists even for two moments. All is transitory and everything is fleeting. All objects are mere passing phantoms, mere appearances; they are mere names and forms having no substantiality about them.\(^\text{41}\) We have seen that all these appearances are relational, implying the duality of subject and object. As such they have no independent status of their own. They are there only in the realm of attributable relativity without any substantial content of essential reality. They have an empirical function and not an absolute existence.\(^\text{42}\) In tune with Śaṅkara he says that hidden behind the apparent world lies the Real Brahman, behind the transitory phenomena stands the Eternal Existent, beyond the empirical many exists the Absolute one, beyond the perceptible change abides the Unknowable Permanent, beyond all qualitative distinctions is the Distinctionless 'Abheda'.\(^\text{43}\)

Śrīmāl Rāma Tirtha applies the criterion of non-contradiction (trikālābhādhitvam) of Advaita philosophy for determining the real existence of a thing and argues the world out to be unreal, because none of the terms of the empirical world, no object, no distinction, no duality abides the same for all time. All phenomena that comprise the world are transitory and therefore not real. The only thing, he says, that stands the test of non-contradiction is Brahman the Absolute.\(^\text{44}\) The world appears differently at different levels of experience. The dream world is annihilated by the waking experience, similarly the waking-world vanishes in the turiya-state.\(^\text{45}\) There is

\(^{41}\) C.W., p. 226; G.R., III., pp. 1, 2, 3, 8, 33, 118, 119; K.R., I., p. 136.
\(^{42}\) K.R., I., p. 426.
\(^{44}\) K.R., I., pp. 331, 377.
\(^{45}\) G.R., VI., pp. 113-114.
no world, he says, for the emancipated spirit (mukta puruṣa) according to Śāṅkhyā-conception of ‘Kaivalya,’ or in the state of ‘asamprajñāta samādhi’ according to Yoga system or in the ‘apavarga’ of Nyāya system or even in the ‘niḥśreyasa’ of Vaiṣeṣika system, simply because the subject-self has reposed itself differently.  

Śaṅkara Advaitism treats Ontological Brahman and empirical world on entirely two separate levels. Swāmī Rāma aligns to say that Brahman and the world are mutually exclusive terms. The terms of the Absolute cannot be applied to the terms of the phenomenal world and vice versa. One cannot be reduced to the other. The Absolute permanently exists unchanged whereas the world is only a transitory and changing appearance. In the face of the Real the world cannot stand even as a particle. The stress of this idea is seen to culminate at places in the extreme assertion that absolutely speaking, God as the Creator and world as the created, both are illusory. God the Creator, Controller and Governor is meaningful only in relation to the world created, i.e., only in the empirical sense and not in the absolute sense. There has been no real creation and the idea of Self-manifestation or Self-differentiation or Self-transformation of Brahman is not tenable in the ontological sense. He writes, “From the point of view of the Absolute Basis the emergent never issued forth.” “The world, etc., never was nor is nor shall ever be.”

The world is, thus, reduced to a mere phenomenal appearance and also labelled as unreal in the ontological sense. Its appearance has been regarded as a mere illusion. To the problem whether it is the very nature of Brahman to appear as many or it is the ignorance of the subject-mind to mistake the non-dual Absolute to be diverse phenomena, Rāma seems to accept the advaitic solution. Consequently world-appearance is regarded by him as an illusory appearance to the self-deluded ignorant. It is a ‘deception,’ a ‘mirage,’ a ‘horn of a hare,’ a ‘barren woman’s son.’ There are good many examples

47 K.R., I., p. 313.
49 G.R., VI., p. 117.
50 G.R., VI., p. 118.
51 K.R., I., p. 433. अज हृद महत्त महामृतु कभी हुमा ही नहीं।
52 K.R., I., p. 435. जगल बगल न कभी हुमा, न है न होगा।
of perceptual illusions of various types quoted by Swāmī Rāma to illustrate the illusion of the world.53

MĀYĀ

It is really baffling to hold that the whole world is verily Brahman, that it is God-grounded and God-manifestation and then to qualify that it is so only empirically and not ontologically, and that, in fact, world-existence is apparent and illusory, and not real and of the nature of truth. The problems: To what or to whom is this illusion due? and, Where does ignorance reside? etc., are quite knotty. The empirical analysis that it is due to the ignorance of the subject-mind is not finally satisfactory, for an advaitic absolutism cannot recognise any ontological status of a subject in duality with an object. Nor is the idea palatable that the Absolute Omniscience of Brahman should suffer from self-delusion. Rāma leans towards Advaita-Māyāvāda for getting at a solution of this problem and ascribes the world-appearance to Māyā—a precarious something responsible for all the mystery of the world.54

Phenomena of the world have been declared as unreal for the reason of their being transitory, but they are recognised to be grounded in the Real, for an utterly, unreal something could not possibly make its own appearance. Brahman, being absolutely non-dual, has got to be regarded as the only cause of this world. Māyā the cause of all finitude and form is itself a power of God. Rāma equates it with the ‘Logos,’ ‘Idea,’ ‘Reason,’ ‘Pure Form, the begotten son of God’ of the western philosophy inasmuch as all phenomena are due to it.55 At another place he looks upon Māyā the Form as a mode of the Brahman the Force.66 At yet another place he regards Māyā as a force of Brahman whose ‘indivisible flame (jyoti) of Consciousness (Caitanya)’ is always present in the multiplicity of phenomena, without Itself implying the phenomena67—an idea comparable to Sri Aurobindo’s Consciousness-force and the Gītā-view—“By Me all this universe has been extended in the ineffable mystery of my being; all

54 Refer : G.R., VI.,—‘Maya or the when and why of the world,’ pp. 97-118.
55 C.W., p. 276.
56 C.W., p. 393.
existences are situated in Me, not I in them." This only shows that Māyā is not something in itself, but a power of Brahman. It is a force of Brahman-Consciousness (Cit-Śakti) which is the cause of all multiplicity of the world without in the least affecting the absolute status of the Brahman.59

But Śvāmī Rāma holds with Śankara that the function of this Māyā is to make the ever non-dual Infinite Brahman appear as divided into many finites. This appearance is formal and not essential, just as a number of lines drawn by a pencil have a formal difference and yet an essential oneness of carbon. Difference is all formal and form is only differential; all multiplicity is in appearance and all appearance is due to multiplicity.60 Thus it is creating an appearance of multiplicity without an actual division of the Essential Substance, and this apparent multiplicity is mistaken to be real by the wrong vision that confuses the form for the substance. It is as if hypnotising ourselves into ignorance (avidyā) about our own truth of being one with the Absolute.61 This ignorance has a double function of concealing the real One and distorting it into the apparent many.62

Śvāmī Rāma refers to two types of illusions, viz., extrinsic illusion and intrinsic illusion (samsargādhyāsa and svarūpādhyāsa).63 In the former we are deluded that the apparent diversity is an essential diversity and in the latter we are deluded about there being anything other than one Self. Both the types of illusion are due to Māyā. Illusion, of whatever type, cannot be understood except in terms of subject-object duality—the subject that has the illusion and the object about which he has the illusion. Since Advaitism leaves no room for any dualism whatever, it cannot be said without qualification that the Māyā which is responsible for all illusion has this or that status in relation to the Self or the Brahman. It is, accordingly, said to suffer, in advaitic language from 'anavasthādoṣa', i.e., from the defect of precarious or dubious position.64

To the many, not impertinent, questions, e.g., Does Māyā

58 Gita IX-4:—मया तत्त्वविदं सर्व जगद्ध्यात्मकः।
मस्य नात्मिनं न चाहैं तैत्तिकैसरः।

59 K.R., I., pp. 312-313.
60 K.R., I., pp. 433-435.
61 G.R., VI., pp. 162-164.
63 K.R., I., p. 207.
64 G.R., VI., "Lecture on When and Why of the World."
exist or does it not exist? Is it in Brahman or out of Brahman? How does it emerge? When does it start functioning? etc., etc., we do not have any specific answers. Swami Rama has declared all such questions as irrelevant and absurd. They are, according to him, ‘putting the cart before the horse,’ for, all questioning, implying the duality of the questioner and the questioned is within the Maya, all relations of where, when and how are included in the Maya and applying them to Maya would be as absurd as putting the question,—‘Where did space begin? or When did time start?’ Maya exists and also does not exist. It exists so long as and because the world appears and it does not exist the moment the illusion of the world-appearance is over into truth-knowledge, ‘Brahma-jñana.’ The advaita position of ‘anirvacanīya khyāti-vāda’ has been accepted by Rāma almost without reserve. He characterises the ‘sadasadvilakṣanatva’ of Maya in his simple words, saying that that which defies a definitive analysis is Maya. At one place he speaks in consonance with the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha that Maya means that which (yā) is not (Mā). Thus Maya is existent and non-existent, both and none. The world is a cosmic illusion and empirical appearance to the ignorant. The ‘where’, ‘how’ or ‘when’ of the Maya and therefore of the world cannot be answered in absolute or unqualified terms.

ESTIMATE

We have seen that the views of Swami Rama Tirtha have all the features of vedāntic tradition, bearing important similarities with the views of Śankara as well as of Rāmānuja. His tone has both a mystic conviction and a harmony of reconciliation. According to his own estimate of the positions of Śankara and Rāmānuja in respect of the world-emergence, a reconciliation does not seem to be very difficult if we could search out some missing links. Our recent tendencies in the direction seem to have been anticipated in his views. But his own approach, which is mostly emotive and full of spiritual inspiration, does retain a distinction between the empirical and the

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66 G.R., VI., p. 165.
67 Ibid., pp. 143-144.
68 Ibid., p. 125.
70 G.R., VI., p. 118; Compare Atreyā, B.L.: Philosophy of the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, p. 178.
71 K.R., I., p. 312.
absolute, so that his absolutism involves Śāṅkara Māyā-vāda even though his mysticism breathes Rāmanuja-Lilā-vāda. The world, consequently from ontological point of view is false, and the world as manifestation is divine. The two elements of illusion full of error and the joy of creative sport, do not meet on the same level nor, perhaps, do they either follow or imply each other.

We may regard the world as ‘unreal’ if the word ‘world’ is doomed to stand only for empirical appearance bereft of all ‘what’ or ‘why’ behind the appearance, and the word ‘real’ is reserved for that which permanently abides. But whether we could legitimately make such arbitrary privations is of no easy warrant. If Lilā-vāda imposes human sense of glory and delight on the transcendental Being, Māyāvāda suffers from an unaccountable isolation of the Being from the becoming. Śwāmī Rāma’s approach, without being critical of the respective positions of Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja concentrates more on the practical implications of his advaitism, which necessarily suggests divine essence of the world and its life. As such his position seems like paving the way for an integral God-World-Harmony, something like an ‘upaniṣadic revival’ in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, quite important elements of which are found in the views of Bergson and Whitehead. The terms of the Supreme Being and the terms of ceaseless creations of the ‘World-Energy’ may very well be ‘biune’ instead of remaining separate duals.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{72} Sri Aurobindo: \textit{Life Divine}, p. 314 (American Edn.).
The Self

We have seen in the previous chapters that God is all and all is God. We now turn to the problem of the self. In his creative style Swāmī Rāma once posed the problem of the self before a prince who approached him to know about God. He asked the prince first to introduce himself, and on the latter’s reply in terms of his name, parentage, place, etc., he remarked that things like name and place said something about his predicates and nothing about himself, subtly suggesting the discrimination between ‘his’ and ‘him’ between what he had and what he was. This aptly is the line of investigation on which reflective contemplations generally proceed to sift the self from the not-self, and arrive at the real nature of the self, for, to discriminate between what we have and what we are is to make an indirect distinction between what we are not and what we are. To determine, therefore, what the self is, it is greatly helpful and even, perhaps, necessary to reject what it is not.

THE NOT-SELF

The commonest notion as well as, in certain cases, the view held out by materialistic logic has been that the body, the human frame of flesh and bones is verily the self. This is what the Vedāntin not only rejects with a purely academic logic, but what he also regards to be the greatest spiritual malady. Swāmī Rāma joins to say that regarding the physical body as the real self has been the root-cause of all evil and suffering in the world. In a stylish and suggestive way he likens the body of a man to a horse and his true self to the horseman driving the horse, and expresses a deep concern on the-

1 G.R., I., p. 121.
2 G.R., I., pp. 126-127.
3 G.R., I., pp. 203-204.
malady that the horseman be lost and the horse saved. This very aptly suggests the distinction made by the Sāṅkhya as well as the Vedānta systems between the body and the self, the ‘kṣetra’ and the ‘kṣetrajña,’ the ‘deha’ and the ‘dehī,’ etc., etc.

Śvāṁī Rāma Tīrtha has repeatedly said that the self is not to be confused with the body, the physical frame of human form. “You are neither the body nor bodily.” The body constantly undergoes change and nothing belonging to it survives time. It never remains the same even for a small duration, whereas there is a permanent identity of the self enduring all bodily changes. From birth to death there are innumerable stages which the body passes through, but the self runs through them all ever the same, always identical.

“There is something within you which remains the same when you are in swoon, which remains the same when you are bathing, when you are writing... Are you not something which remains the same under all circumstances, unchanging in its being, the same yesterday, today and for ever?”

Commonly speaking, it is understood that the body has in it a self, termed as ‘soul’ and it appears as if the body is a container and the soul is contained in it. Śvāṁī Rāma Tīrtha maintains that such a notion is misleading. (To the question, “Have you got a soul?” he replied, “No, I am the soul and I have the body.”). It is the self or the soul that has or sustains the body and not vice versa. It must be reserved that from Śvāṁī Rāma’s point of view the term ‘self’ and the term ‘body’ cannot stand together on a common ontological ground, and the expressions of one being in or belonging to the other are used in a special sense. He speaks of the body as the ‘false ego,’ the ‘false apparent self,’ and rejects the materialistic view of the self as untenable.

If the self is not the body, could we not regard it as life or as mind? Śvāṁī Rāma’s treatment with regard to life and mind is the same as to the body and neither a vitalistic view nor a psychological view of the self could be accepted by him as correct. Just as we have the body and not are the body, he says, we have the brain, and not are

4  G.R., I., p. 120.
5  K.R., I., p. 146.
6  G.R., I., pp. 138-139.
7  G.R., VI., p. 54.
8  G.R., VIII., pp. 54-55.
the brain, we have the mind and not the mind. His line of approach looks somewhat parallel to the upaniṣadic line of investigation suggested in the Bhṛgu Vallī of the Taittirīya-upaniṣad, where the seeker of Truth gradually passes from the ‘annam’ to the ‘prāṇa,’ from ‘prāṇa’ to the ‘manas,’ from ‘manas’ to the ‘viśīṇānam’ and then ultimately from the ‘viśīṇānam’ to the ‘ānanda’. (These terms may be broadly translated respectively as ‘matter, life, mind, gnosis and Bliss.’)

In not accepting either the body or the life or the mind as the real self, Swāmī Rāma does not adopt a Bradleyan logic which fails to see beyond the apparent though compelled to recognise the presence of the real self, but a psycho-religious attitude of regarding the apparent or the empirical ego as insufficient to answer the demands of our quest for the real self. Referring to the theory of unconscious cerebration he critically maintains that it is not acceptable because it does not explain memory or ‘pratyabhijñā.”

In the language of the vedānta, the body, the life, the senses, the mind and all that is ordinarily understood to constitute human personality is termed as the empirical self or the individual ego ‘ahankāra’ and Śvāmī Rāma Tirtha scrupulously maintains it to be different from the real self, the latter, however, being the essential basis, the ‘tāttvika ādāhāra’ of the former, for, it has no independent existence of its own. The empirical self or the ego is wrongly felt to be the real self by us simply because we do not rise to the truth-vision and put an undue reliance on our ordinary experiences which, on close examination, would be found to be varying according as we are awake or dreaming or sleeping. The empirical self having a relative existence and a varying shade of meaning, cannot be accepted as the real self.

THE EMPIRICAL SELF

Śvāmī Rāma Tirtha obviously accepts the Vedāntic analysis of the empirical self into the gross body, the subtle body and the causal or the seed-body, the ‘sthūla’, the ‘sūkṣma’ and the ‘kāraṇa’ with the three corresponding levels of experience, viz., waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep and the three relative existences, and treats all of them to be veils or, ‘upādhis’ (something like accidents) to the real self.

10 C.W., pp. 276, 279.
and its pure consciousness. He explains them all with suggestive illustrations and an unusual freedom of exposition.

All the three bodies are changeable, mutable and transitory. All the three levels of experience are varying, impermanent and trans-passing: all the three existences are relative, incongruent and unabiding. They are all phenomenal and hence unreal. The real self stands behind them always and uninterrupted and as the only witness of all that is so relative. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha likens the real self to an ever-shining sun and the three stages of the empirical self with the three stages of a brook developing into a river. The first stage of the brook originating from melting glaciers with purity and noiselessness and potentiality is like the seed body, the ‘kāraṇa deha’; its next stage, playful and fickle, running through rich valleys full of changing scenes is like the subtle body, ‘sūkṣma šarīra.’ and the last stage with massy volume of water, dirty and sluggish, is compared to the gross body, the ‘sthūla deha’, all of them having a continuity of flow, but none having an abiding status. The three states of the river, further, symbolically illustrate the three levels of experience, viz., the dreamless sleep, the dreaming, and the waking, none of which reveals the absolute truth of the self. The real self compared with the Sun, shines the same on all the changing stages of the empirical self.

Of these three stages or levels of experience and three sheaths or bodies of our empirical self the dreamless state and the seed body, the ‘kāraṇa deha’ are the innermost or the deepest, and the waking state, the ‘jāgrata’ and the gross body, the ‘sthūla deha’ are the outermost. The order in which these relative stages of the empirical self stand is that the ‘kāraṇa’ precedes and contains the ‘sūkṣma’ and the ‘sūkṣma’ precedes and contains the ‘sthūla’. Amongst themselves they have a causal sequence in which the ‘kāraṇa’ is the innermost potential, the ‘central core’, and the physical body is the outermost manifest, the ‘sūkṣma’ standing in between. All this has a close resemblance

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12 G.R., I., pp. 89, 96.
15 G.R., I., pp. 92-117.
18 Atreya, B.L.: Philosophy of the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, p. 187.
with the view held by *Yoga Viṣṇu.* The physical body is the most concrete and rigid form of the empirical self. The subtle or the astral body consists of “passions, desires, emotions, feelings and thoughts” and the seed body is like a “sub-conscious store house of all the impressions and latent energies of man” and determines, in almost every detail, the functions and workings of human personality on the mental as well as physical planes.

The constitution of human personality analysable into the three bodies, viz., the physical or the gross, the subtle or the astral, and the causal or the seed, has also been referred to as a five-fold constitution with the sheaths known as ‘annamaya kośa’ or the physical, ‘prāṇamaya kośa’ or the vital, ‘manomaya kośa’ or the mental, ‘vijñāna-bhūtaya kośa’ or the Cogitative, and the ‘ānandamaya kośa’ or the blissful. Of these five Swami Rāma puts, at one place, the ‘prāṇamaya,’ the ‘manomaya’ and the ‘vijñāna-maya’ as equivalent to the ‘śūkṣma’, naturally leaving the ‘annamaya’ to be the ‘sthūla’ and the ‘ānandamaya’ as the ‘kāraṇa.’ One finds almost a similar equation of the causal body with the ‘ānandamaya’ in the *Vedāntasāra,* and a subsequent rejection of all the five sheaths as the self. Swāmī Rāma’s reference on the point is neither elaborate nor specifically sufficient.

The fivefold analysis of human Constitution into the ‘pañcakośa’ does not, however, seem to encourage such an irreconcilable distinction between the empirical self and the real self as the threefold constitution of the personality (‘sthūla’-‘śūkṣma’-‘kāraṇa’) may. For, none of the three bodies conveys any of the spiritual glories characteristic of the real self, whereas the first two ‘kośas’, viz., the ‘ānanda-maya’ and the ‘vijñāna-maya’ do positively suggest some divine character of a supra-empirical import. The views of Sri Aurobindo about the ‘vijñāna-maya’ and the ‘ānandamaya’ profoundly affirm their supramental and therefore divine essence and thus offer an integration of the empirical in the real. The ‘vijñāna-maya,’ there, would correspond more aptly to the ‘gnostic’ rather than to the ‘cogitative.’

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20 G.R., III., pp. 159-160.
22 *Vedāntasāra*: 45.
23 The *Vedāntasāra* attempts to examine and reject others’ views of the self equating them with this or that or the other of the Vedāntic five sheaths: 123-135.
The empirical self, Swāmī Rāma holds with the tradition, is not a static and fixed thing, but a changing constitution with complex phenomena in which the three bodies have their respective as well as inter-connected formations and movements. The physical body, for example, is inhabited as well as pervaded by the subtle and the subtle by the seed. The dissolution of the physical does not mean a dissolution of the subtle. The same subtle body 'sūkṣma', may desert one gross body, 'sthūla', and adopt another and so too the seed-body may do with the subtle body, 'sūkṣma', so that there is a transmigration and reincarnation of an individual being.

The phenomena of birth and death of individuals involve all the complex processes and laws that govern cosmic life. The most important and unrejectable law that operates in the universe is the law of Causation which inevitably proves continuity of the individual life—a previous life and a future life—and hence transmigration. This transmigration, says Swāmī Rāma Tirtha, is of the subtle body and, as held by the Yoga Vāśīṣṭha as well as the Gītā, is greatly determined by the principle of desire-fulfilment, naturally implying a freedom for the individual in his life-after-life-journey. The law of causation coupled with freedom of action is the law of Karma. So there is a succession of bodies of man, they are born and they meet death; there is a transmigration of the individual and his life-after-life-journey is governed by the universal law of causation as well as freedom of action and desire. The individual as the active doer, the agent, 'kartā' as also the passive 'bhoktā' the patient reaper passes from experience to experience towards some evolutionary goal.

THE SUPREME SELF BEHIND THE EMPIRICAL

But all this account is simply empirical and absolutely inapplicable to the real self—the Ātman, the soul, the spirit which is neither born nor subject to death. It has no journey or transmigration; it is neither 'kartā, agent, nor 'bhoktā', patient. The terms of birth and death, action and its fruits, change and transmigration, etc., etc., carry no sense in the context of the essential soul. They have a meaning only

24 G.R., IV., p. 156.
26 K.R., I., p. 363; G.R., VI., pp. 176-177, 183, 188.
27 We shall deal with it elsewhere.
in so far as the ‘jīva’ or the individual ego goes. This ‘jīva’ is no reality in itself; it is only a shadow or a reflection of the self. The empirical subject, the ‘I’ of ordinary experience is nothing but the Self shining in the intellect, a virtual image of the self, ‘cidābhāsa’. The spirit or the soul, the ‘ātman’ is thus, the self-existent reality and the ego or the empirical self is only an apparent reflection thereof. The whole range of subject-object-duality, implied in our ordinary experience, lies far below the self-luminous kingdom of the real self which transcends all empirical knowledge into a pure, witness consciousness, free from all duality and relations.

The real self is none of the various bodies and none of the relational terms of these bodies could be justly applied to it. It is a self-conscious spiritual entity which transcends all distinctions operating in the empirical self. The limited ego, is what wrongly appears as the self, for, it is neither self-abiding nor a permanent existent. The vedāntic criterion of an ever-interminability-of-existence ‘trikālābādhitva’ can be truly satisfied only by the spiritual essence, the ‘ātman’ which is the ground of all the relational stages of our empirical self. Its self-luminous consciousness lends awareness to the mind, just as the self-shining Sun imparts a glowful reflection to water.

The real self, thus, is held to be hidden behind and implied in all empiricallity. In tune with the upaniṣad Rāma says:

“‘All sounds find their centre in the Self or Ātman. All colours have their centre in the same. All sounds, colours, tastes acting through the senses find their centre in the one Ātman or Self.’

The objects are known by the senses, the senses by the mind ‘manas’, the mind by the intellect ‘buddhi’ and the intellect itself is known by the self. The self is, therefore, the ultimate subject, beyond the reach of the intellect. This so closely follows the Gitā view regarding the supremacy and ultimacy of the subject-self. Using the traditional argument from deep-sleep-state, Śrīvān Rāma holds that this self is a permanent witness, a constant subject, an ever-awake ‘dṛṣṭā’. It is the ultimate knower implied in all knowledge and,

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32 G.R., III., pp. 123-124 ; Compare Br. 4-5-6.
33 G.R., I., pp. 129-130.
34 Gita, III-42.
35 G.R., I., pp. 136-137.
as such, can never itself be an object of cognition.\textsuperscript{26} The idea compares so well with the upaniṣadic transcendence.\textsuperscript{57} The subject-self, ‘sākṣi caitanya’ is all-knowing, and its omniscience consists in self-awareness.\textsuperscript{28} \textit{To be is to be self-conscious}. Self-existence and self-awareness go together. Says Śwāmī Rāma, “You are and you know it; this is the whole of omniscience.”\textsuperscript{39} He addresses his readers, questioners and his listeners as ‘Light of lights, the ‘Sun of suns,’ ‘Caitanya-ghana,’ ‘jñānasvarūpa’, etc., etc., asserting thereby that the self is omniscient and ‘svayam prakāśa’, i.e., self-luminous.

The self-luminous all-witnessing self, from the very nature of the case, cannot be something temporary, for, Omniscience does not only mean knowing all things at one particular point of time but to know all at all time. It must, therefore, be an everlasting self. It is immortal and indestructible.\textsuperscript{40} The real self abides the same through all changes and transformations of the body. “The real ‘I’ does not die,” “Your real self is incapable of death,” “Your real self can never die.”\textsuperscript{41} Using the simile of a light house, Rāma writes,

> Beam sweeps with incredible speed over the sea and land, yet the lamp itself moves not at all........the body of desire is incessantly in motion in the world of suffering, the ‘I’ high up above is fixed in heaven.”\textsuperscript{42}

The real self is ever indivisible and immutable. By breaking a looking glass, a child may only multiply his image a thousand times, but himself he remains the same one.\textsuperscript{43} “The sun, the moon and the stars may be destroyed, but you are not destroyed.” It does not change in or with time; it is eternal, ‘nītya’. “All time is simply ‘Now’ to it.”\textsuperscript{44} Although the immortality of the self is implied in its omniscience and can be proved by a critical epistemology, Śwāmī Rāma Tīrthā declares it to be true out of conviction without caring for any philosophical proof.

\textsuperscript{26} G.R., VI., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{27} वनेदं सर्वं विज्ञानातिः तं केन विज्ञानीयादिविज्ञातारमरं केन विज्ञानीयात्। Br. II-4-14.
\textsuperscript{28} G.R., III., p. 289.
\textsuperscript{29} C.W., p. 243.
\textsuperscript{30} K.R., I., p. 410.
\textsuperscript{31} G.R., I., p. 157.
\textsuperscript{32} C.W., pp. 67-68.
\textsuperscript{33} G.R., I., pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{34} G.R., IV., p. 135.
“Whether Philosophy is able to prove the immortality of the self or whether it fails and swoons, the truth of my being ever unchangeable, perfect knowledge, and all bliss has always been real and shall ever remain so.”

THE GLORIOUS DIVINE

We have, so far, attempted to penetrate deep below the apparent self and found that the real self transcends all the empirical categories in its supreme status. The real self is an undeniable existent and a self-luminous subject. In so doing we have concentrated more upon what the self is not. Swāmī Rāma’s approach to the self, truly speaking, is primarily mystic and poetic and, as such, the affirmation of positive divine glories of the self has as great an importance as the negational approach of the absolutist.

He uses the Vedāntic analysis of human aspiration to prove that man is essentially and inherently endowed with the Godhead. Our inherent aspiration for immortality or Eternal Existence, Perfect Knowledge or Omniscience, Sovereign Power or Lordship and Mastery, utter Freedom, Bliss or Ānanda is beginningless, persistent and intrinsic to our very nature and proves that by nature we are akin to all these divine virtues and are intrinsically one with them; anything that opposes them is extraneous and accidental and we never feel at ease with it, for, Rāma holds, it is a natural law that everything tends to resume its original position by removing the factors that cause its displacement. We always get curious to know the cause of an event or occasion that contradicts our kinship with divine

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46 In his lectures on ‘Sin: its relation with the Ātman or Real Self’ (G.R., I., p. 151) and ‘Prognosis and Diagnosis of Sin’ (G.R., I., p. 185) as well as in his Urdu article ‘Vahadat’ published in the ‘Alif’ (K.R., I., pp. 125-172) he has dealt at length that every individual human being has a natural craving for an endless life, perfect knowledge, complete freedom, unrivalled lordship, and unmixed happiness. No one welcomes death, nobody loves ignorance, nobody likes bondage or dependence, no one cherishes poverty and want and no man seeks suffering and misery. Every one avoids them and seeks their complete cessation, nay, everybody aspires for positive Eternity, Knowledge, Power, Light, Delight. Further, no one in the world feels satisfied at the idea of his being impure, no one relishes an impeachment, no one chooses to suffer from insufficiency. All this is so very natural with man’s temperament and indicates his instinctive love for and inherent inclination towards Purity and Self-sufficiency.
virtues and set ourselves to an earliest removal of the same. To sum up, man is essentially and intrinsically divine ‘nitya’, ‘mukta’, ‘śūdra’, ‘buddha’ ‘ānandarūpa’, ‘ātmārūma’, etc., etc.⁴⁷

Śwāmī Rāma attunes himself with the upaniṣads and sings, lavishly and buoyantly the divinity of the Self. “Divinity is the synonym of my true Self......What a vision! What a truth!! What a grand fact!!”⁴⁸ Virtually the real Self is ‘All Truth’, ‘All Light,’ ‘All Joy,’ ‘All Bliss,’ ‘All Happiness,’ ‘All Glory,’ ‘All Beauty’.⁴⁹ The ātman is pure like a crystal⁵⁰; it is sinless, unsullied and even insensible, the Holy of holies.⁵¹ The impurity of the body or the mind can never contaminate the soul. The Self is always free, complete and absolute.⁵²

Such a Self, naturally, is eternally self-contained and self-satisfied. It never wants anything. It is self-complete and ever-perfect.⁵³ It is ever unruffled and contains all uninterrupted peace within itself.⁵⁴ The Self is the source and treasure of all joy and happiness. It is of the nature of bliss.⁵⁵ “Bliss Absolute, I am that, I am that,” Thus all glory, all beauty, all purity, all freedom, all peace, joy and happiness are the natural virtues of the real self like the fragrance of a rose.⁵⁶

“All Joy I am, OM! OM!! OM!!!
All Knowledge, I am, OM! OM!! OM!!!
All Truth I am, OM! OM!! OM!!!
All Light I am, OM! OM!! OM!!!”⁵⁷

Freedom of the self has been understood by Rāma not only as a mere absence of the involvement of the self, but also as a power of

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⁴⁷ In almost the same fashion has H.H. Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya Swāmī Bhārati Kṛṣṇa Tirtha shown the views of Śaṅkara regarding the divine nature of the self and consequently its identity with God. (The ‘Kalyāṇa,’ Vedānta number, first article).
⁴⁸ G.R., III., p. 87.
⁴⁹ G.R., II., p. 207.
⁵⁰ G.R., IV., p. 133.
⁵¹ G.R., I., pp. 163-164.
⁵² G.R., I., p. 162.
⁵⁴ G.R., II., p. 186.
⁵⁵ भट्टाद्वा है जिसके लिए दरबार। वो आराम है कल्ब में जलबागर। K.R., I., p. 1.
⁵⁷ G.R., III., p. 291.
determining our destiny. It is the energising force,\textsuperscript{58} the efficient agency behind all actions, the magnet that imparts magnetism to the limited ego,\textsuperscript{59} the controller and governor of all functions.\textsuperscript{60} It has a potent will which governs and accomplishes all activity.\textsuperscript{61} The self is, simultaneously, a supreme will which controls all phenomena. "...it is on account of the Ātmā, on account of the omnipotent Self Supreme that every phenomenon is taking place in the universe,"\textsuperscript{62} It is the omnipotent reality implied, behind our empirical impotence.

Among the ever so many divinities of the self is included the characteristic glory of its lordship, ‘ānīśvarya.’ Swāmī Rāma speaks of the dynamic sovereignty of the self and puts it as the ‘Lord of lords,’ the ‘Master of masters,’ the ‘Ruler of rulers.’\textsuperscript{63} He says,

"The wide world, the whole universe is yours. The suns, the stars, the moons, the earths, the planets, the milky way, all these are yours."\textsuperscript{64}

The self is verily the Law that governs all life.

"I am the Truth inevitable.  
I am the Law inexorable."\textsuperscript{65}

Wealth of quotations could be given to show that Rāma regards the Self to be the Impersonal Lord, a monarch that governs the whole universe,\textsuperscript{66} the Sole Controller commanding the whole existence. "The real man," he says for example, "the true man is the Divinity, God, nothing else but God, the real man is the master not only of one man’s destiny, but of the whole universe, the wide world."\textsuperscript{67}

**TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE OF THE SELF**

Recasting a glance at the empirical self, a body, a life and a mind, limited, changing, with temporal and spatial distinctions, suffering from insufficiency and want, groping in darkness and ignorance, doomed to its impotency and bondage and suffering, and

\textsuperscript{58} G.R., I., pp. 131-132.  
\textsuperscript{59} G.R., II., pp. 156-157.  
\textsuperscript{60} Compare: —य: श्रविन्त्र मानित शत ात्मा सब्जान्तर:...Br. 3.4-1.  
\textsuperscript{61} K.R., I., pp. 181, 206.  
\textsuperscript{62} G.R., III., p. 288.  
\textsuperscript{63} G.R., IV., p. 143.  
\textsuperscript{64} G.R., I., p. 143.  
\textsuperscript{65} G.R., III., p. 17.  
\textsuperscript{66} G.R., I., p. 167 ; G.R., V., p. 56 ; G.R., III., p. 175.  
\textsuperscript{67} G.R., VI., p. 175.
then on the celestial heights in which the real self shines supreme, it seems as if the two are utterly incompatible. The terms of the 'real' completely transcend the terms of the 'empirical' and the 'empirical' falls miserably short of the 'real'. The real self is transcendent and absolute; it is beyond all time and space, beyond all relations, beyond all dualities or polarities of pleasure and pain, high and low, beyond all formational limits of the world, beyond all the variety of planes known as the physical, astral or mental, etc., beyond all senses, all perceptions, all thought and imagination, beyond all conceptualisations and beyond all descriptions. Such a real self and such an empirical ego seem to present an antagonism. Swami Rama Tirtha explains it by reference to the māyā-vāda of the advaitins. He says, it is by wrongly identifying the self with the finite body, life or mind that we miss the liberating self-awareness. It is by putting predications to the unpredictable that we mistake the not-self for the self. Our ignorance about our own self is responsible for putting all the 'upādhis,' limitations to the Illimitable.

There is, however, another feature of Swami Rama's philosophy which deviates from the māyāvāda of the advaitic tradition. He regards the real self to be verily the support and ground of the empirical self. Writes the Swami:

"The ancient seer, the (कवि पुराण) which the Gītā and the Mahābhārata mention as abiding in the breast of each IS:

1. Prophet and Poet in तुरीयम्
2. Blind logician and Historian in मुद्रि—without materials for reasoning or a world for events but groping towards them.
3. Painter in स्वच्छ
g. Sculptor in जाप्रल"}

It is the basis, the ‘ādhārā’ of all that it transcends. It is the very essence of all form, centrally seated in the heart of the latter, the indivisible Spirit in-dwelling all the changing bodies. It surpasses and yet embraces all senses, thoughts and conceptions. All spatio-temporal relations are placed in its all inclusive infinity. It comprehends all the world within its compass. All the differentials of empirical self, life and energy, body and mind, knowledge and activity fall

68 C.W., p. 247.
within the self-complete existence of the real Self. Writes Swāmī Rāma:

"I, the Infinite One that is manifesting itself in the bodies of the greatest orators, in the bodies of the greatest men, in the bodies of the most wretched creatures. Oh, what joy! I am the Infinite One."71

In tune with the Gītā, again "The world is in me, the world cannot contain me."72 The whole world is in the self and not vice versa.73 The Self pervades the whole universe, it is omnipresent; ‘all distance is simply ‘here’ to it. It is nearer than the nearest and farther than the farthest.74 It is the all permeating identical reality expressing itself through all variety,

"...........a unity whose nature it is to be infinitely determined yet which in all its determinations never goes beyond itself, but in all its multiplicity and variety is only and ever realizing itself."75

It is the continuity running through every object, a consciousness that shines in all the stages of our being. The Self is, thus, a principle of unity embracing all diversity.76

It inevitably follows that such an infinite, all permeating, all knowing Self is secondlessly one and identically the same in spite of its multiple self-differentiations. There is one single Self or Ātman permeating the whole body of this universe. Matter and mind, subject and object are only apparent differentiations of the same Indivisible reality.77 "In reality," he says, "You are the self as well as the so-called not-self."78 Again,

"The playful ripples, waving trees,
Entwining creepers, humming bees,
Are my expressions, my balmy breath,
My respiration is life and death."79

71 G.R., I., p. 71.
72 G.R., I., p. 173.
73 G.R., VIII., pp. 57-58; Compare...
74 K.R., III., p. 223; Compare तद्रे तद्वितिके...etc. (Gītā, IX-4.).
75 C.W., p. 409.
76 Compare... मद्य सर्वं मिदं प्रोतं मूः समिनितत्वा इव ।...Gītā, VII-7.
77 G.R., VI., p. 241.
78 G.R., IV., p. 78.
79 G.R., VI., p. 214.
The Self

The foregoing picture of the self has assumed all the colours which paint it into God. The nature of the self is the same as the nature of God. Swāmī Rāma's writings are replete with the ideas of the glory and divinity of the self and the eloquence of his monistic convictions, in fact, declares it to be identical with the Brahman. "You are the Infinite God." "You are God Himself," "Self is verily God," "Self is the only stern Reality," Self and Reality are identical, "I" is the cosmic principle immanent in all," "You are Brähman," "I am all, the knower, knowledge and the known. "The self is Brähman," "You are nothing other than Brähman," "Reality is myself;". "The real self is God, the thread holder of this world-puppet-show," "You are not an image of but God Himself", etc., etc., are some of the many ways in which Swāmī Rāma has asserted that the Self is the only reality.⁸⁰ In fact his writings and speeches bring us to a point where pantheism of the Vedānta is to be seen as 'Pan-selfism' of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha.⁸¹ To be true to Vedānta we should use the term panentheism and to be true to Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha we had better used the term 'pan-en-selfism.'

The self is God and God is Self in their absolute identity. This identity, however, is not only an identity in transcendence, but also in immanence, i.e., an identity in the manifest all. The majesty of the self is that it is centrally present in everything; everything emerges from it. The self is the sole substratum of all things, it is postulated and implied in all beings, it is the axiomatic basis of all that exists.⁸² All existence lies in the Self, all life pulsates in the self, all beauty flowers in the self, all joy, all happiness, smiles in the self, all love communes in the self, all power generates in the self, all magnetism, all attraction concentrates in the self, all light shines in the self, all peace rests in the self, all freedom moves in the self, all glory excels in the self. Such is the essential nature of the self and such again, are its intimations in the manifest world. The entire universe is a manifestation, an expression, a reflection of the self. Nature, its creation, its movement, its beauty and life, all owe their existence to the self. All Cosmic immensities as also the smallest and the most insignificant of its details are grounded in the self.

⁸² C.W., pp. 272-273.
“Your self is the support of the sun and stars, it is the self of every drop of your blood, it is the self of the whole body, it is the self of every hair of the head.”

ESTIMATE

In sifting the self from the not-self we have arrived at Śrī Śāntinathā’s transcendentalism, an undeniable pure existence of the Eternal Self, identical with Brahman. The individual ego implying its difference from other individual egos (and therefore many in number), appears due to our ignorant view confining itself to what operates on the surface, without penetrating deep into the underlying Essence, and hence all the implications of the Māyavāda. And yet, the Same Supreme Self has been declared to be the Immanent Divine, self-manifest in all the details of the universe. One in its essence inrunning all the formational many. The whole universe is intimately and essentially One Spiritual Self, as if in a dynamic dance of self-delight.

Ordinarily speaking, transcendentalism and immaneism have not been going well together. Transcendental unity of the self and its manifest multiplicity may, as well, look a little incongruent strains in Śrī Śāntinathā’s thoughts. Intimations of self-realization, however, being the primary import of his teachings, metaphysical inconsistency of traditional pattern between transcendence and immanence need better be resolved into a mystic synthesis, in which the two may meet as complementsaries. Transcendence of the self need not necessarily exclude or oppose the empirical nature of the self, it may comprehensively inform and explain it. Conversely the manifest self with its operational dynamism and formational variety may be the very expression of the Divine’s creative delight. There is no good reason that the existential status of the self be regarded alone as true and functional power of the same Self be labelled as false. If function is not existence, equally, existence is not function; if function is illusion from the existence point of view, existence may, as well, be illusion from function-point of view, both ways implying an arbitrary dualism between the two. A satisfactory monism is one which may be able to explain both mutually, and not demolish any for the sake of the other.

Conclusively, therefore, transcendence and immanence of the Self, do not seem to stand utterly irreconciled in the views of Śrī Śāntinathā.

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83 G.R., IV., p. 181.
Rāma. For, although there is no synthetic logic offered by him, of the type of Sri Aurobindo’s logic of the Infinite, his mystic songs and inspiration of a dynamic spirituality steer clear of utter illusionism of life on the one hand and a persistent qualification standing between the individual self and the Supreme God on the other. The whole of his literature is eloquent with mystic solipsism of the upaniṣadic character\(^\text{81}\) where the Self is supremely real in its pure existence as well as splendidly manifest in the cosmic play.

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\(^\text{81}\) Compare, Ranade: *Constructive Survey of the Upaniṣadic Philosophy*, p. 352.
We have studied Swāmī Rāma Tīrthā's metaphysical views in the last chapters and have noticed that they are greatly suggestive of a harmonious advaitism in which transcendental Brahman-World-Self-identity of an absolute status could very well concord with the dynamic immanence of the Divine in all empirical diversity. His views, however, are neither a matter of cold logic nor mere belief; they are practical inspirations for spiritual self-excellence and divinization of life. In tune with the characteristic spirit of Indian Philosophy, Rāma's search into the ultimate truths of life and existence is not merely for an academic satisfaction of an intellectual curiosity through conceptual speculations, but for fulfilling the Essential want of life as such.

Naturally, therefore, the foregoing chapters on the metaphysical nature of God, the World and the Self, however they might satisfy our taste for classificational systematization, are a sort of chopping off his total philosophy into arbitrary segments to suit our adopted mode of analytical study. Bertrand Russell has spoken of our approach to philosophy as either intellectual or emotional or practical according to our different temperaments.¹ If we were to accept his classification, Swāmī Rāma's approach is first emotional, next practical and last intellectual, for the reality of the Brahman and its identity with the Self is, for him, a matter of inspired feeling much more than a logical rigour. We have named and classed his philosophy as Vedānta, a term of his greatest choice, but a term which he uses with confidence not only for a metaphysical system, but comprehensively for everything good and high and desirable in life, for

¹ B. Russell: History of Western Philosophy, p. 819.
light and truth, for moral excellence and spiritual realization, for religious faith and social ideals, for self-culture as well as for national reconstruction. For a correct and complete study of Swāmī Rāma’s views, therefore, it is not enough to know his metaphysical views in isolation; we have to study together his views on spirituality, religion, morality and self-culture.

With his characteristic conviction, Swāmī Rāma reads a spiritual significance in life and envisages a divine goal as the ideal of all human endeavour. As with metaphysical principles, so with the secret significance of life, we have to go deeper or transcend higher than what appears on the surface of life, and, thus, discover the ideal, as also perhaps the inevitable goal towards which it is moving.

NORMAL HUMAN LIFE & ASPIRATIONS

Human life, as we normally experience it, is full of misery, ignorance, bondage, limitations, fear of death, insufficiency and want, restlessness, weaknesses and all types of sufferings, physical and mental, individual as well as collective. There seems to be apparently no consoling explanation of, and no escape from anguish and distress in life. From our persistent frustrations life starts looking a horrible void exciting a tendency to run away from the mysterious, unaccountable, irrational and cruel existence. But Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha speaks with his Vedāntic confidence that life with all its details has a Divine Support and spiritual significance.

“My child, there is one who understands perfectly...... There is no fraction of your days, your body, your thoughts, your passions which has not deliberately and calmly been prepared and which shall not deliberately and calmly be removed, removed, again, when it has played its part......whatever you are and whatever you do there is one who will and does look you candidly in the face and understand you. You may recoil from that gaze ; but if you learn to encounter and return it (whether in one or many life-times) you will see that from it at length all secret terrors, shame, disfigurement, death itself vanish away, and you will not only not be alone in the world, but you will be a sovereign lord over the world.”

There is a divine plan and a divine law which explains man’s incapacity and limitations and the secret of all his inherent aspirations for Power and Light and Ānanda, which apparently present a contradic-

2 C.W., pp. 40-41.
3 Ref. Last Chapter.
tion with his present lot. This Law Divine, again, assures a promise of fulfilment of his aspirations from human misery to Divine Joy, from finitude to the Infinity, from limits to the Illimitable, from bondage to Liberation, from ignorance to Knowledge.

Man is never completely satisfied at getting the objects of his desires and passions. They sort of temporarily gratify him but his final happiness recedes to further and further attainments and like the horizon of a traveller, the end never seems to come. Essentially man does not seek only the objects of his changing desires but a final and complete fulfilment of his whole being both through them and their transcendence. His normal experience seems to challenge any possibility of such a final fulfilment and self-perfection, but the Law that prevails and governs life, believes Swāmī Rāma, ensures its attainment as inevitable. Pain and suffering ensure our rise into Perfection. "The pain of bondage is the prophecy of freedom," says Swāmī Rāma so that man’s own aspiration to be free is the promise of his liberation.

Human suffering is constantly driving man towards God realization. Rāma believes it like a mathematical certainty that Nature’s plan is to see man rise to the plane of God-Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo has beautifully corroborated:

"To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilight or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional sufferings, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realize the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness of the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world’s workings, that direct opposition appears rather as a part of
EVOLUTION IN A SUPERHUMAN DIRECTION

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha's account of world-emergence has not found any elaboration in his writings or speeches. His ideas are concentrated more upon metaphysical or spiritual implications of the world rather than on its processive description. His studies of science, however, seem to have almost convinced him that evolution is a fact of nature and the terms in which evolution has been generally described by the biologists do not seem to have presented any disagreement with Vedāntic spiritual significance which Swāmījī reads in life. Of course, he believes that there are much deeper implications and much higher possibilities of evolution than mere biological. The Laws and principles that govern life and its evolution are not only physico-chemical or chemico-biological but psycho-moral and religio-spiritual. Evolution, he accepts, is a long tale of passing through innumerable stages from matter to mind, but with a secret spiritual significance all along and with ultra-mental or spiritual future to follow.¹⁰

Nature and its workings, life and its processes, the cosmic evolution and its dynamisms exhibit that there operate, both, the law of conservation as well as the law of transformation. Everything tends to maintain its own identity in status and every creature tries to preserve itself and survive. At the same time everything undergoes constant change and mutation, every life undergoes transmutation and successive transformations. There is both an inertia and a flux. The present, while conserving a continued status of and from the past, tends towards all the changes of future possibilities. Human life, accordingly, contains all the imperfections and limitations of a past animality, but it also carries a promise of a future spiritual perfection. Man's ignorance and passions, his animal propensities and beastly impulses are what linger in him from his dark and barbaric past but they could in no way be regarded as the everlasting characteristics to persist in his future as well.¹¹ Like the body and its form, his life, mind and psyche—all have been and shall continue evolving progressively towards higher and higher possibilities of

¹¹ G.R., VIII., pp. 8-9.
perfection, towards a spiritual fulfilment of his fundamental aspirations.\textsuperscript{12}

In his life-after-life journey, governed by the laws of *Karma*, secretly significant of a spiritual evolution, Swāmī Rāma believes, the individual moves on and on towards higher stages of his attainment until he inevitably realises his Godhead.

"The object and the goal of each and all in the world, the end of Evolution in the world, is that each and all should realize the Divinity within, that this little self should accumulate experience until it realizes its unity with God, until it realizes its one-ness with Divinity. Even at the sword's point, it must be realized."\textsuperscript{13}

Swāmī Rāma is inclined to think in agreement with the theosophical view that in such a progressive march of the individual, there is no returning back to the inferior stages of evolutionary process which one has already lived through and outgrown. The notion that the individual soul may be retrograded from the human life to the animal or still lower forms of life, as condemned for his misdeeds, does not find any support in either a scientific and rational approach to the problem of evolution or a spiritual interpretation and significance of cosmic processes.\textsuperscript{14}

There are so many stages of evolution even in human life and an individual being passes through each one of them gradually, naturally and beneficially.

"There are depths in man that go to the length of the lowest Hell as there are heights that reach the highest Heaven; for are not both Heaven and Hell made out of him, made by him, everlasting miracle and Mystery as he is."\textsuperscript{16}

Swāmī Rāma compares them broadly with the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human stages of evolution and visualises the superhuman stage as the next and the highest stage possible.\textsuperscript{15} This stage he compares with the Sun at one place and an infinite circle at another to signify its all inclusive spiritual purity and infinite love for all beings, Light and knowledge and Realization of unity with all, the stage of Godhead, the superhuman divine stage.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} K.R., I., pp. 92-93.
\textsuperscript{13} G.R., III., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{14} G.R., VIII., p. 17.
\textsuperscript{15} C.W., p. 296.
\textsuperscript{16} G.R., I., pp. 36-48.
\textsuperscript{17} See ‘Expansion of the Self’, G.R., I.
Evolutionary process remaining continuous, its laws and their
operations may change from stage to stage. Struggle and strife, for
example, might have been the characteristic features of the animal-
stage of our past, but they do not constitute the final truth of evolu-
tionary law. In its spiritual stage, unlike the biological stage,
evolution is to be governed by the law of love which operates through
self mortification, service and sacrifice, unity and harmony. Love,
the invincible force, brings victory in the spiritual struggle, if struggle
at all continues and a force needed for fighting it out.

There is a clear indication in the writings of Swāmī Rāma
Tirtha that higher than the biological stage, human life has advanced
to the mental stage in which it has progressively lost its physical and
vital powers for his intellectual advancement to thrive upon, just as
we lose the weaker unit for a stronger unit in a chess-game. Man’s
scientific discoveries and inventions are his own enlargement and
self-progress through his intellectual power. But that is not the
last achievement. There is yet to emerge in his evolution a supra-
intellectual stage, somewhat comparable to Sri Aurobindo’s supra-
mental manifestation, characterised by a realization of unity and a
cosmic consciousness coupled with a universal love in identity of all
existence. This stage has to come indispensably, through a moral
excellence and purity of life rather than mere biological grow-strong-
ness and animal-powers, through what Rāma calls a Vedāntic
religion, “the only religion which is in harmony with the laws of
Evolution because it wants to establish real integration through
formal differentiation.”

To the problem whether man’s future advancement and his
evolutionary heights are a matter of pure fancy and wishfulness
which man cherishes or a matter of some supreme plan of the
Divine Law, whether man’s further achievements are a matter of
his personal choice or what God the Great designs of him, Swāmī
Rāma’s position is that it is both. Essentially speaking, man as the
aspirant and man as the potential God are both true in one without
presenting any mutual opposition. Man’s highest aspirations, there-
fore, are in perfect unison with the Divine Law and Cosmic Purpose;

22 C.W., pp. 150-151.
his choicest ideals are at one with the Supreme-Inevitables, his freedom contradicts not the Law that determines his destiny. The fundamental instinctive impulsions of man push him naturally and progressively into the direction of his spiritual ideals so that what he himself naturally desires is ultimately and essentially the same as may be ideally desired of him. His instinctive aspiration is a sure promise of his divine future. Swāmī Rāma clearly maintains that even the evil-most propensity of man is grounded in his inherent love for Godhead and exhibits some grain of his perpetual quest for the Spiritual Glory.\textsuperscript{23}

The Law that governs life and the world, again, is what infallibly guides us towards a spiritual goal without exemption, even "at the point of bayonet." Spiritual realisation is not only possible and good, it is also inevitable. He writes:

"The Law of Nature (unalterable), the Law of Providence is that we shall rise to Self Consciousness. All the follies of the world, all the worldly wisdom of men in this world is tending to push everyone on the right road to this Divinity, to realise his unity and oneness with God. At the bayonet's point every one will have to learn to be a Vedantist."\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Vedānta} need not bring sword and flames to convince you. All laws of nature are as it were the soldiers and Great Army of God that are pushing you on the onward march to self-realization. You must come then, you cannot do otherwise."\textsuperscript{25}

Elsewhere he says,

"Everything else in the world is optional; the only thing compulsory is the \textit{Brahma-Vidyā} which emancipates from all desires."\textsuperscript{26}

**TELEOLOGY**

What we call external teleology and internal teleology, the former labouring to prove that the whole universe is either being pushed towards or pulled into some final goal by an external Law or Purpose, and the latter maintaining that it is unfolding itself unto its final destiny impelled by its own law of being, both stand reconciled in the views of Swāmī Rāma inasmuch as he looks at man's life as

\textsuperscript{23} G.R., I.,—Chapter on ‘Sin its relation to the Ātman’.
\textsuperscript{24} G.R., VIII., pp. 60-61.
\textsuperscript{25} G.R., VIII., pp. 60-61.
\textsuperscript{26} K.R., I., p. 272.
governed by the Cosmic Law and also as guided by his own choice and impulse to be moving in the same ‘Vedāntic’ direction. God the governing Law without, and Self the impelling force within, are the same. Godhead the goal lies within as much as we seek it without. Writes Swami Rāma, “The source of power, joy and life is within you. The God of men and nature and nations is within you.”

“All the self-evident truth is that you are already God, nothing else but God. Your God-head is not to be effected; it is simply to be known and realised.”

“All prosperity, ‘vaibhava’, of the world, all power and talent he says, is within us: we have to only realise it.”

“That what I was constantly looking for, was hidden in my own eyes.”

Strictly speaking, Swāmī Rāma’s Vedāntic absolutism would not quite agree with all that teleology implies, for there is absolutely only One Reality in its supreme Status and the idea of a purpose or end or goal does not fit well with its Supreme Self-Sufficiency. And yet the changing world does show a regulated and well-designed plan and the Cosmic becoming is advancing towards the glory of its inherent Spiritual Being. “How far are you from me, O! fruit?”

“I am hidden in thy heart O! flower,” expressed Rabindra Nath Tagore the idea that the final goal of our endeavour is hidden deep in our own nature. The highest aim we are destined to achieve lies latent within our own being. Writes Swāmī Rāma,

“It is the presence in man of something which is not subject to the bondage of externality that constitutes the fulcrum by which its freedom can be achieved.”

TRANSCENDENCE

Thus, psychologically from human aspirations, evolutionally from Cosmic Laws and teleologically from the inherent Godhead of man, we understand that a superhuman spiritual future inevitably presents itself as the goal of human life and that man essentially seeks Divinity. “Humanity”, says Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, “is not the goal

27 G.R., I., p. 23.
28 G.R., IV, p. 94.
29 G.R., IV, p. 131.
31 K.R., I., p. 15.
32 C.W., p. 402.
of evolution.”

The idea of a superhuman evolution has every consonance with the Theosophical view of a Divine Scheme and emergence of a new race as well as the views of Sri Aurobindo who writes,

".........if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realization of that which she secretly is. We cannot then bid pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn.........any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond."  

This going beyond implies a self-exceeding into a Light that transcends all the relativities of knowledge and ignorance, into a Purity that transcends all the common distinctions we make between the pure and the impure, into a Status that exceeds all the relativities of the real and the unreal, into a Good that transcends all distinctions of sin and virtue, into a Love that delights above all attachments and aversions, into a Life that throbs beyond all birth and death. It is according to Rāma a Supreme State that transcends all dualities of the world and the limitations of the body, the senses, the life and the mind, the moral and social values of life, the psychological relations and hopes and fears, thoughts and feelings. He writes:

"No physical actions, good or evil,  
No mental action virtuous or ill,  
No shame or fame, no praise or blame,  
Could taint me ever, no kind of game,  
Nothing but the flood of glory!  
To whom shall I turn and look up,  
When Bliss Absolute,  
When Light Immeasurable  
Is manifest even in Me."  

Of the fundamental aspirations of man there are two aspects:- positive and negative. Positively, he aspires for an existence, a knowledge and delight of the highest order and, negatively, he wants to be free from all his limitations—transience, ignorance, pain and suffering. Liberation from all bondage, freedom from all limitations, deliverance from all sorrow and anguish is one of the most fundamental quests of man. Emancipation, consequently, of the soul into

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33 C.W., p. 163.  
34 Leadbeater: An Outline of Theosophy, pp. 24-25. 74-75.  
36 G.R., V., p. 46.
a transcendental state of existence where there is complete freedom from all circumstantial pain and pleasure, people, place and position, space and time limitations, all relational maladies, often seems to be the goal of our efforts. This transcendence, according to Swāmī Rāma, implies both a freedom from all that fails to sustain man as well as an attainment that fulfils him completely.

UNITY WITH THE UNIVERSE

From such a transcendental setting it appears as if spiritual freedom is something that has nothing to do with man's life in the world and that it has no bearing on his empirical existence. But a close study of Rāma's views discloses that although he often speaks in a figurative language which suggests an utter transcendence of life and the world, he stands for and advocates only a change of attitude towards life and a transformation of the core of our consciousness from what it ordinarily is to a spiritual truth and light and realization of our essential Godhead. This effected, the disturbing sorrowful world ceases to touch the free, 'jīvāṇa-mukta'.

"He is like a man who has climbed a mountain and thereby risen above all the disturbing currents in the valleys below him. The clouds pour their rains, the thunders roll and the lightnings flash, the fogs obscure and the hurricanes uproot and destroy, but they cannot reach him on the calm heights where he stands and where he dwells in continued sunshine and peace."37

The above simile does suggest that he who rises above the world is neither touched by the world nor does he touch it. But it is because of the figurative expressions that such notions arise. Swāmī Rāma does not advocate an utter severance from the world but a heightening of the mind and its attitude, an enlargement of the soul to a divine self-expansion so as to encompass the whole existence within itself. It is to include and comprehend the world and its existence in a Supreme Self-awareness which, while transcending the ordinary 'obscure mentality', fulfils it completely into the ever aspired perfection of Light. It is not merely going asunder and cutting away from what seems to limit our existence, but discovering from within that Supreme Infinite which contains within its vasts all our limitations and loosens them into an infinite freedom and expansion.

37 C.W., p. 363.
"The secret of Life is to find the Divine Centre within oneself and to live in and from that instead of in the outer circumference of disturbances. All the yesterdays of such a person are the tide-washed and untrodden sands, no sin shall rise up against him to torment and accuse him and destroy his sacred peace. His tomorrows are as seeds which shall germinate, bursting into beauty and potency of life, no doubt shall shake his trust, no uncertainty rob him of repose. The Present is his, only in the immortal Present does he live and it is as the eternal vault of blue above, which looks down silently and calmly yet radiant with purity and light." 38

THE JIVANA-MUKTA

We have, in the writings of Swāmī Rāma, frequent references to the characteristics of the free and the self-realised wherein he paints his transcendental state in close resemblance with the Gītā,—indifference in pain and pleasure, absence of eagerness and expectations, freedom from polarities and pairs of opposites, etc., etc.

"The jīvana-mukta' is one who lacks the ordinary springs of motives and consequently cannot be influenced in any way. One whom the profit and loss, counsel of friends, gain and disadvantage, talk of pupils, crooked suggestions of adversaries, unexpected news of any kind can influence and draw from him what? etc., he is unworthy to lead, incapable of guiding." 39

But the same jīvana-mukta' who has such a paint of cold and indifferent colours as his negative characteristics has the brightness and gaiety of a spiritual enlightenment through which he breathes his oneness with the whole Universe. He is himself the centre of all joy and peace, Knowledge and purity, self-contained as well as all-embracing.

We have in the upaniṣads a variety of concepts, e.g., 'immortality of life,' 'companionship of the highest God,' 'likeness to God,' 'absorption in the Impersonal', etc., considered as the final goal of life. 40 Swāmī Rāma shows poetic agreement with each one of them, his eloquence being perhaps the greatest for sovereignty and self-

38 C.W., p. 364.
39 C.W., pp. 435-436.
40 Ranade: Constructive Survey of the Upaniṣadic Philosophy, pp. 164-165.
cosmicisation of the God-realized. In the words of Dr. K. D. Sethna it is 'a Co-extension, as it were, with the universe and an exceeding of the universe.' Explaining the Biblical phrase “We meet in Heaven,” Swāmī Rāma writes,

“Jivana-Mukta, a man liberated even in this life, is always in Heaven. He is one with all the living and all the dead.... He realizes and feels that he is the true Divinity, the real Being, the true thing in itself, the Substance, the Unknowable God, He is All and thus being All he is in Heaven and in Heaven he meets everybody.”

POSITIVE ATTAINMENT

Thus while freedom and liberation convey in negative terms that the free is beyond the world, his spiritual realization marks a positive attainment of a superhuman nature in which he is one with the world and embraces it within his God-self, a stage of all-oneness. Positive features of the goal of spiritual realization have been expressed in various terms and they very well outweigh its negative characteristics which at times cause a sense of Void and Absence. It is not a self-extinction, but a self-enlargement, a self-fulfilment of the highest order that is achieved through Vedāntic freedom. It is to break all the limiting ties to the finitude of things of the world into the Illimitable Infinite Existence. Negation of the finite itself is the means and virtual characterisation of the Positive Affirmation of the Infinite. The free is self-attained and self-fulfilled. The Self-poised and Self-realized is at once the Self-sufficient and self-satisfied.

This state of Self-Containedness as the result of man's spiritual conquests is characteristic of the highest fulfilment and final redemption from all want and suffering. The State of Self-realization through self-transcendence is the master-Key to all self-joy and the completest satisfaction of the highest aspirations. Writes Swāmī Rāma,

41 Compare:- संप्रायवेनमुध्यो शानतःकर: कृतार्थानो वीतरागाव: प्रवत्तात: ||
| ते सर्वेः सर्वेऽऽपि प्राण्य धीराि मुक्तािमानि: सर्वमेवाविशल्ल्य ||
| Mund. III-2-5.

42 Message of the ‘Light of Asia’, p. XIV. (Jaico).
43 G.R., VIII., p. 96.
44 K.R., I., pp. 103, 154; Compare :-आवन्य्येव च संभुष्ट ...Gita, III-17.
"If you wish that instead of your loving them (the objects of love, e.g., friends, riches, power and positions, etc.) they should love you with the intensity of your love ... follow the advice of Rāma (of Vedāntic realization) for it is the open sesame, it is the only master Key to unlock all the hidden objects of desire."\(^\text{45}\)

Self attainment is the highest attainment and the greatest joy of life. All that the world can offer to please man pales into insignificance in comparison to the spiritual happiness of the realized free.

In consonance again, with the upaniṣads, Swāmī Rāma writes—

"What is there in this world that remains to be desired to a man who has once known himself? Nothing in all the treasures of the Kingdom, nothing in all the universe can draw his attention. Nothing in all charms and beauties in this world can draw his notice; nothing in all the stores of knowledge can attract him. Oh, what happiness, what supreme joy, what perfect bliss! how indescribable! It transcends all language and surpasses all description."\(^\text{46}\)

What has been conveyed through the expressions like self-attainment, self-realization, self-containedness, etc., is the same thing as God-realization, God-union and Brahmanhood in the vedāntic context of Swāmī Rāma's philosophy and marks the highest fulfilment of life and the perfection of existence, the attainment of Divine Glory, Beauty and Power and Ānanda.\(^\text{47}\) Quoting richly from the Upaniṣads Swāmī Rāma conforms that having attained God, all objects of desires are attained. "He who is one with Brahman has all his desires fulfilled. Nobody will ever deceive him. No pain or trouble will ever come to him."\(^\text{48}\)

God realization and Self-attainment, while on the one hand ensure freedom from fear and want, bondage and imperfection, imply on the other a mastery over life and law, world and nature. Writes Rāma, "Yes on this side of Innocence lies the Inexorable Law and on the other side mastery over Law."\(^\text{49}\) Realisation of Godhead brings a true fulfilment of man's basic aspiration for lordship and unrivalled mastery over the whole universe, a state which far excels the idea of a heaven shared by many.

\(^{45}\) G.R., VIII., p. 97.

\(^{46}\) G.R., IV., p. 79.

\(^{47}\) U., p. 6.

\(^{48}\) G.R., III., pp. 122-123.

\(^{49}\) C.W., p. 373.
Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha has fondly maintained that realization of Self-divinity brings sovereignty over nature and its powers. The realized is omnipotent in his identity with God. Elemental powers serve him and, as it were, await his commands.\textsuperscript{50}

"Come up, realize your Divinity, your Godhead, realize yourself to be the Sun of sun, the moon and stars and angels will administer to your needs, they must."\textsuperscript{51}

This realization of the true nature of the self further implies the realization of its being one with the whole existence. Truth and Unity with the All are the characteristics of the spiritual Awareness and Knowledge. All-inclusiveness and unity with the entire universe are important marks of self-expansion and self-enlargement of the free—the ‘\textit{mukta puruṣa}'. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha refers to this self-universalisation even in physical terms. The whole universe is verily the body of the realized.\textsuperscript{52} In his free poetic translation of the verses of the \textit{Mahābhārata} in which King Janaka describes a similar realization through renunciation, Rāma points to the glory of Self-universalisation in very positive and elaborate terms, expressing that through self-transcendence is achieved a living unity with the whole universe in all its details.\textsuperscript{53}

Realization of the self as God must be attended by all power and peace. Writes Rāma, “This \textit{Jñānam} the inexhaustible power of which is one aspect has for the other aspect Infinite, Infinite Peace.”\textsuperscript{54} Spiritual goal of God realization is, thus, the attainment of the highest Glories—Love and Knowledge, Power and Beauty, Bliss and Peace, Lordship and Mastery, Freedom and Perfection, all in one and all at once. Rāma's poetic eloquence about the glories of the God-man so often bursts into exuberant exclamations to Nature.\textsuperscript{55}

All these divine glories are not merely things of some transcendental plane of Consciousness, but glories that manifest and operate

\textsuperscript{50} (a) G.R., VII., pp. 44-45;
(b) सूर्य उसीके हृदय से जलता है। इत्यद्व उसीका पानी भरता है, पवन उसी का दूत है। उसी के बापे दरिया रैल में माध्य रगहुँटे हैं, राजे महाराजे, देवी-देवता, वेद, किंतु जो कुछ भी है एक वातावरण का संकेत नहीं । U., p. 51.
\textsuperscript{51} G.R., II., p. 152.
\textsuperscript{53} U., p. 55.
\textsuperscript{54} G.R., VII., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{55} K.R., I., pp. 112-114.
throughout the life of the ‘Mahātmā,’ even in its spatio-temporal terms.\(^{56}\) On the subtle plane, again, the subtle body of the free superhuman finds a cosmic expansion and becomes one with the whole universe. It is above the phenomenon of transmigration then, and effectively helps other individuals in moulding their moral life for regeneration and reform. He writes:

\[\text{“...his (free man’s) subtle body is distributed or diffused throughout the whole world. Everybody partakes of him, carves his flesh and drinks his blood. His is a subtle body cut into pieces and eaten by the whole world. Here is egoism cast into winds. That man, whether he opens his lips or not, whether he be an author or not, whether he appears before the public or not wonderfully serves mankind. He is a marvellous reformer.”}\(^{57}\]

Most consistently, therefore, the spiritual goal of life is not merely a personal individual liberation, but a collective realization and an emancipation of the whole humanity. Rāma’s words in this regard are unmistakable:

\[\text{“Not to produce millions of flowers like Buddha, Moham-}
\text{mad, Christ and other Prophets or Incarnations, but to produce, evoke or express Rāma, himself in every man, woman, and child is Rāma’s mission.”}\(^{58}\)

His views about collective emancipation are quite pronounced although without any elaboration as to the details of its possibility, stages and the ways to it. Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy of a collective transformation, gnostic existence on earth and supramental manifestation very well nourishes the seedlings of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha’s views on the Vedāntic life in the world.

To the realised Godman life in the world and empirical existence are all a matter of spiritual joy. Even his sense-experiences will have the significance of a spiritual awareness without presenting any opposition to it.\(^{59}\) Such a vision Rāma describes as ‘looking through the eyes of God.’\(^{60}\) Realization, thus, does not only bring a new vision but a new life-impulse and a transformation. Knowledge

\(^{56}\) G.R., III., pp. 131-132.
\(^{57}\) G.R., IV., p. 162.
\(^{58}\) G.R., VIII., p. 290.
\(^{59}\) U., p. 10.
\(^{60}\) G.R., V., p. 17.
Divine brings about a life divine, characterised by freedom, mastery, love, unity, joy and vigour. It gives a new interpretation to life and its events and establishes a new order of values, a new aesthetics, a new art and a new science. “God is nowhere” reads as “God is now here.”

Right from the causal plane down to the hair of the physical body there is a divine transmutation.

“Jñana being realised on the causal plane or penetrating the core of the heart becomes overwhelming love, universal oneness, feeling and living ecstasy which like the effulgent Sun, although it asks nothing, begs no reward, seeks no fruit (being perfect renunciation on the mental plane) yet must spontaneously pour itself out as wonderful energy and powerful action on the physical plane.”

“Within the temple of my heart, The light of love its glory sheds, Despite the seeming prickly thorns The flower of love free fragrance spreads, Perennial springs of bubbling joy With radiant sparkling splendour flow, Intoxicating melodies, On wings of heavenly zyphers blow, Yea, ! Peace and bliss and harmony ! Bliss, oh ! how divine ! A flood of rolling symphony Supreme is mine.”

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41 C.W., p. 401.  
42 K.R., I., p. 325.  
43 U., p. 37.  
44 G.R., VIII., pp. 142-143.  
Chapter 7

Religion

Integral God-realization, God-vision and God-life being the goal of human life according to Rāma, we now proceed to study his views about religion, which has been recognised by him to be the most effective way for an accomplishment thereof. In the western civilization philosophical investigation into the ultimates and religious quest for the Supreme, have generally been quite independent of each other. In India, the head of reason and the heart of faith are so exceptionally joined in their pursuit for the Integral Goal, that it is impossible to have a religion without its philosophical background or a philosophical system devoid of its practical implications bearing on the religious life of its adherents. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha’s philosophy, accordingly, is inseparable from his religion. To be more close to his spirit we better say, his philosophy and his religion are one.

THE MEANING OF RELIGION

Ordinarily speaking we understand by religion a system of faith in, and worship of some Supreme—a God with moral governance to be awed, revered and obeyed—proclaimed beyond question or doubt in the word of the prophet, bestowed with revelational knowledge of the Truth—a special messenger of the Supreme. There is almost no room for an independent search and the non-believer is doomed to perish while the faithful adherent is promised all safety. The Sanskrit word ‘Dharma’, however, has very different connotations and a much wider denotation. It includes comprehensively all the essentials of man’s ideals and laws to regulate his character and conduct in the various phases of his life—social, economic, political, moral, religious, civilizational. Swāmī Rāma uses the words ‘Religion’ and ‘Dharma’
in his own style and gives to them a meaning of spiritual import, almost entirely free from external formulations. He has, however, used the term ‘religion’ for both—a spiritual accomplishment as well as the way or ways to it.

Swāmī Rāma etymologically refers that the word ‘religion’ breaks into ‘Re+ligare’ meaning, (back+bind) and defines religion as that which binds man back to his original source, viz., God.¹ He has put the same idea in different expressions at different places, Religion is a ‘contact with the Supreme’, ‘a leap into the Infinite’, ‘Nearness with God’, ‘merger in God’, ‘oneness with God’, etc., etc. His statements are unmistakably expressive of his views that religion is man’s entire and sole concern for God, aiming at a complete Communion with the Beloved, self-losing into the Great Beyond.

At the face of it, religion looks like a bi-polar concern, having man as one pole and God as the other, man as the seeker and God as the Sought, and, as is usual in such a context, there are implications of a God on the one hand, great enough to be prayed and worshipped, powerful enough to be obeyed and feared, benevolent and kind enough to be revered and loved, and a man on the other hand who plays the meek, obedient, needy, weak and incompetent, dependent and bound, so that God is a personal God and man a prayerful seeker in surrender. But the views of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha about God, we already know, are mostly absolutistic. He does not regard God to be a personal Being with favours or frowns, but as the Impersonal Absolute, the Transcendent Pure Being beyond all relations, and in its essential Self-Status unapproachable and unknowable. Apparently such a nature of God and a concern for contact with Him seem to be mutually incompatible.

God as the Transcendental Reality, however, is not held by Rama to be unknowable in the Kantian sense. It is realizable through knowledge by identity. To know God is to know Him as identical with the Self. God-realization is Self-realization.² Liberation or salvation, in that case, is to be understood not merely as an end of our miseries and bondage by some supernatural touch of grace of glory of God, but an emancipation in and through and a realization of our inherent Godhead and a blissful discovery of our eternal

² G.R., IV., p. 40.
identity with God. This realization of God-Self-Identity is neither possible through scholastic theology nor through conceptual reasoning but through a religious spirit, full of utter faith and love for God the All, not by a mere belief in a dogma about God, but by living the truth that is God. Religion as the realization of our essential Divinity and as life of Truth, holds Rāma, is not a means to something, but an end in itself.

For an accomplishment of such a high order of spiritual realization as the identity of the Self with God or Brahman, Swāmi Rāma holds, our religious consciousness has to develop through progressive stages of our intimacy with God. Although, absolutely speaking, it does not sound coherent to think of any changes or progressions or stages of God-realization in terms of self-realization, for, the self already is God and there is nothing that it has to achieve, and God-realization only means Self-unveiling by rending asunder the false curtain of ignorance about our Godhead, yet practically and empirically speaking this self-unveiling is accomplished through progressive realizations of our closeness with God through developing religious consciousness. The final stage of God-realization or God-Self-Identity is generally preceded by feelingful religious intimations with the personal God, and the Vedāntic spiritual culture aiming at self-realization does not necessarily oppose a theistic worship in its various forms. It must, however, be reserved that the spiritual aim of religion, viz., realization of the Self as identical with God should never be confused for, or put on par, in its import, with any of the many forms of prayer or worship or practice or belief of an established order, howsoever important they may be as means for our religious development.

SPIRIT AND FORM OF RELIGION

Swāmi Rāma speaks of three aspects of every religion, viz., the philosophical, the mythological and the ritualistic, corresponding, respectively, to the needs and aptitudes of the enquiring seeker of truth, the sentimental believer and the imitative commoner.

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3 C.W., p. 405.
5 G.R., IV., pp. 42-43.
6 G.R., IV., pp. 44-46.
7 G.R., VII., p. 5.
8 G.R., I., pp. 82-83.
first aspect deals with the essential spirit and central principles of
religion while the second and the third are concerned with its superfi-
cial form and outer shell representing, respectively, the imagery-form
and the performance-form. Spirit of Religion is the eternal quest
of human soul for the Divine; it is the constant, the most universal
and the most important human aspiration. Mythology and ritualism
as the forms of religion have always been different and changing
from place to place, age to age and temperament to temperament.9

Originally speaking, every form of religion fashions round some
spiritual truth; it signifies some inner meaning of the soul's search
for God, and serves as a means to religious training. But by and by
its concretion thickens to cover its own inner significance and gets
itself idolised supreme. Truth is replaced by a dogma, Search dege-
erates into a ritual, visions and experiences condense cold into
superstition, freedom of spiritual adventure makes way for scriptural
injunctions, personal aspiration is interfered with by authority and
collective spirituality hardens to be institutionalised10. Our religious
ideals consequently are lost sight of and a perverted importance on
the formal means, which naturally are different, is lavished by the
ignorant,11 the result is sectarianism, readily corruptible into evils
like intolerance, bigotry, fanaticism and rivalry followed by forcible
conversion, quarrel, violence, war and bloodshed to stain the pages
of human history12.

"Most of the different sets of religious dogmas and prac-
tices of the past, according to Rāma were no more than the
dictates of the known Science of the times. But as the fate
would have it, these were received at first with bitter opposition;
then with over enthusiasm so much so that the mother (Inde-
pendent Thought and Meditation) which gave birth to them
was ignored and killed in handling the child. The teachings
were gradually taken on trust, a boy found himself a Christian,
Mohammedan or Hindu before he was aware of being a man.
Stagnation on the religious field was the natural consequence
when owing to the inertia or laziness of the followers, these
dogmas and practices began to be accepted on the authority of
personalities and volumes of paper with little recognition or
acceptance of original research, diligence and concentration with
which the so-called prophets had studied physical or spiritual

9 G.R., V., p. 96.
10 G.R., VII., p. 3.
11 G.R., VIII., pp. 82-83.
12 G.R., VI., pp. 216-217.
nature and her laws. By and by the teachings of the practical adherence to Christ’s Sermon on the Mount or to Vedic Yajña were, in most cases, discarded to all intents and purposes; but their place was filled with stronger allegiance to empty names. The spirit was actually driven out to worship the dead carcass. There were honest workers like Christ, Mohammad, Vyasa or Shankara, nick-named prophets, that is to say thieves or stealers of sacred fire from Heaven and their books were disgraced by being pitched against the original book of Nature of which they were faint feeble readings in part.”  

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha unmistakably holds that religion is different from either scholastic theology or superstitious dogma, and thus beyond an uncritical belief or a pretentious theorizing mind it is a “mysterious process by which the mind or the intellect reaches back and loses itself in the inscrutable source, the Great Beyond.”

Formal ceremonies and rituals bereft of spiritual principles are insignificant and extravagant superfluities in religion just like the shape of the container from the point of view of the juice contained. In many cases, instructional religiosity creates “spiritual pauperism” and the outer form of a religion is “spirit turned into stone.” Sri Aurobindo expresses the same idea,

“......nothing can be more fatal to religion than for its spiritual element to be crushed or formalised out of existence by its outward aids and forms and machinery.”

While writing on Yajña, Swāmī Rāma Tirtha emphatically discards the old form of Yajña-ceremony and works out a humanitarian application of the spirit of Yajña which essentially means a sacrifice of the personal ego on the altar of the All. Scriptures, he says, must be approached with an investigational attitude and Truth the Self-shining must be discovered through personal experience and not merely accepted on authority. His attitude towards vedic yajñas is never sceptical; he even speaks in very high terms about the Veda. Yet he advocates a scientific spirit in our approach or study of them.

13 G.R., VII., pp. 3-5.
15 C.W., p. 180. He has recognised the necessity of religious training, K.R., I., p. 327.
16 C.W., p. 221.
without which, he holds, we commit the sin of respecting the outer form and name of religion at the cost of its spirit. He writes,

"Belief in form is idolatry.
Love of form is carnality."^20

The writings of Swāmī Rāma make a clear distinction between spirit and form of religion. The spirit or essence of religion concentrates on God while the form of religion on the way of worship; the former implies an implicit and unshakable faith of the heart while the latter clings to only some formula; the former aims at a realization of Truth while the latter only preserves a creed; the former is a spirited adventure into the Unknown while the latter is a timid sense of safety in the orthodox convention; the former discovers a living truth while the latter fossilizes an old gospel; the former enshrines the Beloved in the heart while the latter pedestals a stone in statue; the former breathes vital a freshness of new experience while the latter suffers in suffocation under authority of stale order; the former opens the heart to be filled by the melody of a celestial music while the latter drills up the tasteless grammatical notes of rituals.^21

TRUE RELIGION IS NATURAL AND UNIVERSAL

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha has laid an exclusive importance on the spirit of religion which, he believes, is universally the same and which all the variety of religious forms are meant to serve. Religion in its essential spirit is the most fundamental and natural preoccupation of man because there is a community of nature between man and God.^22 Our instinctive love for immortality, knowledge, power, freedom, happiness, etc., impels us from within to seek That in which all these glories and virtues integrate. There is, in fact, no sense in preaching, much less in imposing religion, for, a real religious aspiration for spiritual perfection is so very deeply rooted in man’s nature. Love for God is as natural for man as for the flame to rise upwards.^23 Revelation of the existence of God, believes Swāmī Rāma Tirtha, is made by “the book of Nature the Veda Supreme,” independent of any external agency.

^20 C.W., p. 362.
^21 C.W., pp. 187, 312.
^22 C.W., p. 5.
"O God, the book of Nature is the 'Veda' supreme to reach Thy presence. I cannot miss Thee as I could never miss the sky."24

Natural circumstances stripped of all artificial interferences help spiritual growth. Truth is neither anybody's monopoly nor could it be purchased by selling our own freedom to an authority. He says, "Sell not your liberty to Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad or Krishna." Old ways and old solutions might have suited old problems of old people. "You are living today..............Be free, free to look at everything by your own light."25 Religion, thus, is not only what may win for us some freedom as a reward at the end of a toilsome self-subjection to the rule of a scripture or authority, but that which grants a freedom even in our approach to our own problems and during our earnest search for spiritual perfection and God.

"Religion" writes Swāmī Rāma, is a question between man and his God and does not admit of any external or formal interference."26 Religious quest in this sense is "as universal and vitally connected with our being as eating. The successful atheist knows not the process of his digestion, as it were."27 It is a fact of life and not merely a make-believe. Quest for God is instinctively present in the very marrow of human being and his conscious urge for Him grows so spontaneously and simply. Consequently religion is a whole-life pre-occupation of man and not a mere pastime or custom or fear. It is not a programme, one amongst many others, in our everyday routine, but the only plan to accomplish in life, nay, even life-after-life. It does not merely consist of a morning meditation or a visit to a temple, a ritual now and a ceremony then, a vow today and a charity tomorrow, but of all that we ceaselessly aspire for and act and live to attain wakefully as well as dreamingly.28 Religion is not something we bear for making entries in the forms of a law-court or a school, but the conviction which stays firm in our hearts and runs warm in our veins and puts a seal on all our thoughts, feelings and actions.29

24 C.W., p. 419.
26 G.R., VII., p. 48.
27 C.W., p. 418.
28 C.W., pp. 136-137.
29 K.R., I., p. 82.
From such a conception of religion it naturally follows that religious ideals of man are not what can be superficially adopted by him from somewhere or what can be effectively imposed upon him from outside, but what he must intently discover from within himself. Religious truths, consistently, must be seizable to our own understanding and religious ‘sādhanā’ must suit our total nature ‘svabhāva.’ Man being what he is, there is so much of diversity in his thoughts, ideas, feelings, propensities, and aptitudes. Formally speaking, religions have been quite as many and they have catered to the needs and suited the aptitudes of different people at different places in different ages.

Yet the fundamental principles and basic truths they have embodied have almost been the same for the reason of human aspirations being essentially the same. Thus, while religious forms have been quite diverse, religious spirit has always been the same, ever free from any or every one of those forms. The spirit of religion remains unantequated in spite of the forms of religion getting stale, since the essential search of human spirit is eternal.\textsuperscript{30}

Behind the different names and forms, of religions that have caused so much quarrel and quibble in the world, there has been so much of uniformity of religious essence, or, to put it differently, the vitality of religion sustaining all the variety of religious bodies has been the same.\textsuperscript{31} Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam and others—all agree in their fundamental principles such as the existence of God, the Omnipresent Almighty, Truth, Purity in practical life, immortality and freedom and bliss as human aspirations, etc., etc.\textsuperscript{32} The ways of their worship and meditation show in agreement that God is ‘the Above,’ ‘the Beyond,’ ‘the Incomprehensible,’ ‘the Within,’ ‘the Invisible.’\textsuperscript{33} Even their conception of heaven and hell, have the same significance despite the differences of figures. Śvāmī Rāma Tīrtha writes:

\begin{quote}
"Not a religion but the religion which is the soul of Islam, Hinduism or Christianity is, strictly speaking, that indescribable realization of the Unknowable where all distinctions of caste, colour and creed, all dogmas and theories, the body and mind,
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\textsuperscript{30} K.R., III., p. 177.
\textsuperscript{31} G.R., II., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{32} K.R., III., p. 298.
\textsuperscript{33} G.R., V., p. 2.
time, space and causality together with all that is contained therein, this world and all other imaginable worlds are washed clean off into what no words can reach.”

Such an eternal and universal religion is the religion of Truth Spiritual, universal and natural.

“Rāma brings you a religion which is found in the streets, which is written upon the leaves, which is murmured by the brooks, which is whispered in the winds, which is throbbing in your veins and arteries.”

Swāmi Rāma uses the name ‘Vedānta’ for it, the religion, not confined to India alone, but equally meant for all.

“Vedānta unlike Mohammadanism, Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism which go after the teachings of individuals like Mohammad, Christ, Buddha and Zoroaster, etc., has no such affiliation to a person or a teacher or a sect, etc. It is Truth, the end of knowledge. It is universal Truth and not a monopoly of a particular religion held by the Hindus alone, but a Truth that could be discovered by anyone anywhere.”

Religion based on Natural truths and pledged to no spatial or temporal affiliations must, of necessity, be a catholic religion in which the apparent differences of mutually quarrelling religions must be reconciled.

**SUPERNAL CHARACTER OF THE VEDĀNTIC RELIGION**

As metaphysics the Vedānta establishes a spiritual unity of all existence, as religion and culture it imparts a vision and a living realization of the joy and beauty of that spiritual unity. It is at once the science of self-discovery and the art of spiritual life. Vedāntic truth illumines the intellect, Vedantic vision inspires the heart and Vedantic realization dynamises our acts. Vedānta religion is not merely a contention of the Vedic scriptures but a religion of the heart beating in its own awareness, and sustained by its own free conviction. As such, it is one with the essence of every other religion. It aims at a discovery of the innermost secrets of life and existence, an understanding that comprehends all the immensities of the universe, an insight that penetrates all depths of reality; it seeks

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34 G.R., V., pp. 2-3.
the vision of the highest beauty, the zenith of the highest perfection, the joy of the highest bliss; its realization vitalizes all life, animates all activity and intimates all relations. It brings an integral fulfilment of man in his ever-true identity with God, and therefore, with the whole existence, a realization of the truth of his self-divinity—higher than the highest knowledge, happier than the happiest enjoyment and better than the best virtue.  

The term ‘religion’ ordinarily speaking, fails to hold all that Swāmī Rāma has in view when putting the adjective ‘Vedāntic’ with it. He implies a spiritual self-seeking behind the apparent self-concealing phenomena into a divine vision of its own God-head essentially and categorically perfect and blissful, and holding the entire existence in its non-dual God-identical, all-uniting Truth of being. This suggests a field connoted better by the term mysticism than religion. In the context of the Vedānta, however we have not much to differentiate. Vedāntic realization, to review, means God-realization, Vedāntic life and religion mean God-religion. Says Swāmī Rāma:—

“Love the Reality only, Cling to God alone, Take in God, assimilate God, walk with God, be God, behave God.”

God-life, God-knowledge, God-realization implies a transcendence of phenomenal knowledge, feeling and life. Like Wordsworth who complained of the world being ‘too much with us,’ Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha felt:

“The material objects are blindly and mercilessly weilding people’s desires all the time; Religion aims to set you free of their hypnotising influence.”

Vedānta maintains a difference between the real Reality and the apparent reality. The difference does not only rest on the metaphysical planes, it equally stands on the religious and the moral values of life. The spiritual realization of God-self-identity, consistently, means a transcendence of our ordinary experience; it means a knowledge that transcends subject-object-duality, a joy that trans-

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39 C.W., p. 328.
40 G.R., II., p. 55.
41 G.R., I., pp. 49-50.
cends the polarity of pleasant and unpleasant feelings, a Good that stands above right and wrong. It is a state that surpasses all materiality and worldliness into a sublime freedom of the spirit. The Godman is a man of realization beyond all relativity, all pairs of opposites, complete and perfect in his own Self the same to everyone everywhere, one with the whole existence—all himself.42 Such a transcendence comes by removing all illusions—extrinsic as well as intrinsic. Śrīmāl Rāma observes that other religions help the removal of extrinsic illusion by holding everything as creation of the same God, whereas Vedānta removes the intrinsic illusion responsible for the appearance of all duality.43

Transcendentalism of his religion, at the face of it, looks very cold and barren. Does it not encourage an utter indifference towards life and its affairs? Is not a transcendental religion of the Vedāntic type devoid of all that is good and happy in life? Śrīmāl Rāma holds that transcendence of all that is relative, either in terms of ontological existence or of moral virtues, instead of being an ontological nihil or moral indifference takes to pure existence and all good. “True Religion” he says, “means faith in Good rather than a faith in God.”44 It ensures an all-inclusive love for all and not an exclusive attachment to a particular object or ideal.45 It brings universalism of the highest order and the true Vedāntin has not only a negative tolerance for other religions, but a large-hearted positive appreciation for them all. He is at heart one with the Christian, the Musalman, the Baudhha and all, and his God-feeling flows equally pure in the temple, the mosque or the church.46 His cheers are not circumstantial; he is always and in all circumstances joyful. Rāma expresses the Vedāntic religion in a single commandment:

“Keep yourself perfectly happy and at rest, no matter what happens—sickness, death, hunger, calamity or anything. Be cheerful and at peace on the ground of your Godhead......”47

The Vedāntic cheerfulness expressed in the above lines should

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42 See the last chapter.
43 G.R., VI., pp. 132-133.
44 G.R., V., p. 44.
45 G.R., V., p. 55.
46 K.R., III., pp. 139-141.
47 G.R., VIII., p. 265.
not be mistaken for a stoic contentment born of indifference to pain and pleasure and reliance on some wise God, but a positive joy born of transcendental realization of our identity with the All. Peace comes by transcending all the differences, the cause of all disturbances and worry. Freedom is born of our identity with the all-governing Law, the Absolute. Thus *Vedāntic* transcendence of all that is relative, partial, limited, worldly or other-worldly, is transcendence into all that is Perfect and Good and Happy and not merely a self-annihilation into a void.

**RELIGION IS ANTHROPOCENTRIC AND ALL-UNITING**

From a *Vedāntic* approach of the above type it sounds as if religion, in its utter concern for God and Divine Joy, is indifferent to human life on the earth and as if man is called upon by religion to suffer self-mortification for God-affirmation. But the views of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha do not easily encourage such an interpretation. He has even characterised religion as ‘anthropo-centric.’

> “Not the question about God and not the origin and enquiry into the origin and the purpose of the world is religion, but the question about Man. All religious views of life are anthropocentric.”

Self-Transcendence means only transcending the limited ego-sense and rising into the spiritual perfection which is already inherent in man’s essential nature. Divinity as the aim of religious aspiration is not some extra-imposed or other-worldly aim of man, but a self-impelled seeking of his very being. Writes Rāma, “Let man dare to be divine since God has dared to be human.” This idea has found a very elaborate treatment in the works of Sri Aurobindo and suggests that the foundations of man’s spiritual evolution have been laid in the Divine’s involution in earth-nature. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha regards human life and experience to be containing all the possibilities of his spiritual awakening. Godhead is hidden below as the very constitution of human frame, and all the beauties of his spiritual perfection have to flower out of himself, a truth that has found a figure in “the body being the temple of God.” As in ideal so in achievement, as in conception so in practice, man himself, actual as well as potential, is the pivot on which religion hinges; man

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48 C.W., p. 336.  
49 C.W., p. 244.
is his own guide and friend and ideal, and man himself, his own foe and fall. Speaking in a Christian context he says,

"Your soul is not impure and sinful by nature, it has not fallen through the sin of one man and does not depend upon the virtue of another man to save it."\(^5\)

The idea resounds the Gita-teaching:

"By the self thou shouldst not depress and cast down the self; for the self is the friend of the self and the self is the enemy."\(^6\)

Apparently such an idea of entire self-sufficiency and anthropocentricity in religion strikes a little strange and uncommon note against the usual religious tone, for, commonly speaking, religions are, for the main part, deistic and contain important elements of a grace of God, a promise of the prophet and a guidance of the preceptor, etc., etc. Swāmī Rāma's views, however, are not exactly a challenge to all that. His attitude is more reconciliatory than revolutionary. His approach does not encourage an absolute division between the human and the Divine or the worldly and the other-worldly and, as such, his religion unites God with man as much as man with God. What he calls the Vedantic religion, therefore, offers harmonious unity of all religions by affirming their common essentials.\(^7\)

In his lectures in America to Christian audience Swāmī Rāma Tirtha refers to a number of Christian ideas and at many a place he makes a Vedantic interpretation of them. In some of his writings in the 'Alif' he clothes his Vedantic ideas in some Urdu or Persian words closely associated with the Islamic religion. In so doing he is full of confidence that essentially there is no difference between one religion and another except in words and figures of imagination. He is eloquent; "True christianity is not different from Vedānta if you properly understand it."\(^8\) The ideas of the mercy of the saviour, to

\(^5\) C.W., pp. 115-116.
\(^6\) G.R., IV, p. 131.
\(^7\) Gita VI., 5—उद्देश्य दिनांक: नात्मानमवसाद्येव।
ह्यामेव ह्यामो बहुरामेव निक्षुरामेन:।।
\(^8\) Dr. Bhagwān Dās has made a similar attempt of bringing out a unity of religions in much more elaborate detail in his 'The Essential Unity of All Religions'.
\(^9\) G.R., VI, p. 82.
take a few examples, and the idea of ‘atma kṛpā’—self-help or self-confidence or self-salvation are not mutually opposed in that, both-ways, it is our faith that saves, and from the Saviour without to the Saviour within there is just a little change of centre of faith without any variation in faith itself.\textsuperscript{55} Om and Amen, again he says, are similar, both phonetically as well as religiously, Amen being uttered at the end of all prayer, the language of the heart, and Om representing the end, the final stage and comprehension of all knowledge.\textsuperscript{56} The biblical ideas of “We meet in the Heaven” and “The kingdom of heaven is within you,” holds Swāmī Rāma Tirtha, have the Vedāntic truth of the divine nature of the self.\textsuperscript{57} The ‘Trīśūla’ (Tri-pierce) as the symbol of God the Destroyer, the ‘Ghāyyoor’—the Jealous or the ‘Qahhar’ the Terrible God and the idea of crucifixion of the flesh on the cross have almost the same strain of spiritual truth.\textsuperscript{58} The ‘La Ilah Il-Ilah’ of Islam and ‘Brahma satyam jaganmithya’ (ब्रह्मसत्यं जगान्मिथ्या) of the Vedānta and “sarvam kṣanikam” (सर्वं क्षणिकं) of Buddhism declare the same Truth.\textsuperscript{59}

Spiritual truths equally shared by all religions are eternal and imperishable. Dharma is undecayable (शर्य) and needs no defence or defenders.\textsuperscript{60} Swāmī Rāma writes:

“When great ideas have once been into the world and formulated, they may be misrepresented, thwarted or even defeated and made to retire for a time into the background, but they are destined not to perish and they continue to live a life of their own till in the fulness of time the advance of human thought and morality reaches a stage of evolution when it becomes possible to realize them in the social order......... Truth crushed to earth shall rise again. The eternal years of God are hers.”\textsuperscript{61}

**REGENERATION OF RELIGION**

Real religious life, thus, consists in realizing the eternal spiritual truth short of which no traditional belief can save man.\textsuperscript{62} Truth-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} G.R., II., pp. 161-168.
\item \textsuperscript{56} G.R., IV., pp. 110-111.
\item \textsuperscript{57} G.R., VIII., pp. 94-95.
\item \textsuperscript{58} G.R., III., pp. 6-10.
\item \textsuperscript{59} K.R., III., p. 176.
\item \textsuperscript{60} C.W., p. 53.
\item \textsuperscript{61} C.W., p. 291.
\item \textsuperscript{62} G.R., V., p. 77.
\end{itemize}
realization brings immortality and peace; it alone redeems; all else leads to peril and destruction,” for, Swāmī Rāma regards religion to mean a spiritual realization of truth and not a particular fashion of worship or performance of a ritual or observance of ceremony. Prayer and psalm-singing and the Sunday church service, he holds, are no service to God; so also the traditionalised mechanical activities connected with temples or mosques. Nothing short of a sincere and integral atonement with God, the only Reality, could thus stand the test of true religion.

In spite of such an emphasis on the spirit of Vedāntic religion, Swāmī Rāma never despises any of the various religious practices. His has been a very healthy caution against the devitalised mechanical rut of ceremonial rites that have come to occupy the central position in our religious life, and is keen, out of his pure affection for all, to regenerate the spirit with which God must truly be sought, and realized. He emphasises his Vedāntic principles of self-God identity, ego-transcendence, virtue of renunciation, etc., as the very foundations and significances of all our prayers and worship. In prayer, he says, there is, a unison of man’s will with the Divine will, and worship means complete self-giving to the Lord God (गृह्यायाम). Losing the empirical self is gaining the real self. “The night of the body is the day of the soul.” “Bhakti (devotion),” he says, “is the seeing of the All in all we see” with sweetness and love. In congregational worship we realize our collective oneness of the spirit. “Worship”, he says, “is transcendental wonder,” and the greatest object of wonder being man himself, all worship is worship of the self.

Referring to the progressive advancement made in our intimate devotion to God, Swāmī Rāma mentions three stages, respectively as ‘tasyaśvāham’ (I am only His) ‘tovaśvāham’ (I am Thine alone) and ‘tvameśvāham’ (I am verily Thou). The first two stages in which God is respectively a third Person and a second Person, are sweet and pure and spiritually significant, but the third and the last is the sweetest culmination, the final stage in which is realized a complete

63 K.R., I., p. 176.
64 C.W., pp. 133-137.
65 K.R., I., p. 231.
66 C.W., p. 254.
68 C.W., p. 349.
oneness of the self with God.\textsuperscript{69} This oneness is not only a once-achieved or sometime-achievable oneness in communion, but an ever discoverable truth of the eternal self-God-identity through progressive mystic realizations.

Religion, thus understood as a spiritual self-seeking, holds Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, is never opposed to either philosophy or science. "This Vedānta Philosophy, this Religion, is a religion as well as a science .....it reconciles Philosophy, Science and Religion.\textsuperscript{70}" In the west science has been taking some wonderful adventures exploring into the mysteries of Nature and, influenced by its independent and investigational attitude, modern philosophy also has assumed a spirit of freedom from traditional authority and religious belief, in some cases even to the extent of being mutually antagonistic. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha has made a very valuable contribution to the recent efforts of thinkers to bring about a reconciliation between them. On the one hand he exalts scientific spirit characterised by independence of the search-loving mind and investigational adventure without any bias and strongly advocates for such a scientific spirit in religion,\textsuperscript{71} while on the other, he confidently upholds the religious experience to be more valid and convincing in spiritual investigations than mere rational or logical speculations. Religious revelations are comprehensive and synthetic,\textsuperscript{72} while scientific researches are analytical and piecemeal. Religious insight penetrates deep into the otherwise unfathomable mysteries of nature and existence while scientific discoveries are confined merely to the observable superficies.\textsuperscript{73}

Of all the sciences, psychology has ventured most in the study of religious phenomena. But for the most part, its treatments have been superficial and dogmatic, in some cases even pretentious. Referring to one of them, which looks upon religion as a mania, curable by medicine Swāmī Rāma writes :

\begin{quote}
"If by this or that medicine you claim to cure religio-mania, hence calling it a disease, I can cure all your scientific capacities by a drug ; or we can cure a man of his life by some poisonous chemical. Would that prove that scientific acumen
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{69} G.R., IV., pp. 43-45.
\textsuperscript{70} G.R., VI., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{71} G.R., VI., p. 91 ; G.R., II., pp. 22-24.
\textsuperscript{72} Compare Radha Krishnan : "An Idealist View of Life", p. 92.
\textsuperscript{73} K.R., III., p. 180.
or life are diseases? No. Just as no medicines can make us scientists, so no chemical can give us the religious sense."

Vedāntic religion, conclusively, is a free and scientific experimental spirituality which goes so well not only with, but to the advantage of both philosophy and science.

APPROCIATION

In spite of a few seemingly inconsistent emphases, e.g., the futility and utility of religious training, natural spontaneity and disciplinary practices of religious behaviour, etc., born mostly of Swāmī Rāma's poetic vehemence, his views on Vedāntic religion have the characteristic merit of stripping religion of its chaff as well as of building a comprehensive synthesis between the varieties of religious faiths. There being a progressive religious enlightenment, he holds, religious experiences are not false simply because they vary: they are true at their own levels and in their own contexts.

Another very great merit of his 'Vedānta' lies in contributing towards bridging up the gulf between the 'here' and the 'hereafter'. He calls his religion as 'Naqad Dharma' (cash-religion) meaning that it is not a remote concern for an after-life, but is effectively operative 'here' and 'now'. In his own words:

"Not the withdrawn but the transfigured life, radiant with power and energy, triumphant in its selflessness, is religion."

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74 C.W., p. 306.
75 K.R., I., p. 183.
76 C.W., p. 235.
Chapter 8

Morality and Values

Whereas religion is generally understood to be man's intimate quest for the Supreme Beyond, morality may be said to be his concern for a good life here. Search for enlightening Wisdom and celestial Bliss might seem to be an independent private enterprise of an individual and the problems of common life might seem to have concentrated on such ideals of social character as may help in the attainment of common Good. Truly speaking, the problem of practical values of life cannot, except most arbitrarily, be cut off from the problem of ultimate and final values of life as a whole; it seems rather extremely uncritical and superstitious to split up human life into practical and otherwise. Accordingly, values, immediate as well as remote, social as well as extra-social, mundane and supra-mundane, have to be studied and evolved out comprehensively.

Superficially speaking, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha seems to have little or no regard for the common moral conventions while advocating a transcendentalism of religious perfection. Spirit or God to him is the only worthwhile Value in life and all that is mundane is discarded to be worthless, contemptible and foolish. But we have seen, in the preceding chapters, that his is neither a cynic attitude towards life, nor does he preach a 'run-away-from-life'-philosophy. It is true that out of an advaitic enthusiasm he has regarded the world as illusory and hence all worldly concerns to be valueless, but it is equally true that his advaitism suffers from no privations and hence his constructive approach to the problems of life. Struggle and strife in the world, disharmony and discord of our relations, sufferings and miseries of our existence, fear and frustrations, sin and evil, and all that is so ugly and unpleasant in life cannot be annihilated by merely shutting our eyes towards them. They may turn out
to be mere phantoms when the world is realised to be nothing more than a dream on a transcendental realization, or may assume pleasant colours of a Divine painting, but until then they are horrible facts of experience and have to be faced with courage and insight.

CONVENTIONAL ETHICS

Like religion, believes Rāma, morality has had its own long history and the stupidity of man has continually been corrupting. every fresh and useful approach to moral problems into codified dogmas at the cost of fundamental principles implied in them. As in religion so in morality, the common man enslaves himself to a set of formal standards founded on some rocky tradition, and irrespective of the logic of his attainable goal, mere conformity of his actions to these, no longer living standards is considered to be right and important. Swāmī Rāma’s views are revolutionary to the extent he advocates a complete freedom and independence from conventionality, which, at times, he unreservedly declares to be doing more harm than good. “Moral pauperism”, he writes, “is produced by giving precepts.”1 External standards of conduct choke down our inner awakening to the sense of right and wrong which can develop only through personal experience and maturity.2 Real morality is a matter of inner inspiration and never of an outer imposition.3 Mere formal conformity of our acts to some established codes does not constitute morality, we must have an inner enlightenment and pure minds for being moral.4 Codes are not important in themselves: they have a place in our moral life only as, and if, they serve and not govern man. Even social and scriptural authority is recognised only by an implied choice of our own acceptance thereof and hence proves our freedom from and superiority to them.5

This apparently shows Swāmī Rāma’s utter disregard to all jural conformationism in ethics. His, however, is not an attitude of only a revolt against all codeful tradition into an unquestioned licence but that of revolutionising moral values, although sometimes his versions do sound like declaring all code-regulations as.

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1 G.R., V., p. 34.
2 G.R., V., p. 51.
3 C.W., p. 208.
4 C.W., p. 258.
5 G.R., III., pp. 29-30.
"vain and futile." While reflecting upon Emersonian virtues of Non-conformity, he writes:

"The question is not between conformity and non-conformity. It is between conformity to the small and seeming and conformity to the Universal and Real. He who sacrifices the former at the altar of the latter wins. The former is the fruitful source of sins. The latter is Virtue and it should be observed so long as the Universal and the Real has not become one with our being—a part and parcel of our life. Then and not until then there is no conformity."

Thus formal and external morality in the sense of a conformity to a set of codical standards is not entirely useless. But it is meant only for the unawakened ignorant, and, if pedestalled higher than inner morality of the heart and mind, may even hamper our moral progress.

Codes and conventions are only the formals of morality of which purity of the heart and character are the essentials. The former undergo change and alterations with age and place and circumstance and serve as means for the latter. A vigorous and vital ethics, therefore, must be adaptive enough to liberalise its forms to suit the changing conditions of society and time. Swāmī Rāma's nationalistic and humanitarian interpretation of Yajña, his liberal views about sex-morality and the problem of killing and non-killing bespeak of his conviction that morality is grounded in something deeper than social conventions and stands higher than traditional sanction.

Referring to some of the very important virtues that have acquired weight and volume of long conventions, Swāmī Rāma maintains that they all had some spiritual significance and principles behind them, devolved of which they have now become meaningless and mechanical. Killing and non-killing for example have been very important issues in almost all religious traditions. Swāmī Rāma would have us treat them purely from the point of view of love for all beings, and the vision of their spiritual oneness irrespective of their phenomenal multiplicity, so that mere act of killing or non-

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6 G.R., V., p. 72.
7 C.W., p. 324.
killing of the bodies is not important in itself. From *Vedānta* point of view, again, he explains meat-eating to be wrong only because it is inconducive to spiritual meditation and not merely on the basis of its involving physical butchery.\(^{10}\) Referring to the *Gītā* in his support he says that it advocates love of the “Imperishable Reality, the true Ātman to such a degree that the knower is not moved even if all the suns are hurled into annihilation and millions of worlds are melted into nothingness.”\(^{11}\)

**THE SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE**

Obviously no distinction between good and evil, moral and immoral and right and wrong can hold valid in the context of a transcendental absolutism, and Śvāmī Rāma clearly maintains that these distinctions are limited only to human and social considerations.\(^{12}\) Strictly speaking, moral virtue or goodness does not necessarily indicate spiritual advancement of a soul nor does it inevitably lead to some spiritual perfection, much less do the traditional conventions and social standards relate to the inner spiritual life of an individual. Śvāmī Ramā writes:

> “Can the conforming conventional praise-seeking conduct be called pure? Confound it not with purity, it is weakness.”\(^{13}\)

There is no necessary correlation between outward conventional morality and inward spirituality of a man. It does not, however, mean that morality is something opposed to spirituality and vice versa. It only implies that spiritual advancement, which Śvāmī Rāma, unequivocally and repeatedly, emphasises to be the only important thing in life, does not necessarily follow from or depend upon social morality. His categorical advice is to care always for truth and never for sentiments or opinions of individuals.\(^{14}\) “Law” he says, “is no respecter of persons.” Those moralists whose vision is narrowed down merely to codical formalism are styled by him as “hysteric.”\(^{15}\)

On the contrary Śvāmī Rāma maintains that true morality is

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\(^{10}\) G.R., III., pp. 225-227.

\(^{11}\) G.R., VII., p. 155.

\(^{12}\) C.W., p. 144.


\(^{15}\) G.R., V., p. 17.
grounded in spirituality and moral is that which reflects a spiritual awakening. Conduct is imperfect unless it proceeds from a spiritual vision of all being one. All good spontaneously follows from spiritual realization.

“......highest morality is just such an adjustment of inner relations with outer relations that the good outside becomes greatest joy within. And this is in ‘jñāni.’”

Service and sacrifice, sympathy and love, and all other virtues and duties so naturally follow from spiritual awakening. Thus all that is good to others refers to a natural fulfilment of the self.

“In a perfect ‘jñāni’ right acts (deeds) become as spontaneously imperative as the demands of healthy appetites. That which is ultimately good brings as much immediate satisfaction as the cravings and sensations when answered.”

As such, all divergence and antagonism between egoism and altruism and self-fulfilment and self-sacrifice, naturalism and moral restraint find a reconciliation in the spiritual perspective of Swāmī Rāma.

NATURALISM

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha proclaims that Vedānta is at once the science of life, the philosophy of truth and the religion of nature. A close and direct study of life and nature, free from dogmatic bias and orthodox superstition, helps a great deal in discovering direct the hidden laws that govern life in its entirety, and a comprehensive vision of the innermost secrets of nature would only make us, both, good and free.

Life with its progressive evolution is heading towards a ‘Vedāntic realization’ wherein lies the privilege and supremacy of man. We are almost assured that the morally low and degraded today will surely rise to the state of purity tomorrow. This truth should naturally make us catholic and large-hearted, patient and loving, tolerant and compassionate. Absence of this realization narrows our vision and lowers our aims and consequently makes us

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16 C.W., p. 385.
17 C.W., p. 359.
18 Ibid., p. 359.
19 G.R., III., p. 34.
20 G.R., V., pp. 17-18. He says, “The so-called sinners are my moral babies”.
miserable. The only healthful morality, therefore, has to be learnt from the teachings of life and nature which we have to approach direct for ever-fresh truths. To accept stale views from tradition or custom would be spiritual stagnation.\textsuperscript{21} Nature, Swāmī Rāma holds like Wordsworth, is all-sufficient and all-healthful in infusing into us all purity. He writes:

"Foolish moralists! Religious fiends! Hands off! You have no right to dictate to the young folks...Nature, if allowed to have her free course, will never err. The Law or God that worked up the evolution of man from the tiniest amoeba to the human form divine, can well be trusted."\textsuperscript{22}

Again, like Rousseau, he says,

"If artificial morality-hawkers leave people alone, the so-called physical and mental cleanliness will be learnt just as easily and naturally as one learns to wash his hands regularly as a matter of hygiene, as a simple law of health."\textsuperscript{23}

There is evidently a very eminent note of naturalism in the voice of Swāmī Rāma, well comparable to that of Rousseau. He advocates a complete freedom to an individual and deems it as essential for his moral and spiritual advancement. No conduct under obligation can be rightly merited as moral. The good and the beautiful is what naturally flows from an awakened spiritual purity.\textsuperscript{24} Such a freedom to the individual seems to stand against all altruistic traditions of morality in favour of utter individualism, but Swāmī Rāma is confident that it brings a natural altruism, the only and the inevitable sanction of God’s nature.\textsuperscript{25} Life and its experience, pleasant and otherwise uninterrupted and unmoulded by codical standards, lead to the realization of the essential oneness we have with all others, and, thus, inspire into an all harmonious altruism in which alone is our individual growth completed.

**MORAL LAW: THE LAW OF KARMA**

This naturalism is based on Swāmī Rāma’s conviction that nature is not a mere aggregate of physical or biological events and their forces, but something that works divinely. He often puts it as

\textsuperscript{21} C.W., p. 48.
\textsuperscript{22} G.R., V., p. 53.
\textsuperscript{23} G.R., V., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{24} G.R., VIII., p. 135 ; G.R., VII., p. 118.
\textsuperscript{25} K.R., III., p. 199.
identical with the 'Law' that operates and governs all cosmic
determinations—physical, biological, psychological, moral and
spiritual. Naturalism of Swâmi Râma is thus, no cry for a rever-
sion to our animal nature with let-loose biological impulses, but a
call for moral and spiritual awakening which leads humanity forward.
Some moral traditions have regarded nature as lowpropense,
'adhogâmini' so that even the slightest concession on our part has
the dangers of irreparable moral degradation. Swâmi Râma has a
bold challenge to such a view and trusts that nature is essentially
good and makes us pure and virtuous, wise and spiritual. It governs
us infallibly, categorically and unsparingly. 26 It is a stern Law which
must make us moral from within, purify us from evil and make us
love purity. "The Law", he says, "is that you shall be pure." 27

The law is that evil or sin must be followed by suffering just as
simply as over-eating results in indigestion, and operates irrespective
of human contrivances. It knows no exception and we cannot cheat it.
"Try to throw dust into the eyes of God and you will be blinded
yourself." 28 Such a Law is an unchanging Impersonal Law beyond
favours or frowns. Its mercy is mercilessness. He writes,

"Mercilessly rolls on the wheel of Law. He who lives the
law rides the Law. He who sets his will against God's will
(i.e., the Law) must be crushed and suffer Promethean tor-
tures." 29

The Law is unalterable and perfect and we have to cultivate a Spin-
ozistic attitude of intellectual love for It, so that there is no room
for either a begging or a frustration. Its governance is automatic,
implicit and unerring, so that "We are punished by our sins and not
for them." 30

Unlike the common unphilosophical notion that paints moral
governance of the world through the figures of some superhuman
agencies, say, angels and demons maintaining the accounts of our sins
and virtues and treating us with heavenly reward and hellish punis-
hments, Râma holds a psycho-philosophical explanation in which

26 G.R., III., p. 326.
27 G.R., IV., p. 91.
28 Ibid., p. 91.
29 G.R., III., p. 6.
the nature of mind, its thoughts and emotions, have to meet their
own natural consequences—a fact which has been corroborated
by the theosophical researches and also by modern hypnotism.
Writes Rāma:

"Every thought of evil has for its ultimate goal the heart
of him who sends it. Around the world it goes and soon or
late in this or another form and perhaps long after it has been
forgotten, its sender receives it back again."\(^{31}\)

This Law Universal and Its governance has found the Vedic
expression ‘ṣ tabh’ and in the context of human action works as the
Law of *Karma*—to put it in simple words: “As you sow, so shall you
reap.” Dogmatized and narrowed down the whole import of the
theory of *Karma* has come to merely mean that our good and virtu-
ous deeds ripen into fame and fortune, power and position, wealth
and victory and our immoral deeds lead to starvation and poverty,
disease and defame, misfortune and misery. Swāmī Rāma puts the
theory in a wider application of the principle of cause and effect and
maintains that we reap results of the same nature of which our deeds
have been. “If you have love in your mind you will find love; if
you entertain hate you will meet hate.”\(^{32}\) The wicked people prosper-
ing in the world do not militate against the law of *Karma* for the
reason of their intelligent application in the line of their own pursuits.
They have however, inevitably to see a moral fall for their wicked
passions.\(^{33}\) The views of Sri Aurobindo on the problem of ‘Karma’
are strikingly similar, and one is inclined to think that what appears
as an implicit glimpse in Swāmī Rāma, finds a profound vision with
explicit elaborations in Sri Aurobindo.\(^{34}\)

The Theory of *Karma* includes and explains both the theory
of fate or fatalism as well as the theory of reincarnation or transmi-
gration of what is usually called ‘soul.’ We are so much different
from one another and our individual differences are not fully
explicable in terms of heredity and environment. They could not
reasonably be accounted for by arbitrary choice of a whimsical
God. Chance or accident conveys a mere absence of any positive

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\(^{32}\) G.R., II., p. 63.
\(^{33}\) C.W., pp. 410-411.
\(^{34}\) Sri Aurobindo: *The Problem of Rebirth*—Section One XII,
‘Karma and Justice’.
explanation. The universal law of causation must naturally connect every birth with some pre-birth antecedents and every death to some post-death consequents and thus maintain a causal link as well as a continuity of the experiencing individual, for, scientifically speaking, nothing physical, vital or mental is destroyed in death.\footnote{G.R., VI, pp. 183-188 ; pp. 219-221.} This pre-birth-life-death-post-death process is not a mere chemico-physical mechanism but psycho-moral working with spiritual significance.

Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha contends that, man’s essential self being identical with the Cosmic Self, the phenomena of life and death do not apply to it. It is the seed-body wearing the subtle body and then the physical body to which life-death process applies. Man’s desire is the chief propeller there. By their very nature desires have the potency of their fructification and carry in their original essence a sanction of the Divine inasmuch as they impel the individual being towards Godhead. For want of proper understanding, however, they get shrouded in self-singling impurities and confined to self-suffering narrowness of only bodily pleasure and worldly boons, styled as ‘māyika’ desires by Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha as against the ‘original’ or the ‘fundamental desires’ for Divinity which he calls ‘Godly desires.’ For expressional clarity and convenience we better put them as ‘desires’ and ‘aspirations’ respectively. Both, Rāma believes, fructify, but whereas aspirations lead to eternal fulfilment, peace and joy, desires lead to temporary pleasures wrought with difficulty, struggle and consumption. Our fate, ‘prārabdha’ is only a cumulative effect of our past desires and desire-propelled acts; our destiny is to be determined by our present desires and efforts. Heaven and hell are our own creations just as our dreams are fashioned after our waking life, and experientially correspond to our desires, faiths and convictions.\footnote{G.R., VI, Lecture 8, ‘Man The Master of His Own Destiny’.}

There arises now the problem of individual freedom. If according to the law of Karma everything has a cause, then life, its events, birth, death, desire and will also must have their respective causes and hence a complete determinism. If, however, there is a freedom of the individual will, the law of Karma is not thoroughgoing, and hence untenable. The attitude of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha to this issue
is more reconciliatory than selective. He brings in the difference between the absolute and the relative standpoints to reconcile the claims of both. In the absolute sense, the individual is integrally and organically one with the Infinite and, as such, he is completely determined. Relatively speaking, he has a freedom of choice and desire and, thus, is free. We may say that man is free so far as desiring is concerned and determined so far as the eventual results are concerned. Swāmi Rāma is primarily a practical vedantin and for a successful practical policy of life he stands to choose freedom of effort ‘purusārtha’ in preference to fatalism.

The law of Karma has the significance of spiritual education for man in that it not only operates impersonally and mechanically, but implicitly contains a spiritual message for him to advance towards Divinity. The law of Karma is also the law of justice and compensation, so that if somebody suffers at the hands of another, he will be sometimes put in a privileged position and be compensated for his suffering, as also if, somebody benefits at the cost of another, he will have to suffer for it and pay the penalty. Thus even our suffering and sorrow have a moral for us which is the most natural and intimate teaching of the Law rather than a wrath of nature or God. Swāmi Rāma says, “The law is that the seeming evil always comes in time to serve you unless you make it evil by distemper.”

**SPIRITUAL TRANSPOSITION OF MORALITY**

So, Nature that is divine or the Law that is impersonal is the guide and the teacher that slowly but surely teaches without precepts and inspires without impatience purity and goodness in our life. Morality comes neither by an ape-like imitation nor by compulsion, but by an inner growth. It is being good that is important and not merely doing good. Not social recognition but self-conviction is the sanction of morality. Not injunctions but illumined inner impulses should lead. The only principle is the principle of Truth. “He is a man of principle whose principle is ‘Haq’, Truth.”

In such an emphatic transposition of morality into spiritual setting which he calls ‘Vedānta’ Swāmi Rāma even makes cynical
remarks on the ways of the world, and one is likely to misunderstand him to be antisocial or otherworldly.\textsuperscript{42} It is really drastic to overthrow all that has so far been cultivated as social morality and then, it may not be entirely free from very great dangers. The views of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, however, are what may be better conveyed as spiritual reorientation of the whole import of morality rather than a revolutionary destruction of the so-far-acquired moral sense of our society, although his poetic language has the fiery spark that may burn to destroy, if not safely and carefully kindled to illumine.

GODHEAD: THE HIGHEST VALUE

\textit{Vedāntic} analysis of human aspirations has already shown that Immortality or Eternity, Truth or Knowledge, Bliss or Joy, Freedom and Purity, Lordship or Power, are the ultimate ideals for which everyone of us is inherently aspiring.\textsuperscript{43} They all constitute and characterise the Essence of the Divine, the Infinite Immutable God, the Absolute that is identical with our own spiritual self and, as such, we may say that the real and eternal goal which humanity is aspiring is self-realisation which is the same thing as Godhead. This ideal is the most natural, persistent and predominant in our life-seekings. This verily is the Value that outbids all other values of life. Rāma characterises \textit{Śiva} which is a synonym for the English word ‘Good’ as follows:

“If there be one object or idea, which is ever present and incapable of being excluded by any other, which all things and thoughts suggest and from which everything else derives its significance and reality, that is \textit{Śiva}.”\textsuperscript{44}

This ‘Śiva’ is the ultimate purpose in life. God, Law, \textit{Triśāla}, \textit{Haq}, \textit{Om}, Self, Divinity, \textit{Brahman}, Infinite, the All, the Truth, etc., etc., are the various expressions for the same transcendent goal higher than which there is no ideal and to which all our life experiences, pleasures and pains, fortunes and misfortunes, good and evil are inevitably leading, and which nature designs to instil into us even through her ‘harshness’, ‘slaps’, and ‘knocks’. “All that is frightful in Nature is the hound of the Hunter Truth.”\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} ‘Vedānta overturns all worldly values’, K.R., I., p. 275. ‘Vedānta makes you carefree about your duties, K.R., I., p. 280.
\textsuperscript{43} Chapter on \textquoteleft The Goal of Life\textquoteright.
\textsuperscript{44} C.W., p. 404.
\textsuperscript{45} G.R., V., p. 52.
In such a view of our life-ideal we have a transcendence of all the relative values of this world and the other worlds, possible or actual, the earth and the heaven, and also a complete and final fulfilment, negatively as a freedom from all suffering and misery, grief and ignorance, limitations and wants, ‘Karma’ and ‘prārabdha’ and positively as an attainment of the highest aspirations—Knowledge, Peace, Beauty, Love, Glory and Power. It transposes our sense of value from social morality to spiritual excellence and opens new visions of supra-ethical significance. An ever free consciousness of our own divinity and identity with the Supreme sets us utterly free from all sense of duty and responsibility, all considerations of sin and virtue, all obligations of the society and the world, all subjection to ‘vidhi’ and ‘nīṣedha’.46

TRANSCENDENCE AND RENUNCIATION

Godhead being the highest Value, all worldly values are simply worthless. Virtue is more valuable than riches. Money and possession, material gains and worldly prosperity are empty and worthless and an attachment with or craving for them is definitely bad and ignoble. “It is laziness and inertia,” says Rāma, “to be led by the current controlled by the sense of possession.” Social recognition and honour are all vain. Pleasures of the world end in pain and its charms are all fleeting;47 its powers are fetters, its glamour is deception.48 Rāma is sarcastic about our ordinary life routine in which, he says, we are busy like yoked animals constantly lashed into misery.49 “To be a slave to sense-enjoyment is like burying alive oneself to rot in the grave of his own body.”50

In decrying hedonistic life, Swāmi Rāma Tīrtha’s tone is, apparently, that of an austere cynic but in devaluing all worldly standards of comfort and happiness he speaks like a stoic rationalist advocating a life of prudence and self contentment. A mere escapism from the world is not his way nor does he spread sheer contempt for social life. The life of sensibility, of passion and desire, he holds, needs a regulation and control of the reason. What is needed is to transcend our desires and passions to such supreme heights that they

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47 G.R., IV., p. 38.
48 G.R., IV., p. 68.
49 K.R., I., p. 268.
50 U., p. 21.
may lose all colour and taste like an artificial lamp in the bright sunshine.\textsuperscript{51}

Supra-ethicalism refers to the Supreme End to which renunciation is the most important means. But renunciation does not imply a cynic contempt for the world nor an ascetic glorification of penance. It is only a useful means for a spiritual fulfilment, i.e., God realization.\textsuperscript{52} Personal desires, selfish attachments and egoistic aims have to be relinquished for the attainment of peace and felicity, spiritual bliss and divine knowledge. It is to lift ourselves from all that is mundane so that our life may be a life of God. “True renunciation means delivering everything to Truth.”\textsuperscript{53}

Renunciation or ‘\textit{tyāga}’ of the finite, the limited, the temporal is, thus, a negation that leads to an affirming of the Eternal and the Infinite. Desire which binds us to transitory values has to be eradicated for having a joy of the real spiritual glory. Renunciation of the world leads to the possession of the Heaven of heavens. It is “losing the horse” for “saving the horseman”; “crucifying the flesh” for attaining the “\textit{Kingdom of Heaven}.” Renunciation places you at your best, and “makes a god of you.” Self-denial, self-transcendence or self-abnegation is the way to Immortality. “Everlasting life” lies in losing the ‘congested life of personality.’\textsuperscript{51} All inspiration that blooms into artistic beauty and poetic creations, maintains Swāmi Rāma Tirtha, is born when the limited ego-sense is lost into the Infinite Spirit.\textsuperscript{54} From the physics of colour he draws that it is by giving and losing that we gain. All beauty and joy comes from self-losing and self-giving. A mental attitude of renunciation and desirelessness may be helpfully cultivated through austere discipline and ascetic penance with curbed wants and stern vows, etc., although it would be incorrect to treat them as its essentials, for, Rāma holds as the \textit{Gītā} does, that resignation is essentially a virtue of the heart and not an outward practice.\textsuperscript{55}

Renunciation, which leads to all spiritual attainment, Rāma further holds, is the basic virtue of our character from which all other

\textsuperscript{51} G.R., VIII., pp. 128-129.
\textsuperscript{52} K.R., II., p. 315.
\textsuperscript{53} G.R., V., p. 118.
\textsuperscript{54} G.R., I., pp. 51-52; G.R., III., p. 147.
\textsuperscript{55} G.R., II., Lecture 3. ‘\textit{The Nature of Inspiration}’.
\textsuperscript{56} K.R., II., p. 315.
virtues spring. He even equates renunciation with realization: the
former is a negative expression of the same thing of which the latter
is a positive expression. He maintains that all that is good and
beautiful and harmonious spontaneously flows from a spiritual rea-
lization or putting it the other way round, all beauty and charm,
all goodness and harmony, whether physical or moral or aesthetic is
born of self giving and self losing, self-abnegation and self-transcen-
dence.\textsuperscript{57}

GOOD AND VIRTUE

We have seen from the above that moral values are not any
fixed formulae in themselves; they are spiritual bearings. Virtue
and vice are relative terms like positive and negative ‘coordinate
axioms’\textsuperscript{58} of mathematics without any fixed and absolute demarca-
tion; they have to be teleologically evaluated. As such, anything
that hampers our spiritual growth is a virtue and that which
promotes our spiritual growth is vice. Our acts and tendencies are vicious
if they are world-ward and they are virtuous if they are God-ward.
“According to \textit{Vedānta},” says Rāma, “anything that retards or
checks your supreme happiness or Divine cheerfulness is sin.”\textsuperscript{59}

Curiously enough, we have two imports about virtue and vice
and their distinction in Śwāmī Rāma Tirtha. At some places he
seems to regard virtue as a means to spiritual progress, vice being
its opposite, and at other places he treats it as an effect thereof.
Righteousness and purity he maintains, for example, leads to
spiritual realization and truth-knowledge, and righteousness and
purity, he declares elsewhere, are impossible without a knowledge
of the Truth. To hold that realization would come on acquiring
mental tranquillity, he says, is to put the cart before the horse.\textsuperscript{60}
Such contentions apparently confuse as to the proper adjustment of
ends and means and render their mutual relevance rather ambiguous.

We may, however, find an explanation in the psychology of
learning, if at all it holds valid even in moral life, so that things
and practices to which we take for cultivating a good moral character

\textsuperscript{57} G.W., p. 430.
\textsuperscript{58} G.R., VIII., p. 4. The term ‘axiom’ seems to be a misprint for
‘axial’.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{60} K.R., I., pp. 233, 238, 239, 244, 251.
become almost natural and spontaneous in our advanced stage of moral or spiritual perfection. Thus effortful morality and effortless morality both may be successive stages in which virtues may respectively serve as means at first and spontaneously and effectively issue from our moral excellence afterwards. We come across the mention of a number of virtues while studying Śvāmī Rāma, many of them as virtues for practice and many to spontaneously follow from an inner awakening. He is unequivocal in his contention that a virtue is perfect only when it is naturally and effortlessly generated by a spiritual realization, which is at once truth-knowledge and unity in love. Self-control, viz., control of the body, the senses and the mind, temperance, self-contentment, desirelessness, curbed wants, solitude, humility, meekness, quietude, non-irritability, purity of the body, food and sex-regularities, cooperation and help to others, courage and fortitude, self-sacrifice, catholicity and large-heartedness, forgiveness, faith and confidence, self-improvement and absence of criticism, are the virtues that help and promote our moral culture and spiritual awakening. It is implied that all moral training is self-training and not others' reforms.

To search for the fountainhead of all virtues, however, one has to revert to his supra-ethical ideal of self transcendence into Truth-realization which is the ‘backbone’ of all morality and without which all is vain. He writes:

“When we are out of tune with Rāma, we do not see the way, miss the path of Law, and must suffer, while in God, the right methods, the right impulses, right inclinations spontaneously well up in the heart and lead us to the rich landscapes, mountain-scenes, refreshing springs of Peace, Prosperity and Purity or the blissful light in us of itself draws life and love towards us. Anything that dims the Divine light in us, any company or association which tends to lower the ‘sattvaguna’ are deadly enemies or seductive Satan, especially aggressive Ignorance.”

“Vedāntic realization” may perhaps be the most suggestive expression for Śvāmī Rāma’s cardinal virtue or super-virtue. Socrates thought, wisdom was the cardinal virtue and conceived that it was incredible that one should have wisdom (i.e., knowledge of the good) and not act accordingly. In almost the same way Śvāmī Rāma holds that Vedāntic realization, meaning at once a consciousness comprehe-

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41 C.W., p. 419.
ding oneness of all existence in its identity with the self and a delight and joy of an all-embracing love Divine, must surely bring in all purity, and goodness of our character. Spiritual vision reveals our essential unity with all, and there naturally follows equality, magnanimity and catholicity. Purity comes purely and simply into the heart of the self-realised. We are impure of heart for the reason of limited and narrow visions and weak and ignorant ideas. The strong broad vision of truth would naturally expel the weaker ideas from the mind and make us pure. True purity comes only by realizing the Pure Self as identical with all, and hence loving all. "True Purity alone is true love and true love alone is genuine purity."\textsuperscript{62} Vedāṇa also brings fearlessness. We are afraid because of our exclusive attachment for some finite things and our feeling of difference and division. To the unity-visioned there can be no fear of death or loss. "None exists but God. Of whom shall I be afraid, of whom ashamed?"\textsuperscript{63}

Truth and knowledge of the real self is, thus, the super-virtue which is its own criterion and the fountain-force that generates all effective goodness in life. To be ourselves true to the Truth is to set the world right. Knowledge of spiritual Truth is to live it.\textsuperscript{64} Wisdom must dynamize action. "True action is not separable from true love and true wisdom."\textsuperscript{65} Spiritual vision of Truth is verily a realization of unity through love that enlivens all our activities. In friend and foe the seer sees the same Beloved and his conduct would naturally be full of love and benevolence.

"Prajñā" and Karuṇā", we are told, go together. The self-realized saint, holds Swāmī Rāma has spontaneous compassion for all beings, however, sinful they may be, and his purifying love saves them not only from the odds of the world, but even from their internal agony of self condemnation. The fact of moral evolution is that we have to pass through so many stages, relatively high and low. "The so-called sinners are only moral babies." Such whom they call ‘fallen’ are only ―not risen yet."\textsuperscript{66} All this makes the man of knowledge

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{62} G.R., V., p. 36.  \\
\textsuperscript{63} G.R., VIII., p. 176. \\
\textsuperscript{64} The idea echoes : तत्र को मोरः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुप्रयतः। \textsuperscript{68}  \\
\textsuperscript{65} G.R., V., pp. 63-70.  \\
\textsuperscript{66} G R., VII. p. 57.  \\
\textsuperscript{66} G.R., V., Lecture II., ‘Criticism and Universal Love’. 
\end{flushright}
exceptionally large-hearted and the sage of broad sympathies is not only tolerant, but kind and compassionate, loving and generous to all.

Such an attitude of universal love, believes Rāma, places us higher than the morality of ‘Hate the sin and not the sinner’. “O dear people,” he writes, “you can never love anything so long as you perceive ugliness there. Love means perception of beauty.” To the realised love is the only law. “Whoever lives in love lives above law as Law. The only lawful Law is love. To live in love is to live true to yourself.” It is love that unveils beauty and creates harmony in life. This love is universal and comes only by self-transcendence and God-vision.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The problem of evil is a very obstinate problem in life, and Śvāmi Rāma has not left it untouched, although his account has not been very exhaustive. Apparently speaking, evil of the world is out of man’s control and the weak-minded pessimist may, even does in some cases, look upon suicide as the only way out. But that cannot solve the problem. “Can the schoolboy,” writes Śvāmi Rāma, “make progress in Arithmetic by wiping from his slate the sum he could not work?” Some others commit the mistake of attributing arbitrary favours and frowns to a partial God, for evidently such a notion goes ill with the nature of God. Nor could there be a room in Vedānta for a Satan, rivalling through his mischief God the Good.

Śvāmi Rāma’s consistent attitude to this problem is that evil is not an absolute fact of life but only an empirical phase. In hundred and one ways has he asserted that evil is born of our ignorance and can be removed by knowledge of the Truth. We mistake the unreal for the real, miss the true self and replace it by the body, the mind, etc., and are eventually led to evil and misfortune and struggle. “To break the Vedāntic Law………..is the root of all maladies, assuming the shape of one trouble now and then of another.” Falling out of tune with the real self, the Divine within, is the sole cause of

47 G.R., V., p. 18.
48 G.R., V., p. 42.
49 C.W., p. 233.
50 K R., III., p. 274.
52 G.R., III., p. 31.
all evil. The want of practical faith in moral governance of the world, violation of spiritual laws and absence of realization of spiritual unity lead to suffering. Knowledge and love of truth broadens the heart and widens the vision, Ignorance contracts and narrows it down. Ignorance divides us from within and eventually disrupts the world from without. All the vices of the world naturally follow. Lack of love, rivalry, exclusive possession and attachment, selfishness and jealousy, eagerness and covetousness result from want of spiritual knowledge.

Obviously the cure of evil lies in transcending the relative into the absolute. We can be free from it by removing ignorance and discovering truth. Śwāmi Rāma prescribes the traditional formula of our own rising above petty experiences into a witness-consciousness 'dṛṣṭā bhāva' a process of self-silencing without strife or resistance. "Resist not evil, resist not at all, stand still and see the glory of the Almighty." The attitude of 'non-resistance' does not mean an inert passivity, but the calmness and tranquillity of mind, worryless and unruffled. He says, "Evil is a disease, but worry over a disease is a worse disease." Transcendence, we know, is realization of the positive nature of the Self and thus an affirmation of its divinity, and then a consequent love and harmony for all.

**BEATIFICISM**

Knowledge of the real self, the pure ātman, and a poise in our pure witness-consciousness would mean, on the one hand, spiritual status of our being and, on the other, a dynamic life of selfless activity for the good of all, full of love and compassion. Such a state, we are conscious, would be a supra-ethical state in which one rises above all sense of duty and responsibility, supersedes all codes and laws and transcends all social and human standards. But in no way would this supersession imply a Nietzschean, decrial of all moral sense, sense of duties and obligations and the value of moral character and conduct, nor would a spiritual transcendence imply an utter negation of all life-activity, an ascetic quietism and withdrawal from all social

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78 G.R., III., p. 90 ; C.W., p. 365.
74 C.W., p. 420.
75 G.R., VIII., p. 225.
76 C.W., p. 220.
77 C.W., p. 307.
life. It would only set us high and above the ordinary standards of social morality and petty aims which commonly control and guide our activities, where we could breathe a freedom of supernal splendour and act out of pure joy and self-delight, which intrinsically contains the good of all.

Swāmī Rāma classifies duties into four categories, viz., duties towards ourselves, towards the country, towards humanity and towards God,78 in the order of ascendance wherein the higher one excels the lower one, but including and not contradicting it, so that duty towards God—in the sense of spiritual realization rather than institutional obligations or scriptural injunctions—stands highest and includes all the import and greatness of the rest. “In the realization of the self (God) are fulfilled all our duties.” Duties in the world involve relations of some desired purposes or aims with specific means of an individual in relevant settings. God being beyond all limitations and relativities, our duty towards God would imply freedom from common duties and obligations, into the spiritual self-sufficiency of our Godhead. As such, duty towards God would mean dutlessness. To the self-realised there is no duty.79 Self realization being itself the supreme duty, all else would find an automatic fulfilment in it. He writes:

“You have simply to shine as the soul of all, the source of light, the spring of delight. O blessed one! and energy, life, activity will naturally begin to radiate from you. The flower blooms and the fragrance emanates of itself.”80

Such a view greatly resembles the ideas of the ‘Karma Yoga’ of the Gītā where the yogin sees action in inaction and inaction in action. Rāma says, “Not having anything to do, to be doing something is Vedānta.”81 Positively speaking, love with renunciation, work without desire, action without attachment are the characteristics of the Vedāntic way of a good life. All work is impersonal work, and in the Vedāntic way is it done best and most nobly, with perfection and ease. The most gigantic tasks to a self-poised man are as the lifting of flower’s fragrance by the summer breeze.”82

80 G.R., V., p. 74.
81 C.W., p. 209.
82 G.R., V., p. 121.
Chapter 9

Sadhana

The *Vedāṇṭa* of Rāma primarily means knowledge of the Absolute Reality and religious transformation, moral purity and spiritual realization, artistic inspiration and creative excellence, good life and enlightened activity. All of them constitute what may be called a divine life, powerful and glorious, luminous and perfect, beauteous and delightful. Divine life as the aspired goal, we have seen, is both ideal as well as inevitable. The practical problem now is: How to move towards it? What should man's efforts be to accomplish it in coordination with nature, for, indeed, the goal is natural as inevitable?

Swāmī Rama's frequent elational utterances give the impression, at times, as if Godhead is a matter of an easy miracle ready to play out at a moment's command. He speaks for instance, "You may gain realization this moment" or "immediately on the spot you gain realization", etc.¹ But his writings are sufficiently serious and elaborate to suggest a sustained system of *sādhanā* or self-culture, a steady and secure path to the Supreme Realization. The contextual conditions of the possible 'immediate realization' are complete renunciation and non-attachment to the world, its objects and relations, and an utter reliance and meditative concentration on God, all of which, naturally, require a long cultivation themselves. Recognising the important factor of time in *sādhanā* he says, "Realization cannot be obtained at one jump. Time is necessary."

¹ G.R., IV., p. 10.
² G.R., VIII., p. 62.
The apparent contradiction of the possibility of an immediate God-Realization with a long and effortful self-culturing may be resolved by his *vedāntic* position that God the Real is eternally identical with the self and as such is possible of realization any moment, and yet the ignorant ego-centred individual has to be free from his self-blinding ignorance through a long and effortful process of self-transcendence to discover this identity with the Divine. That way, all sādhanā is a negative process of self-discernment through an elimination of the not-self. God-realization, he says, is an already accomplished fact; it only needs a discovery by negating untruth.

"You have not to do anything in the positive sense of the word in order to realize God. Simply undo what you have done.....But this undoing of what has been done is to some a very hard task. There is some effort to be made in undoing..."³

*Sādhanā* which is characterised as a labour of 'undoing' may be negative in process but it is positive in its effects in that through developing stages of self discernment the ‘śādhaka’ increasingly advances towards greater and greater self excellence and spiritual fulfilment. The two are in fact, complementary to each other.

**SĀDHANĀ AND NATURE**

Unlike some of the traditional systems of spiritual discipline which regard life of the spirit as something opposed to the life of, and in, nature and treat nature and its ways to be difficult impediments to *sādhanā*, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha reads an inevitable spiritual lesson in nature itself and regards it as helpful and encouraging in our spiritual pursuits. “When man is treading the right path”, he says, “the whole nature works for his deliverance.”⁴ Life in harmony with natural laws, he holds, is a *life of spiritual good⁵*, for Nature, from his point of view, is not merely something material and mechanical; it is also spiritual and moral and serves as the eternal book of GOD-Knowledge.

Swāmī Rāma does recognise the difficulties of spiritual pursuits. The path of truth has been compared with the edge of a razor, but

³ G.R., IV., p. 2.
⁴ C.W., p. 98.
⁵ जिसकी आदत प्रकृति की आदत हो वह आचरण से शिवोहँ गा रहा है।
that, according to him, is not the whole truth. He believes that nature immensely helps him who strives well with confidence and courage.

“In the beginning the path seems to be very narrow and sharp; but when you come out victorious over the ordinary temptations, you will find the path to be wonderfully beautiful and exceedingly easy. You will find that the whole of nature helps you and everything stands on your side.”

To the spirited seeker all circumstances are helpful. “Nature turns stumbling blocks into stepping stones.” The Self being the master of the world in its identity with God, “Nature is waiting anxiously upon the ruler of the Universe.” Not only at the end of the struggle in spiritual life does nature serve the Victorious, but even while he is engaged in his pursuits does she help and support him. In cases of necessity the true seeker does always get all help and guidance, even as fire draws oxygen to it.

Nature in the sense of external circumstances is always in harmony with the inner state of our being and, as such, no circumstances are hostile to our sadhanā. In fact, it is the inner state of the mind that reflects in the outer circumstances. Śrīma Śrī Rāma is convinced:

“There is but one Reality. When the heart beats at one with it, the whole world pulsates at one with the heart. When the mind is out of tune with the only Reality, the whole world vibrates differently from the mind.”

What is needed for a sadhaka, therefore, is not some special circumstance favourable to his realization but a self-training and self-improvement to be in perfect harmony with God the All, which brings peace and harmony with the whole Nature, for, nature indeed obeys the Spirit and vibrates in consonance with it.

Śādhanā, according to Śrīma Śrī Rāma Tirtha, has to be thorough and vigilant on the one hand and spontaneous and natural on the other, so that all effortful self-education goes well with a free evolu-

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6 G.R., IV., p. 22.
7 C.W., p. 145.
10 C.W., p. 386.
tion of the individual, thus implying that too much of self exertion is to be avoided as much as indolence. “By the very attempt,” he says “to shut out ignorance.........and weakness you post weakness and ignorance there.”¹¹ In favour of spontaneous natural progress of the individual the psychology of maturity in learning presents to him a principle of, even spiritual and moral growth, so that ‘moral purity’ and ‘God-Consciousness’ have to develop spontaneously and not on ‘running after’ realization ‘by aping the ways of’ others.¹²

INTEGRAL SĀDHANA

The essential nature of man being divine, and evolution being the cosmic plan of nature, freedom and spontaneity go a long way in the direction of our spiritual resurgence and yet a personal effort on the part of the sādhaka is necessary till he carries in him the grains of his longings and is normally disposed to striving for their fulfilment. The goal of God-realization being the goal of the whole man and not merely his particular part or faculty, his sādhanā is the sādhanā of the total being and not merely a piece-activity of either his body or life or mind.¹³ The personal effort at self-education and self-culture comprehensively includes the part played by every member of human constitution, viz., his body, life, mind, heart, psyche and all, so that sādhanā includes physical discipline, mental purity, moral and religious culture, and spiritual excellence, all in mutual harmony and perfection, for, none of them could be entirely isolated from the others except artificially.

THE BODY AND SĀDHANA

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha has laid a great importance on physical fitness for an effective spiritual sādhanā. Although he believes that the body of the spiritually awakened would automatically keep healthy, yet “for a beginner health of the body and mind need to be properly emphasised.”¹⁴ The body has been likened with a servant that has to serve its master, the spirit, and therefore it has to be kept, both, fit and docile.¹⁵ To keep a fit body one has to follow the natural laws of health in matters of food, exercise and sex, etc., etc.

¹¹ G.R., II., p. 204.
¹³ G.R., VIII., p. 51.
¹⁴ C.W., p. 259.
¹⁵ C.W., p. 252.
Bad stomach is the cause of ill health and unhappy temper. Food of the sādhaka should be simple and agreeable, light and easily digestible, and should be taken at regular intervals, long enough for a complete process of digestion. The quantity of food also should be such as can be easily assimilated. Fasts may be observed whenever necessary. Swāmī Rāma Tirtha holds nature to be a good guide, and the instinctive natural dictates as the best practical directions to be followed in matters of food, i.e., for eating and fasting. The natural course is the golden mean avoiding the excesses of over-eating as well as under-eating. There should be no intoxicants, because they bring exhaustion.

It is however to be understood that the materials of food and the act of eating are not all important in themselves; it is the attitude and feeling behind eating that greatly concerns our sādhana. Referring to the Hindu way of life Rāma says that the act of eating itself may serve as a spiritual yoga if performed with a religious feeling.

"With every morsel of food that goes into your mouth you have to contemplate on the idea that this morsel is a representative of the outside earth and here am I incorporating into me the whole universe.........and the very process of eating called the animal-process is a realizing process."

Not only to eating, but to all such acts of physical life the same principle applies. While bathing, for example, which is ordinarily a physical process with hygienic importance, we can concentrate while the naked body is drenched to every pore that we are one with the ocean of life and also that with the dirt of the body is being washed off the soil of the soul. Thus every act and process of life may be turned into a religious act (sādhana) provided we change our attitude. The Gitā supports such an attitude towards life, conspicuously in its variety of yoga.

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16 In his sarcastic comment on our dish-hospitality he says, “To commit murder and yet escape law, the easiest way is to entice a man to eat before the previous meal has thoroughly been digested (or between meals.)” C.W., p. 411.
18 C.W., p. 256
19 G.R., Ill., pp. 265-266.
20 Ibid., p. 266.
21 Gita, IV., pp. 24-33.
Healthful exercise should be taken regularly and scrupulously, advises Rāma, ‘as a sacred (religious) duty.’ “Exercise is very essential for good health as it keeps in harmony the external limbs of the body with the internal dynamic nature of the body.”²² He commends, in very high terms, an open air walk in company with nature and regards it as a curative even of mental depression and evil moods.²³ Yogic postures are regarded as very useful. In praise of the ‘samādhi’ posture he writes, “Sit straight in ‘samādhi’ posture one whole day; all poisonous germs must perish.”²⁴ Like food, he holds, exercise should also be taken with a religious attitude, “turning each physical movement into a strong suggestive spiritual symbol serving the same part as the pouring of oblations…….”²⁵

Prānāyāma or breath-control is regarded by Rāma as immensely helpful for physical vigour as well as mental health. He believes that ‘prānāyāma’ removes physical ailments as well as mental worries and is an excellent means as a vital exercise for keeping vigorously fit, buoyant and inspired, serene and self collected. Really speaking ‘prānāyāma’ is a technical breath—exercise with controlled inhalation and exhalation, etc. But the mere bodily process involved in it and the vital implications thereof are not all about it. Body straight, backbone stiff, head up, chest out, eyes front, and the processes of slow and easy but full inhalation through one of the nostrils and holding the breath within, and then slow and controlled exhalation through the other nostril to a complete self-emptying, so to say, and lastly staying still, breathless, he says, have to be accompanied by mental concentrations and spiritual auto-suggestions, respectively on intaking the Divinity or breathing in the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent godhead, and next on being the all permeating all inclusive Infinite Divinity, and third on blowing off all ignorance, impurity, weakness, etc., from within, and lastly on the self contained transcendence of one’s space-time-free existence.²⁶ Thus the whole process of ‘prānāyāma’ has a spiritual setting with spiritual result to follow. Śwāmī Rāma’s suggestions for mental concentrations correspond well to the symbolic meditations during prānāyāma respectively on Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, the trinity of the Hindu-God,

²² C.W., p. 413.
²³ G.R., IV., p. 177.
²⁴ C.W., p. 412.
²⁵ G.R., V., p. 110.
but he does not seem to prescribe any ‘mantra’ to accompany the respective processes of it. Whatever that be, to switch over from idea to idea or image to image, seems mechanical rather than meditational.

He gives his caution against an unnatural zeal of over-control of breath which might lead to physical disorders. Easy and natural prāṇāyāma with gradually increasing breath-control is the right way. He also advises simple deep breathing without any special technique along with spiritual feelings as the most natural form of prāṇāyāma with ‘wonderful results.’ What seems important, therefore, is the feeling-part of it. “I am breathing the air of the whole world. All beauty and love of the world are mine.”

Physical health, we have seen, does require a physical culture in the form of food regulations, exercises and prāṇāyāma, etc. But there is a psycho-spiritual basis of it, without which it is not perfect. “The secret of perfect health and vigorous activity lies in keeping your mind always buoyant and cheerful, never worried, never hurried, never borne down by any fear, thought or anxiety.” Whereas self-relating psycho-spiritual suggestions of positive nature work a marvel in promoting our health, negative attitude of ignoring the body plays a helpful part in it. “Those who think the least of their bodies enjoy the best health.” Detachment from the body brings health to it.

Sex is another problem so closely connected with our physical health, vital vigour, psychological balance and spiritual sādhanā. Śrīmad Rāma regards sex as a paradox. It is, in its essence, a spiritual principle of union and yet it is, in its physical expression, a cupidity to tempt into self-ruin. “Sex is the allegory of Love in the physical world (Śrīmad Rāma uses the word ‘Love’ specifically in a spiritual sense and holds that “Love is always for God.”). It is from this fact that it derives its immense power. The aim of Love is non-differentiation, absolute union of being which can only be found at the ‘centre of existence.’

“the prime object of sex is realization of unity, the physical union as the allegory and expression of the real union. From the protozoic cells to the very highest expression of sex,
we find that Love takes the form, chiefly and before all else, of a desire for union and only in lower degree of a desire for race propagation.”

And yet sex, in its carnal form, is the greatest allurement for a fall. For sādhanā, therefore, Rāma advises the control of sex as of utmost importance. Sex energy he calls divine energy and for good life it is to be properly controlled and used. “The root of all sin is this divine energy misdirected.” Referring to the view of H. Spencer that biological fertility diminishes along with high mental development in agreement with our Yogic science of ‘Brahmacarya’ that sex energy if ‘checked and controlled easily becomes changed into ‘ejas’, inexhaustible spiritual power’ and quoting a number of examples of great men from the East as well as the West, he holds that, purity of sex is indispensable for spiritual life.

By sex-purity, however, Rāma does not seem to mean a cynic asceticism of the medieval type, glorifying extreme and hard celebacy for its own sake and prescribing a puritan’s shudder or annoyance at the very idea of sex. He advocates an enlightened life above sex much more than a puritanism taking arms against sex. As an idealist he imparts a spiritual significance to sex, as a poetic heart he glorifies the Lord Love and as a naturalist he advocates an evolutionary out-growth of sex. ‘Slaves of Purity’ he says, are more dangerous than the impure themselves. Purity should grow from within. “Attaching undue importance to the merest trifle of outward purity, nay, sex hatred, keeps you off from the only true purity—Realization of the self.” ‘Extravagant regard for sexlessness’ according to him is wandering away from the true path. His teaching about sex-purity, thus steers clear of the two extremes, viz., carnal indulgence on the one hand and extra-cautious puritanism on the other. Sex control is necessary, but it has to grow on a sound basis of enlightenment, natural evolution and liberal attitude. His views are very much similar to those of Sri Aurobindo who holds that sex is representative on the physical plane of the Īśvara-Śakti-principles of the highest spiritual essence and that sex-purity is indispensable for holding spiritual ānanda.

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30 C.W., pp. 103-104.
31 G.R., VII., p. 36.
33 G.R., V., p. 33.
THE MIND AND SĀDHANĀ

Now we turn to the mind. Even in the sādhana of the body and sādhana of the vital principle of man, mind’s role is very important. The wonderful powers that mind possesses, may be conveniently classed as intellectual, emotional and conational. We have to work for the achievement of our integral goal, through all of them. Māyā, Ignorance or Illusion, we have seen, is the root cause of all trouble and misery in life, and knowledge, therefore, is the only way out. This knowledge, however, is spiritual self-realization, knowledge of the Absolute by identity and, as such, it is a knowledge much superior to and higher than the mental supramental to use the term of Sri Aurobindo—the Jñānam, as Rāma puts it, which is the Universal solvent in which all fear and anxiety dissolve, or the fire in which the whole world is burnt.

Our search for such a super-knowledge starts with jñānasā, the enquiry of the intellect with regard to the ultimate Truth. The intellect, although finally declared incapable of comprehending the Truth, has to go a long way in its search for the Absolute with its power of discernment and discrimination. It enquires and strives and fails in its venture to scale the Illimitable, and yet in sādhana it has its role of posing the enquiries into the nature of the Ultimate. In spite of its limitations, the intellect has to advance our sādhana also through a discrimination, ‘viveka,’ between the real and the unreal, the eternal and the temporal, and the good and the evil.

“Religion in the sense of Truth-realization is indeed a thing of the heart. But that which enters the heart must first be discerned by the intelligence to be true. It must be seen as having in its nature a right to dominate feeling.”34

The function of ‘viveka’ or discriminative knowledge is to provide us with a correct perspective in which things could be seen in their mutual relation, their merit and value, their advantages and dangers. Naturally the sādhaka who possesses discriminative knowledge is in a position to live a much more judicious life and therefore a more effective and successful life than the one who does not, and such a one, again, “is in a fit frame of unwavering mind to apply himself to the study of Universal Truth.”35 It is viveka which enables

34 C.W., pp. 311-312.
35 C.W., p. 258.
a person to give due weight and value to, and hence make a proper use of everything in life.\textsuperscript{36}

Thus, ‘viveka’ which is primarily a cognitive virtue must have a dynamic bearing on life. \textit{Ved\=antic} tradition lays down ‘viveka’ or discriminative knowledge as a very important \textit{s\=adhan\=a} for Truth-Realization, the chief import of which appears to be only an intellectual differentiation between things eternal and transitory—‘\textit{nity\=anitya vastu viveka}’. Sw\=ami R\=ama Tirtha also makes a sharp distinction between the permanent spiritual real self and the transitory empirical self comprising the body, the senses, the mind, etc., at places designated as the higher self and the lower self. But to him ‘viveka’ is not merely a metaphysical insight, it is also a moral sense that controls and guides our judicious activities. Thus ‘viveka’ has to operate in the \textit{s\=adhana}’s thoughts, volitions, and activities, together and effectively. Practical hints of the following type on ‘viveka’ in matters of thoughts, interests, speech and actions, etc., are found in the writings of Sw\=ami R\=ama Tirtha:

\begin{quote}
1. Never should you engage in anything of transitory interest. Pursue the eternal.
2. By making the acts bear the stamp of Reality, by and by the thoughts will also cease to dwell on passing incidents.
3. When you are about to speak, be sure that the talk will do you good; if not, do not enter into conversation at all.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

Just as we need a clear and sharp intellect for right understanding and a judicious conduct of life, so do we need refined emotions and a large and catholic heart for a spiritual \textit{s\=adhan\=a}. If ‘viveka’ serves well to train the intellect, virtues like love, compassion, forgiveness and sympathy do well to open our hearts to the ‘Lord Love.’

\textsuperscript{36} In an interesting parable Sw\=ami R\=ama narrates that a priest in his dream visited the lowest hell to which scientists (as non-believers) had been condemned and he was astounded to find the hell well-rivalling in its beauty and grandeur the highest heaven, the secret being the scientists’ ingenuity in putting to proper use and order all the things of the hell and thus converting it into a veritable heaven. The moral aimed at, in the parable, is that man who has within him both the divine god and the earthly body can convert his hellish life into a heavenly bliss by a proper and discriminate use thereof. G.R., I., pp. 181-183.

\textsuperscript{37} C.W., pp. 121-122.
In its highest essence Love is the ‘Real Self Undefinable,’ the source and origin of the whole creation, manifest in the world as power, attraction, affinity, etc., the moral sustenance of all good and the principle of Unity with the whole universe.\(^{38}\) Using the terms of physics as symbols of spiritual truths Swāmī Rāma says that heat which is a symbol of Love is the fundamental energy-substance of which glow and light as the symbol of Knowledge, is manifest form, meaning thereby that Love is the basis of knowledge. He has expressly said that we cannot know a thing unless we love it. The spiritual Truth therefore is known as realizable through love. “Love divested of all carnality,” he writes, “is spiritual illumination.”\(^{39}\)

In our practical life, especially in the context of our emotional culture and sādhana of the heart, love means a sympathetic realization of our unity with others. Its implications are generosity, catholicity, forgiveness for our fellow beings and a large-heartedness open to embrace the Divine in all. Ganga, the purifier is the ideal of such a heart-training. Says Rama, “So long as ‘udārata’ has not become natural with us, we cannot realize God.”\(^{40}\) Niggardliness and miserliness make us self-shut and hence incapable of feeling the Infinite Great. It is “making a famine where abundance lies.”\(^{41}\)

Love which is essentially opposed to attachment expands our hearts into universal sympathies, renders a sweetness to all things and frees us from all our limitations. The sādhaka is advised to cultivate a universal love for all, instead of exclusive family attachments. Swāmī Rāma even suggests that our affection for family relations may itself be the starting point of such a universal love. “Wife and children,” he says, “are not boundaries but centres of love.”\(^{42}\) As such our love may radiate through them in all directions and indefinitely, for, in fact, it is the very nature of love to unite and not except.\(^{43}\)

Discriminative intellect and loving heart of the sādhaka have to be effective through a training of his will. As in viveka so in love,

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\(^{38}\) C.W., pp. 141-142.
\(^{39}\) G.R., V., p. 59.
\(^{40}\) C.W., p. 434.
\(^{41}\) G.R., I., p. 145.
\(^{42}\) G.R., V., p. 54.
\(^{43}\) अगर इसक सच्चा है तो जब तक बहुत न आवेगी, दम न लेने देगा। K.R., III., p. 93.
the sympathetic disposition or catholic and loving attitude of the sadhaka has to express itself in his practical life. It has to dynamise his activities. Love is not merely to be felt, but to be lived. It is, as if, we have to be love itself rather than lovers. “O living man, it is worthwhile to live as love yourself.” To live as love makes us divine. With his stylish expressions writes Rāma:

“Live as love and all laws will be assimilated into you. Be in tune with the inner Harmony and Time will keep time with you.”

Vedāntic realization, we have seen requires a discriminative intellect and a large loving heart, both effectually operative in our practical life. “The advaita is to be realised on the intellectual but more so on the ethical and practical grounds.” Vedānta has to be realized through head, heart and hand, in thoughts, feelings and actions. Light of the head, Love of the heart and life of the body must have an integration.

“Let it tingle through your blood, let it course through your veins and arteries, let it permeate and penetrate your heart, let your brain be steeped with it, let all your being be soaked in it.”

**ACTION**

Swāmī Rāma’s emphasis on the conative and practical aspect of sādhanā, does not, in any way, favour the traditional ‘karma kāṇḍa’ or any other type of sacramentalism. His attitude is similar to Śaṅkara in that he does not consider Karma Kāṇḍa, etc., as either necessary or obligatory for a seeker of Truth. And yet he does not take arms against all codes and scriptural injunctions to discard all ‘kārma kāṇḍa’ as mere rubbish howsoever inferior to spiritual illumination it may be. Sacrament according to him, is not opposed to spiritual ‘sādhanā’ : it is useful to the extent to which it provides a training to the ignorant into self restraint, sacrifice and discipline.47 Only he does not regard it as either sufficient in itself or even necessary always, not to speak of its being compulsory for spiritual life.

44 G.R., V., p. 38.
46 G.R., VIII., pp. 36-37.
47 K.R., II., p. 326.
If, therefore, as we have seen in the previous chapters, spontaneous, delightful, free, enlightened works naturally flow from the self-realized, it shows that spiritual realization is not incompatible with active life. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha holds that if works are done without attachment they can lead to realization, and that way Vedāntic sādhanā is not opposed to household or social obligations. Every activity of life, in fact, can be a means for Vedāntic realization. Intense and dynamic activity and the spiritual repose do not militate against each other. The way in which work has to be taken to, is the Gītā-way of which desirelessness as to the fruit, and concentration with full application as to the performance are the characteristics. “Work minus desire,” he says, “is a synonym for the highest Renunciation or worship.”

Taken that attitude towards the activities of life, every work and every occasion could be well utilized for spiritual realization. Family life, social programmes, political activities and all other engagements of the type could be carried on with a vedāntic attitude, for, Truth is realizable not only to a recluse in a solitary corner through meditational withdrawals but also to a householder in the din and bustle of his world through intense activity. To be always seeking for some special circumstances favourable for contemplative practices may only be ‘chasing a wild goose.’

ASCETICISM

Despite such a wholesome attitude towards life and its circumstances Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha does not regard sādhanā to be an easy and comfortable affair of life. Mind is to be cultured into a discriminative intellect for correct knowledge, a compassionate heart for all embracing sympathies, harmonious dispositions for happy activities and a strong will to sustain the sādhaka against all odds in life, in the face of all that is adverse. Sādhanā for all this has to develop, slowly, constantly and cautiously. The Sādhaka has to be vigilant, austere and self-controlled and as such there is a good deal of asceticism involved in sādhanā. Before he realizes his spiritual unity with the whole universe and works for it out of free compassion and love, the world as world has to be shunned by him as illusory, transitory and deceitful appearance without any pleasures

48 G.R., II., p. 76.
49 G.R., III., p. 46.
whatever. Its attractions are to be treated as poisonous and dangerous, and a strict vigilance against all their temptations is to be observed for *sādhana*.

At places Swāmī Rāma even appears to advocate an extreme cynical neglect of the life of the body. “Ignore the body-think it not”, “Rise above the body, crucify the body, crush the flesh, overcome the bodily interests,” “......the physical life, is not important enough to deserve any serious attention,” “Take no thought about the body as to what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink and what ye shall put on,” “O body, I have nothing more to do with you,” etc., etc., are representative utterances so frequently made by him, and show his attitude of discard towards the body. At times he speaks of even cruel penances. “If thy eyes tempt ye, poke them out; better for the body to be void of light than for the whole being to suffer in the darkness of hell.” His ascetic cautions against wealth, skin-beauty, social honour, etc., are also quite frequent, reminding one of the traditional rigour in *sādhana*.

Life of *sādhana* requires not only an ascetic avoidance of bodily comforts and sense-pleasures but also a stoic forbearance in difficulties and hardships, for, life is essentially governed by the Divine. Swāmī Rāma says, “......gentle calmness is beautiful, but the storm of hot fever has a charm of its own.” Thus, the *sādhaka* has to be vigilantly austere and cruelly cautious against all allurements from outside and all looseness from within, and he has to be calmly patient and forbearingly contented on whatever seems unfavourable in life. Both of them, together, are essentials of what may be called a mental and moral discipline needed for his successful spiritual *sādhana*.

**INNER PURITY AND TRANQUILLITY**

Rigour and vigilance are needed to guard the mind against

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50 C.W., p. 432.
52 C.W., p. 22; Elsewhere he says: जब देखा कि संसार के कामसंघों में राम भूलने लगा है तो सत्त्वत्र अपने तई मुक्तिने कांटों पर मिरामा | U., p. 8.
53 “Beauty,” he says, “is an open letter of recommendation to putting a good face upon a bad business. Folly is its own burden.” C.W., p. 413.
54 G.R., V., p. 44.
impurity while patient forbearance develops a peace and tranquillity within. It could very well be said that purified mind alone can be a tranquil mind and a tranquil mind alone can serve for Truth-realization. Rāma writes,

“Manas at rest is identical with Consciousness. The Absolute (Brahman) Manas, purged of its dross (desires, attachments) loses its fickleness and tends to become steady. Perfect steadiness being attained, manas is one with Brahman.”

He is, here, in agreement with the established yoga-view that without a tranquillised mind spiritual illumination is not possible. Peace and tranquillity is achieved only by a purified mind, a mind that is cleansed of its ‘opacity’ so to say. Swāmī Rāma Tirtha regards all egoistic ‘proprietary-sense’ as opacity of the mind. Purification of the mind therefore is the primary condition without which no spiritual realization is possible. “Only the pure in heart can see God.”

Purity of the mind requires a moral culture which in its own turn would imply a cultivation of good many virtues, some by positive acquisition and others through a negative purgation. It needs a resolute mind to build character, firmly determined to purify itself utterly and entirely. In recognition of the sixfold moral culture, ‘śama-damādi-ṣaṭ-sampatti,’ preparing a fit and sound mind employable for vedāntic pursuits, Swāmī Rāma Tirtha stands for a complete control of the mind in all its parts, so that it becomes a pure and docile instrument of the sādhaka. “In one kingdom at least be a ruler—the kingdom of your mind and be it yours to dictate what shall and what shall not enter there.” He equates the ‘kārṣṭa deha’ with the subconscious mind and holds that our authoritative command can control its working.

Mental control cultivated by happy self-suggestions, and effective self-resolutions, together with other important virtues like

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55 G.R., VIII., p. 168.
57 Compare the upaniṣad-view:

नाविन्तं हृदयस्वरूपः (प्राणा) शास्त्रो नासमिष्टः।
नानास्त्यान्तरं ब्रह्म प्रज्ञानेननमच्छुदाः। कथा-१-२-२४।

58 C.W., p. 399.
59 C.W., p. 301.
60 C.W., p. 280. Modern researches in auto-suggestion may corroborate that a strong suggestion has an effect even on the unconscious recesses of our mind.
equality and balance of the mind, resignation and cheerfulness, etc., would constitute the inner health of the sādhaka.\textsuperscript{60} To be free from anxiety is the inner beauty of the mind and gaiety is the greatest tonic. The duties of life and responsibilities like earning of livelihood, etc., should be taken to in a sportive fashion and the world should be enjoyed with a spirit of resignation “Enjoy the land but own it not.”\textsuperscript{61}

“Vedāntic resignation means throwing off and casting over board all anxiety, fear, worry, hurry and trouble of mind by continually keeping before your mental vision the Godhead of your real self, exempt from all worldly cares, worries and duties.”\textsuperscript{62}

The attitude of the sādhaka towards external things, social circumstances and other people should be of non-criticism and indifference, tolerance and non-grievance, sympathy and kindness. Rāma recommends an attitude of non-resistance even towards hostile criticism that a sādhaka may receive at the hands of others. He says, “As an equilibrator comes criticism, It is the pruning process of Providence, helping us to grow more beautiful.”\textsuperscript{63} Even higher than the attitude of indifference and non-resistance towards the critic would be the attitude of free forgiveness and kindness.\textsuperscript{61}

\textbf{RENUNCIATION}

The greatest impurity of the mind as also the chief enemy of our moral cleanliness which impedes all our spiritual progress is its desire-element with its exclusive attachments and aversions and Swāmī Rāma regards it absolutely essential to eradicate it for a spiritual sādhanā. Desires, he says, are our ‘greatest weaknesses’ and have a ‘choking’ effect on our otherwise free mind; they ‘chop off’ and ‘make us small.’ They ‘enslave’ us and rob us of our joy.

\textsuperscript{60} See the previous chapter.
\textsuperscript{61} C.W., p. 123—The idea compares with तेन स्वस्तेन मूल्यामुः...
\textsuperscript{62} Iṣa, U., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{63} G.R., III., p. 323.
\textsuperscript{44} इश्वर देशन तो तब मिलेगा जब हासारिक हृदि से प्रतीयमान घरी बिरोधी निदक लोगों को क्षमा करते हुम इससी देर भी न लगाये जितनी भी गंगाजी तिनकों को बहा लेखाने में लगाती हैं, या जितनी आलोक किरण अंधकार के उड़ने में लगाती हैं। U., p. 24.
in life. They have a ‘hypnotic’ and ‘debasing’ effect on us. Our desires and attachments with their implied ‘loves’ and ‘hatreds’ are shackles or chains which bind us and from which we have to free ourselves for God-realization. “You cannot be a slave of the flesh and at the same time the master of the Universe.” Desirelessness is regarded by Rāma as the very essential of mental purity needed for God-realization. “Purity of heart means making yourself free of all clingings to the objects of the world.”

The seeker has to cultivate non-attachment and renunciation ‘slowly and resolutely,’ so that he remains untainted by the worldly connections like a lotus in water. To be free from our attachments would also mean freedom from all hatred and jealousy which are, in the words of Swāmī Rāma, ‘inverted attachments.’ To rise above all petty relations of the world is thus an utter necessity for sādhanā. “Form no ties” he says, “Let nobody enter your heart. Let no person come close to the inner self.” The sādhaka is even advised to leave any and everybody whosoever stands in the way of his realization, to sever all his worldly relation with people and exclusively look upon God as the only concern of his life.

At the face of it spiritual sādhanā looks to be an utterly anti-secular pursuit and the path of the spiritual seeker appears to be entirely opposed to the ways of the common man. But the views of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha, in spite of their ascetic vehemence, do not favour, without qualifications, the extremes of the ascetic ways. Renunciation, correctly speaking, is not an external way but an inner attitude of disowning all that is not the self. It does not mean a cynic abandonment of home and society to retire into a solitary cave; it means rising above all selfish attachments into an undisturbed inner peace and calm, an inner spirit of resignation and repose unperturbed by the outer circumstances. It concentrates not upon formal self-privations but awakened self-transcendence, which Swāmī Rāma Tirtha often synonymises with spiritual knowledge. He says:

“This renunciation is described by the Hindus as Ṝṇam,

65 G.R., IV., pp. 2-3.
68 C.W., p. 18.
69 G.R., III., pp. 142-144; K.R., I., pp. 443-444.
which means knowledge, that is, renunciation and knowledge are one and the same thing.”

Renunciation as the essential of Vedāntic Śādhanā extends to the widest ranges of our mental life, and Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha uses a variety of figures to impress upon the sādhaka the imperative of complete self-emptying. To meet Lord God, he says, we have to be majestic by casting away the dirty coverings of desires and clingings, and by seating ourselves on the throne of renunciation garlanded with pearls of non-attachment and crowned with knowledge. Referring to the legend of Kṛṣṇa’s victorious crushing of the dragon Kāliya he brings out a symbolic significance that we have to depoison the lakes of our minds by trampling over the poisonous passions lying in the deeps thereof and by a celestial music to flow from the self-emptyed flute of our being. In its widest application and ideal, renunciation means a complete and unreserved self-denial. “To win all we must give all.” “Give away all that you have.” The ‘all here refers to not merely material things we possess, but even to our attachments with our ideas, opinions, etc. Says Rāma, “You must give up one after another all your pet prejudices, possessions, clingings, attachments.” The idea of a complete self-giving unto the ‘Robber Lord’, Hari, (the ‘dearest name of God to Rama’) strikes a very great similarity with Sri Aurobindo’s integral self-purification and surrender, “rejection of the mind’s ideas, opinions, preferences, habits...desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy...” and “...surrender of oneself and all one is and has...”

For the cultivation of such a high order of renunciation and purity Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha recommends the practice of occasional solitary retirements which is like going to the University for training and self-equipment. The practice of meditation in seclusion serves as a very good means for keeping our spirits up and for maintaining

70 G.R., III., p. 145. Elsewhere he says, “Renunciation does not mean asceticism. Renunciation means making everything holy......Realizing the Divinity in each and all—this is renunciation according to ‘vedanta’ (G.R., III., p. 196).
71 U., pp. 34-35.
72 G.R., IV., pp. 82-84.
73 C.W., p. 322.
74 G.R., V., p. 35.
and also restoring balance and peace of mind of the sādhaka. He prescribes lonely walks and silent contemplations for physical, mental and spiritual health. "God would walk with anyone if only one would walk alone."  

Whereas Swāmī Rāma Tirtha holds that cultivation of all good virtues, mental and moral, discrimination, sound character, good life, desirelessness, renunciation, sympathy and love, etc., lead to spiritual realization, he often maintains that all these good virtues are secure only if founded on a spiritual vision of Truth. Such a position has two implications: first, that the spiritually realized is necessarily, spontaneously and naturally good and pure, and second that all good culture and purity of the mind and heart and life—the empirical self—is complete only when it finally receives the powerful touch of the spiritual beatitude and illumination which brings a transformation to them and establishes the supreme law of harmony and perfection in all the lower members of our constitution. Both of the two implications are implicitly stated in his writings and the latter has very great resemblance with Sri Aurobindo’s supramental transformation. Writes Swāmī Rāma, "As the tendency of the most lustful man ceases before his mother, so the vāsana of the wise ceases on knowing Brahman, the Perfect Bliss." Again, "...outward renunciation can be achieved when inward perfection, inward mastery or kinghood is attained. No other way, no other way."  

**TRANSCENDENCE AND SELF DIVINISATION**

To build a spiritual vision of Truth Swāmī Rāma Tirtha suggests what may be styled as a psychic training or developing an inner conviction of self-divinity. There are two important aspects of this development, negative and positive. Negatively the sādhaka has to transcend his lower self through self-denial and positively he has to assume his true god-head through self-assertion.

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha repeatedly emphasises the necessity of rising above the body-sense, his tone at places becoming cynical for he means to guide the sādhaka into a transcendence whereby he may

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77 C.W., p. 234.  
78 C.W., p. 266.  
79 G.R., I., p. 175.
be free from the mire of body-consciousness, his wrong and miserable identification with the physical body. In tune with the illusionist he calls this body as an ‘upādhi,’ a superimposition on the real self, which the sādhaka must remove.  

He even treats the body as a mere hallucination and advises the sādhaka to think “as if this body were never born.”

Abandoning the body-sense is only a part of a wider programme of self-transcendence in which the whole of the lower self, the body, the mind, the ego, the entire personality of man is to be risen above by the sādhaka. Our ‘childish’ regard for the empirical little self—a particular body, brain, and mind—to be exclusively our own is our spiritual malady, and unless we are free from it, no realization is possible. Rāma’s writings are replete with the idea that the empirical self, the ego-sense, the lower nature of our being has to be mercilessly devoured for the realization of Truth. “Let the little self,” “he says, be flung into infinity.” Making a symbolic interpretation of the event of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s victory over Kaṁsa after having beaten to straightness the crooked Kubjā, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha shows that spiritual attainment of the eternal kingdom of the Blissful Self is possible by killing the ego (Kaṁsa) after straightening the misdirected faith (Kubjā) in the not-self, by a blow of discrimination and thus obtaining the birthright of self-rule and kingdom by employing aright the faith in the Real Self. This transcendence of the lower self has to be entire, that is, the empirical, social, moral and all aspects of its life are to be risen above.

The process of self-abnegation, however, has to be complemented by the important process of self-exaltation into an inner excellence for spiritual realization. This process of self-exaltation consists of a confident and strong and feelingful concentration of our thoughts on the essential divinity of the Self. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha calls it ‘self-assertion,’ which supports and strengthens our rise above our maladies. In spite of the limitations and weaknesses of the empirical self—the body, the mind, the ego, etc., the sādhaka is advised to

\( ^{80} \text{"Having attained to self-Knowledge, abandon this upadhi (body).} \)  
\( ^{81} \text{It is not to be thought of again, the recollection of what is vomited is only calculated to disgust." C.W., p. 266.} \)  
\( ^{82} \) G.R., III., p. 302.  
\( ^{83} \) K.R., I., p. 92; K.R., III., p. 89, etc.  
\( ^{84} \) G.R., VIII., p. 136.  
\( ^{85} \) L.L., pp. 135-137.
inwardly dwell upon the glories and beauties of the Real Self, and its Divine nature, and treat all the propensities of the lower self as foreign to his central being. “Be not centre out,” he says, and advises the sādhaka to constantly affirm within himself his own godhead. “In order to realize Truth you must realize yourself as Truth.” Self-sacrifice and self-mortification are not, in his vedantic scheme of sādhanā, self-extinction into a nihil, but only emancipation into an Illumined Godliness. He writes,

“Offer up to the fire of Jñānam (Divine Wisdom) all your sense of possession, all your clingings and designs, all mine and thine, loves, hatreds, passions, frowns, favours and fashions, body, relatives and minds, all kith and kin, rights, wrongs and dues, interrogating Q’s, all names and forms, all claims and charms, renounce, resign. Pour them as oblations into the Fire of Divine Wisdom. Make incense of them and enjoy their sweet smell while ablaze on the flaming altar of Tat-Twam-Asi, ‘That Thou Art.’”

Purged of all egoism, but not indulging in self-damnation, the sādhaka has to build a conviction of his spiritual self-supremacy through a self-glorification, and then successively a God-vision. “Let the sun and the moon like humming bees play upon the lotus of your heart,” Free from ignorant notions of separative individuality, one has to feel his all inclusive Infinitude.

‘Self-Assertion’ of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha which means an effective conviction of self-divinity and a self-sustained supremacy of the sādhaka, has to be cultivated through self-reliant auto-suggestions, a method which has been based upon a very close study of the wonderful powers of man’s mind. “Just as you think so you become,” says Swāmī Rāma to show that our spiritual progress greatly, or almost entirely, depends upon our own freedom and choice rather than on fate and circumstances. The sādhaka has been consistently,

85 C.W., pp. 67-68.
86 G.R., IV., p. 182.
87 G.R., V., p. 122.
88 C.W., p. 300.
89 “Feel your oneness with each and everyone,” “Remove all sense of separateness,” “Breathe the universal consciousness,” “Feel the Whole world is Mine,” “Concentrate your thoughts upon the Truth of Truths, upon this Reality that all are one, all the bodies are yours,” etc., etc., are the representative assertions Swāmī Rāma makes almost everywhere in his speeches and writings.
therefore, advised by him to guard himself against all self-abasement, and to develop all health of self-glory. If we constantly condemn ourselves as sinful, weak and fallen, we are of ourselves doomed to hell. Conversely if we make healthy self-suggestions that we are pure and divine, we are destined to rise into our own godhead. Like Swāmī Vivekānanda he regards all our spiritual awakening as a process of ‘self-dehypnotising.’

The sādhaka of the spiritual path has been so very strongly advised by Rāma to be self reliant and independent in his search. “Each man must find the Truth for himself.” He chooses to express his total philosophy as ‘Self-reliance’ and regards all spiritual sādhanā to be one’s own endeavour. The seeker should regard his real self as his own teacher and be confident of his self-sufficient inner light, courage and self-efficacy. He writes:

“If three hundred and thirty three billions of Christs appear in the world, it will do no good, unless you yourself undertake to remove the darkness within. Depend not on others......Worshipping this Christ or that Krishna, this fetish or that, will avail nothing........... The only remedy is light and light is living knowledge, living faith in your Divinity. That is the remedy, there is no other.”

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha is never tired of emphasising the powerful method of self-suggestions into self-divinity. To be constantly concentrating on the essential nature of the self within, and firm and feelingful faith in its godhead, greatly helps in the realization of Truth. Swāmī Rāma prescribes the cultivation of ‘Śivoham’-spirit, the spirit of self-joy through unceasing, auto-suggestions as to the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent character of the Real Self—the Transcendent Spirit. He calls it also as the ‘Soham spirit.’ The Śivoham’-spirit of the above nature, is not merely to be cultivated inwardly in silent meditations, but even overtly in our behaviour. Rāma is enthusiastic, “Cry at the top of your voice ‘I am God, I am God.’” All ideas of self-divinity are, as it were, to be breathed into and lived by the whole being through each cell. “Before

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90 K.R., I., p. 363 ; C.W., p. 302 ;
91 C.W., p. 291.
92 G.R., III., p. 85.
93 U., pp. 52-53, 58.
94 G.R., III., p. 142.
falling asleep,” he says, “......make a firm resolve in your mind to find yourself an embodiment of Vedantic Truth on waking up.”

And when awake and active there should be a constant self-reminding of such a resolve to ensure divine behaviour.

The success and efficacy of auto-suggestive method is greatly aided by repeated practice of good thoughts and careful avoidance of unhealthy preoccupations on the part of the sādhaka. Good impressions through good and useful study ‘svādhyāya’ like that of the Gītā and the upaniṣads, etc., company of healthy and pure hearted persons, constant remembrance of God the Good, etc., immensely help the progress of the sādhaka.

Of the many traditional practices that go by the name of spiritual sādhana, Śwāmi Rāma Tirtha regards the chant of OM with faith and feeling as of wonderful value. Treating OM to be the underlying Reality of the whole Universe he advises the sādhaka to make effective meditations on it as identical with the Self.

“Let it course through your veins, let it pulsate in your bosom, let every hair on your body and every drop of your blood tingle with the truth that you are the Light of lights, the Sun of suns, the Ruler of the Universe, the Lord of lords, the true Self.”

His belief in the efficacy of OM is faithful to the upaniṣadic tradition. Not only a meditation on OM, but even humming of OM, believes Rāma, is useful in sādhana, and results in feeling and living OM. Because of its enchanting music with spiritual effects, chant of OM, is useful in every phase of our life and the benefit of its powerful efficacy is available to every man, in every circumstance.

RELIGIOUS SĀDHANA

We have observed so far that the spiritual self-awakening of the sādhaka has to be effected through an all-round culture of our physical, vital as well as psychological life, slowly and resolutely,

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95 G.R., VIII., p. 266.
94 G.R., IV., pp. 96-97.
93 G.R., IV., p. 128.
92 Ranade: Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy, pp. 333-335.
99 G.R., IV., pp. 147-149.
through negative cautions and positive improvements. The body
and life and mind of the sādhaka, however, are not his all, and his
sādhanā for self-divinization has still deeper and more fundamental
regions of his constitution to touch, the innermost core and the
central principle of his being to be transformed. For this deep and
more intimate culture, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha recognises the efficacy
of religious surrender and devotion to God. All our efforts to vigilantly
train the body and the mind, all attempts at self-purification by
curbing our desires and cautious non-attachment, all our practices
at constant carefulness in matters of food and sex, judicious social
company and useful studies, etc., etc., constitute the strenuous part
of our self-culture, the 'do-all' aspect of our enterprise. There is the
'do-nothing' aspect or the 'non-doing' aspect of our complete self-
giving, surrender and devotional love for the Beloved in which the
sādhaka is relaxed unto an implicit communion with the All Good
and Beautiful, a 'stay-home'-attitude of utter faith and trust, indifference
to desire and personal weaknesses, inexhaustible patience and
an unreserved surrender unto the Lord God. "All the vedānic way
of life is typified," he says, "by Arjuna, giving the reins of his horses
unto Krishna." 100 We have to completely 'evacuate' ourselves for
His Abode; we have to be 'empty flutes' for His Breath, the Divine
Music to flow through; we have to be the flowers of His worship;
tools in His Hands.

Truly religious approach, we are familiar, is not a ritual or an
observance-formula, but an essential secret of spiritual intimation, a
mystic realization of the self-God-union-in-love. The sādhaka there-
fore, has to drown deep or merge complete his soul into the Supreme
and not merely indulge in rituals of whatever type or superficial
feeling-patterns that go by the name of devotion, "Upāsanā," he
says, "is that state in which every fibre of our being gets permeated
by God Rāma, the mind is drenched in the Divine Nectar and the
heart is drowned in Bliss." 101

"Happy is he who is drowned in heavenly intoxication.
Blessed is he who is dead drunk in divine madness. Worship-
ful is he who is absorbed in deep Atmānanda....." 102

100 C.W., p. 110.
101 Freely translated from U., p. 3.
102 G.R., VIII., p. 172.
Swāmī Rāma refers to the two types of ‘upāsanā’—the ‘pratikopāsanā’ and the ‘ahangrahopāsanā.’ In the former the seeker approaches God through an outer symbol whereas in the latter he concentrates on God as identical with his own self. Both ways, he holds, surrender and self-opening unto the Lord—the Self-within or the God without—is of a very great sādhanā-value. Pratikopāsanā has the metaphysical basis of God’s immanence in all things and its acme, from Rāma’s point of view, lies in the sādhokā’s vision of God in everything.\textsuperscript{103} In the ‘ahangrahopāsanā’ there is, perhaps, no relevance of a worship or prayer, for, the Self already is God and the sādhokā has only to feel and assert his Godhead by self-transcendence.\textsuperscript{104}

Ahangrahopāsanā seems to be somewhat more consistent with the Vedāntic ideal of self-realization characterised in its various phases by a withdrawal of the consciousness from all that is empirical, relational and changing to the repose of an Impersonal Self-contained status, a delightful peace and Self-fulfilment in an eternal Self-divinity, an expansion of the local limited ego into an all embracing universality, an absolute identity of the Self and God and an integral transformation of the whole being into Supreme Godhead.

Swāmī Rāma so fondly compares the ideal Vedantic sage with the Sun that shines impersonally, and inspires the sādhokā to assume the status of an untouched witness—self-contained and unruffled. It is cultivating the ‘draṣṭā bhāva’ (the attitude of an onlooker) towards the world, life and its affairs, through self-withdrawals. He calls it also the state of ‘Jñāna samādhi’ and regards it as an essential of spiritual health. “We feel our personality or body when we are spiritually sick” just as “we feel our liver or spleen when it is sick.”\textsuperscript{105}

Spiritual health, born of a withdrawal from the transitory outer mentality into an inner self-consciousness, thus, being the

\textsuperscript{103} प्रसीकसन सत्त सफल होती है जब हमें सर्वथा श्रद्धा देखने के योग्य बनाये, सारा संबंधत संविद बन जाये, हर पवार राम की शांति कराये और हर क्रिया पुजा हो बयार। U., p 12.  
\textsuperscript{104} गृहि, IV., p. 35.  
\textsuperscript{105} C.W., p. 22.
essential prerequisite for vedantic pursuits, the sādhaka has to, progressively, realize his absolute status and its absolute identity with Brahman. ‘Sākṣātkāra’, he says, is dissolution of the ‘kāraṇa deha’ or self-realization means disappearance of all empiricity.

"Here there and everywhere;
There where no more a "where?"
Now, ever a now and then
Then when’s no more a "When?"
This that and which and what;
That that’s above "What?"
First last and mid and high
The one beyond a "why"
One five and hundred, All,
Transcending number one and all,
The subject object, knowledge, sight
Even that description is not right,
Was is and e’er shall be
Confounder of the verb "to be"
The sweetest self, the truest Me
No Me, no Thee, no He."

This realization of self-absolutism, however, is attended with two, apparently not very congruent, ideas at different places in the writings of Rāma. One is that the realised has an enlarged consciousness so as to encompass the whole world and hence the practical corollary of his inexhaustible compassion and love for all beings. The other is that such a realization is transcendental and absolute, the enlarged cosmic consciousness being only a prelude to the absolute Brahman-consciousness. He has, for instance, styled self-cosmicisation through progressive social expansion of our being as the Christ-state in which we are freed from what he calls extrinsic illusion and also clearly maintains that the Christ-state has to be passed through before we merge in Nirguṇa Brahman, the state of freedom from intrinsic illusion. His passion for a vedāntic life on earth, on the other hand, is indicative of self-realization being regarded as an essential for a Divine transformation.

106 G.R., II., p. 80.
107 G.R., III., pp. 188-193.
108 Bk., III., Chapter I. The three stages of dṛṣṭa, Iśvara and Divine Transformation, according to Sri Aurobindo, offer a sustained view of our spiritual development and perhaps a perspective in which Swāmī Rāma’s seemingly incongruent emphases could be harmonised (Ref. Life Divine, American edn., pp. 761-762).
To the casual reader, the views of Śvāmī Rāma Tīrtha may seem to swing incoherently to both of the above positions. To some like Mr. Puran they correspond to two different stages of the life of Śvāmī Rāma. On a keener observation, however, they may look to have a coherent mutuality, without necessary successional implications. Whatever that be, the vedānta-realization of Śvāmī Rāma has an unmistakable bearing on the practical life of man and effects a complete transformation of his whole being—Divinity, his poise and Divinity his thrill in every fibre of his being.
Chapter 10

Vedanta and Socio-Political Life

We have observed a harmony of absolutism and immanence in the metaphysical views of Swami Rama Tirtha and also an inspiration for a divine life in his religious teachings. It is worth a study now, that in spite of strong supramundane notes in his philosophy, he designs his Vedanta—often labelled as an antisecular philosophy—to bear on our secular life as intimately as on spiritual transcendence. His alliance with the mayavadins in declaring the world as utterly unreal, his advocacy for a life of utter freedom from all responsibilities and obligations—a self-containedness caring a fig for others’ views and social conventions, a transcendence of all traditional standards and moral values, an extreme individualism and exclusive concern for liberation—do, quite likely, give him the cynical guise of ‘vedantic pessimism.’ But, we are familiar, that such a guise does not represent the inner spirit of his teaching. Like Swami Vivekananda, he is almost a challenge to all pessimism attributed to Vedanta.¹

His teachings are full of inspirational emphases that Vedanta is dynamic spirituality and vitalizes every phase of our life. It makes life worth living, enjoyable and glorious. “Vedanta,” he says, “is no pessimism. It is the highest pinnacle of optimism.”² Light

¹ On being actually asked why he preached renunciation of desires and worldly attachments—the ‘Vedanta’—“to break all connections with the whole world,” and the philosophy that “crushes and dries up all love for humanity in our hearts” Swami Rama clearly answered that without the Vedantic realization of Bliss and freedom real good to humanity was not possible (G.R., II., p. 187.)
² G.R., VI., p. 92.
that is spiritual wisdom must break forth into vigorous life of enlightened activity. He fondly calls his *Vedānta* as ‘Practical Vedānta,’ ‘muscular Vedānta,’ etc., and holds that peace and serenity of self-withdrawal is only one aspect of it, intense activity and energetic works being the other aspect. He writes:

> “Pushing marching labour and no stagnant Indolence; Enjoyment of work as against tedious drudgery; Peace of mind and no canker of Suspicion, Organisation and no disaggregation; Appropriate reform and no conservative custom, Solid real feeling as against flowery talk; The poetry of facts as against the authority of departed authors; Living realization and no mere dead quotations Constitute Practical Vedānta.”

*Vedāntic* religion, holds Rāma, is that in which, both cognitively as well as conatively, Truth of Unity of all existence is realised. In his stylish way he expresses it as our “head in solitude and the hand in society,” “the head in the sky and the feet on earth,” the “heart in Rāma and hand in action”—way of life and strongly believes that the *Vedāntic* religion is not an orthodox creed for some remote life of the other world but an inspiration to ennoble and vitalize our present life on the earth, not an ‘udhār-dharma’ (credit-religion) but a ‘naqad-dharma’ (cash-religion). It has to effectively operate in our individual as well as collective life, and guide us in our family, social and political affairs. He says:

> “*Vedānta* furnishes a correct world picture that will serve the sailors on the ocean of life as a reliable chart for orientation and as a mariner’s compass for a guide.”

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE: VEDĀNTIC SOCIALISM

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha takes a spiritual view of man’s life, in

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3 G.R., VIII., p. 192.
5 C.W., p. 235.
6 K.R., III., pp. 183, 185, 190, 297.
7 C.W., p. 269.
which the individual and his group have a community of their essential being. Personal individuality and social collectivity are only two aspects of the same human life. As such, personal salvation of a few individuals will not do unless the whole social organisation is enlightened. The individual does not stand in complete isolation from his community and his spiritual pursuits must have a bearing on the life of his society. Knowledge and Peace and Freedom as the ideals of Vedāntic pursuits are not merely an individual’s private concern; they are to be effective in our social life. “We hope for a living peace and not a dead one! To keep your light beneath the bushel when people are stumbling in the dark is worse than if you had no light.”

Again,

“To work out your own salvation and let society alone, Oh! if only it were possible! A drowning society cannot let you alone. You must sink with her if she sinks and rise with her if she rises. It is an utter absurdity to believe that an individual can be perfect in an imperfect society. The hand might just as well cut itself from the body and acquire perfection of strength.”

Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha holds that Vedāntic unity is not only an ontological truth, but also an empirical fact so that the world is a dynamic whole and the society is an integral unity. No single individual is, therefore, an utterly independent entity and no one is happy or miserable in isolation. Every member of the society is in the whole and the whole society is in every member. Such a view provides the healthiest foundations for a spiritual socialism, called by Rāma the Vedāntic Socialism, which so happily reconciles the claims of the individual and those of the group and inspires all efficiency, perfection, cooperation, help and organisational progress in our society.

Vedāntic socialism of Swāmī Rāma’s conception is represented on an instinctive plane by the bee-life, where the governing principle is “To each according to his need from each according to his capacity” and where every member has its duty and none has any rights. On the spiritual level, he believes, there would be an

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8 G.R., VII., p. 27.
9 Ibid., p. 24.
11 C.W., p. 169.
12 C.W., p. 355.
which the individual and his group have a community of their essential being. Personal individuality and social collectivity are only two aspects of the same human life. As such, personal salvation of a few individuals will not do unless the whole social organisation is enlightened. The individual does not stand in complete isolation from his community and his spiritual pursuits must have a bearing on the life of his society. Knowledge and Peace and Freedom as the ideals of Vedāntic pursuits are not merely an individual’s private concern; they are to be effective in our social life. “We hope for a living peace and not a dead one! To keep your light beneath the bushel when people are stumbling in the dark is worse than if you had no light.”

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8 G.R., VII., p. 27.
9 Ibid., p. 24.
11 C.W., p. 169.
12 C.W., p. 355.
awakened freedom of cooperation and love instead of an instinctive impulse to characterise our relations. Love and unity and impersonal service are the characteristic virtues of an ideal society standing on spiritual foundations. In his elaborate discussion on the principle, necessity and significance of Yajñas, Swāmī Rāma Tirtha holds out a humanitarian and socialistic ideal wherein the head and heart and hands of every member of our society are wakingly dedicated to be united with the heads and hearts and hands of the whole community. The views of Sri Aurobindo strike so similar:

"Ours might have been an instinctive spontaneity of free and fluid association; the ideal state will be an enlightened intuitive spontaneity of free and fluid association...."

Progressive self-enlargement through our developing identity with greater and greater social groups, holds Rāma, ultimately leads to the realization of our oneness with God the All, and goodness and service to every other being spontaneously follows. Self-exclusion on the contrary leads to all social evil, exploitation, corruption and cruelty. Vedāntic ideals of ego-transcendence and self-universalization therefore, offer the highest principles to guide our life in the society, and Vedānta, again, is the central vision to control the whole economy of practical life—the light that illumines our household-life, economic activities, social organisation, educational schemes, national policy and international relations.

In the field of Economics the ideas of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha create a revolutionary stir when he declares that all trade is unnatural and unspiritual inasmuch as it is actuated by a selfish motive and shuts our vision to ignorant self-exclusion. He says,

"Trade is against Nature. The true nature of man is to give like the Sun; when giving, his thoughts are broad and he is free; when getting his thoughts are narrowed down into little self, he is anxious, therefore, and miserable."

His views on ‘private property’ are typical, revolutionary and original and they seem to contain and yet far exceed the socialistic ideals. With his stylish freedom in the use of words, he puts pro-

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14 Sri Aurobindo : The Ideal of Human Unity, p. 31.
16 C.W., p. 36.
perty as 'that which is proper to a thing or right for a thing.' So that 'man's property is Godhead and Godhead alone.' Elsewhere he writes, "Property in the hands of one who is willing and able to use it well = wealth. In the hands of another man it may just as likely be 'illth' (इल्लत or botheration)." Thus 'wealth' and 'property' receive an entirely different meaning at his hands so that property is not what one legally possesses, but what he ideally aspires, morally owes and practically deserves. "Legal ownership is mischief. True ownership is love."\(^\text{18}\)

Consistently the views of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha on economic organisation of the society and the variety of our economic adjustments revolutionise to moral purity and spiritual import all our mutual relations and reconstruct them on the ideals of our essential oneness, inspiring love, equality and service. The entire cooperative basis of socialist economy so naturally follows the Vedāntic view of life where all are one and each is all. Such a view would automatically put an end to all the evils of economic inequality and exploitation, the evils that have stained the pages of man's economic history and which, even today, the ignorant and selfish tyrants are arrogantly indulging in at the cost of the poor, the low and the deprived. The employer-employee relations, for example, should be based on the principles of mutual fulfilment of necessity and equality rather than the unenlightened tradition of master-servant-creed. Mutual respect and harmony of interests should take the place of greed and clash, of subjection and revolt.\(^\text{19}\)

Vedānta of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha offers spiritual bases for the entire social organisation and as such, the ideals that inspire all our social relations are superior to and more fundamental than even the lofty ideals of 'equality, liberty and fraternity.' Social thinkers have laboured either at establishing the superiority of the community over the individual or that of the individual over the society, so that there have flourished the mutually opposed schools of individualism and socialism, of egoism and altruism, encouraging with exclusive emphasis either a complete freedom or a totalitarian regimentation of the individual. Such schools have in their own turn greatly influenced all human undertakings—political, educational, economic. Even

\(^{17}\) C.W., p. 37.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 37.
\(^{19}\) G.R., II., pp. 75-76 ; C.W., p. 169.
some of the compromises between the two extremes are based upon a superficial treatment of the individual and his group, wherein the two are granted limited freedom in their legitimate fields, mutually recognisable rights and duties and a lawful constitution to govern both. The harmonious synthesis in the light of Rāma's *Vedānta*, instead of just reconciling them by a sort of artificial chop-off-technique, establishes their complementary fulness in their essential unity with each other, so that the highest egoism is also the highest altruism.\(^{26}\)

Self-sacrifice and self-fulfilment from Rāma's point of view are not mutually opposed principles of social import, although we have in his writings an exclusive emphasis on freedom and independence of the individual at some places and a strong call for complete self-denial for the sake of others at other places, seemingly suffering from a mutual contradiction. He says for example "Why should you belong to a society? The society belongs to you."\(^{21}\) Again, "...the right spirit of Truth is to assert the supremacy of the individual against all the world......."\(^{22}\) On the other hand he preaches an attitude of love and service, of catholicity and generous forgiveness, self-denial and sacrifice for others, one and all. In his own words his creed is: "O, Rāma! let this body belong to the public."\(^{23}\) "The only right that man has is to give and not to ask."\(^{24}\) He appears to be an altruist in one breath and an individualist in another but he is both in one on the grounds of *Vedāntic* spirituality where individual growth and perfection is harmonised with the claims of the community, both being complementary to each other in his *Vedāntic* socialism.

Socialistic aims of individual non-possession and his subservience to the good of his community, Swāmī Rāma maintains, are naturally fulfilled in the self-inspired *vedāntic* pursuit of the individual for self-discovery through self-abnegation and self-transcendence. Equality is secured in the spiritual realization of all-oneness. Thus while socialism labour to establish its order through an artificial manipulation of external factors of socio-economic organisation, *Vedānta* has the advantage of laying the deepest foundations of an

\(^{26}\) Chapter on Morality and Values.
\(^{21}\) G.R., IV., p. 174.
\(^{22}\) G.R., VI., p. 167.
\(^{23}\) C.W., p. 354.
\(^{24}\) G.R., VI., p. 168.
enlightened and free and happy society, where the individual asserts his spiritual supremacy over the whole world, and has ‘no botheration’, ‘no worry’, ‘no anxiety’ and where the socialists’ ideal of collective fulfilment is in harmony with the individual self-enlargement through renunciation.  

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

The foundations on which Śvāmī Rāma Tirtha advises our social relations to stand are essentially spiritual, Vedāntic to use his choicest expression. Every individual, there, is a god-person and the group is something like a ‘community of gods’; the relation that holds them together is of free love, spontaneous harmony, living unity and spiritual recognition.  

Growth and perfection of the individual are completely at one with the growth and perfection of the social group. Individual liberty and collective law meet together in oneness. Rāma’s views on social life and the principles of social organisation are of spiritual anarchism where individuals associate freely through the law of inner love and intuitive harmony rather than through a forced necessity of external arrangements.  

The vedāntic society of his vision is not merely an association of hermits, but a dynamic whole constituted of all institutions integrated in the luminous harmony of Vedāntic Truth.

Spiritual foundations of all social institutions, thus conceived of, would naturally transpose all our relations from ignorant and selfish contacts to an enlightened universality of an all-embracing love. And the spiritual insight of every individual would offer him a new perspective to look upon his home, marriage, children, education, society and the state. It is like the love-letter being dear because of the dear friend that all social relations may be sweetened by the sweetness of the Divine Beloved embracingly present in all.

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha elaborately discusses the possibility and desirability of a Vedāntic attitude in our day-to-day-affairs and its liberating influence on our ordinary common relations. Even before

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Money has been regarded as a burden worthless enough to deserve our attention and Nature and its abundance as the wealth of man.

26 C.W., pp. 423, 437.


the luminous intimations of spiritual realization are manifest dynamic in one’s practical life, he holds, vedāntic assumptions should guide his behaviour. He asks, for example, the wife and the husband to regard each other as God and behave as God. The wife-husband relation is binding to both only when they ignorantly desire to possess each other. But the same relation can be liberating to them if they become each other’s saviours by a spirit of renunciation and love without any attachment. Self-denial and sacrifice for the sake of the companion, would promote our mutual happiness and help the realization of Vedāntic Truth. Likewise, man can turn every other domestic or social relation to his spiritual advantage, if he takes to them in a vedāntic spirit of renunciation and godliness. In family life, spiritual realization can be attempted jointly, and our oneness with the family may be taken as a step towards our realization of oneness with the All. “Thus, before realizing your unity and unison with God, first realize your oneness with your wife and children.”

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha advises us to turn our homes into universities, where we gradually learn to expand our limited ego-selves into wider unities with others. That is possible only when our homes are the “centres and not the boundaries of our affection,” so that we might start with our oneness with the family, but not end there, and gradually “sublimate personal love into universal love.” Social life, and its relations, thus, have not been rejected as unspiritual in the Vedāntic scheme of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha. Rather, he has positive suggestions that Vedānta has a healthy solution of all social problems and that social organisation on spiritual bases would harmoniously conduce an integral fulfilment of man’s individual aspiration for an increasing liberty as well as his collective ideal of a perfected whole.

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR A HEALTHY SOCIAL LIFE

The present day problems of social tension are receiving serious attention of social thinkers. Swāmī Rāma makes a psycho-moral approach to them in the light of his vedānta and offers to us a

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20 G.R., III., p. 186.
number of practical hints for the promotion of desired health and harmony of social life.

He recognises the great power of thought and believes that our own thoughts about others greatly determine their character. It naturally follows that we can promote healthy atmosphere by thinking well of others. In his important article on "CRITICISM AND UNIVERSAL LOVE"31 he has given a very healthy advice based on an intimate understanding of human nature. That is, to rid ourselves of mutual distrust and suspicion, to avoid others' criticism, to be impartial and detached, to make constructive thinking, appreciate others' goodness and win their hearts by love and reason.

We should be cautious not to harp upon another's weaknesses or shortcomings, for, in fact, everyone of us may have one or the other weakness and a mere criticism thereof does not help its eradication. Generally we shut our observation off their good qualities and waste our energy in poisonous gossip and unhealthy judgments.

"The energy," advises Rāma, "we waste in judging others is just what is needed to make us live upto our own ideals."32 What is of positive help is a constructive thinking and a catholic attitude of a mother's heart, full of compassion and appreciative sympathy. Darkness cannot be removed by fighting with it or condemning it; we have to enlighten all that darkens. He writes:

"Bring the light in and darkness never was. So the negative criticizing, chilling, discouraging process will not mend matters. All that is necessary is the positive, cheerful, helpful, loving, encouraging attitude."

The negative caution of avoiding others' criticism should be coupled with a positive appreciation of their goodness. "All grumbling," he says, "is tantamount to 'Oh! why is the lily not an oak.' Let us observe the beauty of each." "Don't bark against the bad, but chant the beauties of the good."34 Even for a healthy criticism we have to be impartial and affectionate so that it may have a constructive effect on the person criticised. "Best criticism is to make people feel from within what you wish to make them realize

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31 G.R., V., pp. 12-84.
33 G.R., V., pp. 18-19.
34 Ibid., p. 19.
from without.”*35 The effective way, conclusively, to build a social harmony is love and appreciation and not criticism. Love wins everywhere reason fails. It is the invincible force and ‘the only divine law.’

As in social relations so in national policy, as with the immediate neighbour so with the wide world, as with family so with the entire humanity, Love and Wisdom, Peace and Harmony are the guiding principles to control our interests and inspire our actions. *Practical Vedānta* of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha offers catholic-most ideals of socio-political import in the light of which humanity may accomplish an abiding peace and happiness on earth.

Religious piety and political policy have often been regarded as antagonistic to each other and politics in the name of religion was mostly an evil of human society. But closely observing, history would bear out, evil was born of ignorant prostitution of religious traditions by selfish politicians. In their fundamentals, religious pursuit for the Peaceful Beyond and political concern for the organised here and now are not irreconcilable opposites. Swāmī Rāma’s transcendentalism suffers from no privations and the so-called secular life with all our individual and collective problems is no contradiction to our spiritual pursuits. His views offer a positive harmony to be established between our earthly and supra-mundane interests. He believes that spiritual discipline of *Vedānta* raises every self-centred individual into patriotic heroism and then every nationalist into an internationalist, ultimately to be awakened into universal oneness with all. Realization of the individual-collective-unity through love, he says, is *Dharma*, *Practical Vedānta*, etc.*36

“The individual advances only so far as he merges his will in the national will (service of society). The nation prospers only in so far as she merges her will in the Cosmic will.”*35

Swāmī Rāma believes that behind the apparent political events in the world there is a Divine Governance—The Eternal Law that secretly governs our individual, national and international destinies and the rise or fall of a country is due to its moral and spiritual

*36 *C.W.*, pp. 240, 286.
*37 *C.W.*, p. 375.
position in relation to that Law.\footnote{G.R., II., pp 107-108.} “......no nation falls,” he says, “from any point of view without being degraded spiritually.”\footnote{G.R., II., p. 109.} Conversely, national prosperity and political strength of a country lies in its people being catholic, unselfish, self-reliant and sacrificing, in other words, their moral and spiritual soundness. It naturally follows that healthy politics must needs be grounded in Spiritual Truth, and moral principles of love and justice, purity and kindness, mutual goodwill and cooperation should guide our political life.

Although we don’t find a thorough and sustained working out of the practical details of Swāmī Rāma’s Vedāntic society like those of Plato’s Republic, we do come across some stray images which afford us a glimpse into his ideal picture thereof. Many of them have strong resemblances with some great social philosophies. Like Plato who conceived of a philosopher-king, with wisdom, power and justice, Swāmī Rāma believes that a Brahma-Jñāni ‘saves nations and uplifts the world.’\footnote{C.W., pp. 377, 396.} In his ideal social organisation ‘Love is the only Law’ and ‘Enlightenment the only punishment.’ Important elements of Goswamī Tulśidāsa’s Rāma Rājya, Plato’s Republic, Rousseau’s Emile and theosophists’ universal brotherhood meet pronouncedly in the spiritual anarchism of Swāmī Rāma’s Vedāntic Socialism.’ He says:

“Under this ‘Socialism’ no Kings, no Presidents, no Priests are wanted, no armies needed. No universities will ever be needed as each man will be his own university. Libraries we shall have, to which anybody can come and read. No Professors except for little children. No doctors needed, for by living a natural life, as preached by Vedāmā you can never fall sick, you require no Doctor. People may do whatever they please, may walk over all creation or wherever they like, not being afraid of their brother as they are now, but doing good and devoting their time to really beneficial studies, philosophy and metaphysical researches, living and realizing to the fullest extent their Divinity and Godhead.”\footnote{G.R., VI., p. 174.}
Chapter 11

Problems of India: Its Reconstruction

Whereas the last chapter lays Śwāmī Rāma’s general outline of *Vedāntic* bearing on our practical life and its socio-political phases, the present one purports to study his particular views about Indian problems and their solution in the light of his *Practical Vedānta*. Mahātma Gandhi said that his religion brought him to politics: we may sincerely feel that Śwāmī Rāma’s *Vedānta* impelled him to reconstruct India of the great past into India of a greater future. His sentimental admirer, Mr. Pūran thought that Śwāmī Rāma fell down from his celestial *Vedāntic* ecstasies into the ditches of patriotic and philanthropic interests of the earthly world as a result of American influence on him.¹ Probably Mr. Pūran could not see the intimate harmony in which the *Vedic* and the *Upaniṣadic* spirituality—to the great tradition of which Rāma belonged—integrated the seemingly opposed worldly and unworlly interests. Indian seers and saints, especially the ancients, never excluded the world and its affairs as antspiritual and, therefore, there is no good reason to hold that Śwāmī Rāma’s interest in his country and humanity was in any way retrogressive of his *Vedāntic* life. Lives of Yājñavalkya and Janaka, Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, Śaṅkara and Samartha Guru Rāma Dāsa, Śwāmī Vivekānanda and Sri Aurobindo—all testify to the imperative of retouching the mundane life with the transformative Light Divine. Śwāmī Rāma’s compassionate enthusiasm to revitalise India into a *Vedāntic* nation is therefore in perfect harmony with India’s Spiritual Culture.

problems as well as other world-problems in *Vedānta*. India of his days was a wretched problem and needed serious and effective attention towards an all-round reconstruction. To his patriotic spirit it struck as an opportunity to serve the motherland and he stirred a zeal in her sons.

“If we are born in the critical times of Indian History, let us be thankful; for the work for us is more unique, more poetic and dynamic. Our opportunities for service are more abundant.”

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT INDIA**

In his lectures and writings on India and its problems Swāmī Rāma devotedly sings the glory of Indian past and maintains that India has been the perennial source of all light, power and inspiration to the whole world, religiously, philosophically, culturally and politically and that the world has a spiritual debt to India. Greek as well as Chinese historical accounts of Indian conditions reflect upon its great civilization, pure and prosperous life, powerful thought—an all-round greatness of its culture. From the ancient Greeks down to the modern westerners, holds Rāma, to all thinkers alike, the wisdom of India has always been illuminating. Religious prophets, social reformers, philosophical thinkers and statesmen, all carried in them the light that is India’s.

And yet laments Swāmī Rāma on the sad plight of his contemporary India. The causes of India’s downfall have, by some superficial historians, been traced to its religious fervour to the neglect of all secular life. *Vedānta*, particularly, has, often, been regarded as anti-secular in its pursuits and responsible for India’s political, social and economic degradation. Swāmī Rāma takes an exception to this and holds to the contrary that it is, rather, for want of *Vedāntic* life that India has fallen, as much as it is for the reason of *Vedānta* being in practice, even though unconsciously, that progressive nations are advancing. Commenting on Alberuni’s account of India with lofty philosophy, poetry, astronomy, learning of Pandits, but worse than deplorable conditions of women and masses, physical, moral

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2 C.W., p. 242.
3 Ref. G.R., VII.
and spiritual wrecks, neglected and downtrodden people divided socially, religiously and politically, uncollected minds and dissipated bodies’ etc., Rāma observes, ‘These statements are sadly true,’ but he ascribes them to ‘Lack of practical Wisdom.’

Swāmī Rāma Tirtha has referred to almost all the Indian maladies—social, cultural, moral, religious, political, educational and economic and suggests remedies for each one of them. He observes some of them as ‘Enemies living together’ suffering from internal disunity and external subjection; sectarianism thriving at the cost of national vigour; Hindus disintegrated by the variety of their religious prejudices, Muslims although living and breathing in India but having their sympathies with Turks much more than with their next door neighbours; Christians turning strangers to their own people, etc., etc. The British rule in India has itself been regarded by him as a serious problem with all its ugly phases—taxation, exploitation, terror, division of the people, industrial bankruptcy, the introduction of the evil of wine, etc., etc.

INDIAN NATIONALISM

The problem of Indian politics, from Swāmī Rāma’s point of view, is not exclusively India’s. His international insight looks at it clearly as a world-problem. “To some it might be a question of patriotism,” he says, “to Rama it is a question of humanity.” No one political unit could prosper or suffer in isolation in a world of increasing compactness and the universalized vision of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha apprehends that if other nations didn’t jointly work for the cause of India’s political freedom, there were chances of humanity’s suffering at large—a truth which is being more realized in the growing internationalism of today.

Not only that the suffering of India excites Swāmī Rāma’s patriotic sympathies for her political redemption, but also that he foresees India’s great potentiality to work out a salvation for the whole of humanity. He describes India as the ailing Mother with whose love and wisdom other nations have to be blessed. India, he says, has to be “a source of blessing to England, to America, and to

* G.R., VII., pp. 22-23.
7 G.R., VII., p. 2.
9 G.R., VII., pp. 121-126.
the whole world. In his ‘Introduction to Lālā Bajñāth’s book, “Hinduism Ancient and Modern,” he writes prophetically about the future of India to be inevitably splendid. The sun of ‘glory,’ of ‘wealth and wisdom,’ he says, marching from East to West after completing its round would soon reshive on India with ‘redoubled splendour.’11 “Those who sleep well, wake well. India has slept long enough. Most surely though slowly the lethargy is breaking;”12 In India’s awakening he sees a hope for the whole world, and his love for India breaks forth into his heart-felt appeals to his own countrymen as well as to foreigners with the same intensity and sincerity of his feeling. In his ‘Appeal to Americans on behalf of India,’ his tone is imperative that India should be attended to in the name of humanity, for the good of mankind. (American) ‘practical energies’ combined with India’s ‘spiritual vigour of the Vedānta’ could redeem the whole world.13

Thus while Swāmī Rāma apparently speaks for India, he regards the spirit of India to be secretly significant for the guidance of the destiny of the entire humanity. His views, as such, have the wide range of internationalism and universalism. He expressly upholds a distinctionless unity with one and all. To his impersonal attitude, all countries are equal. He advises everyone to be free from all boundaries of country or caste-affiliations and treat the whole world as his home.

“O child of Nature and God! All countries are equally yours, all mankind are your brothers and sisters. Go where you can live the best as a useful worker.”14

Internationalism and world-citizenship above the terms of patriotism and local attachments are definitely more akin to Swāmī Rāma’s Vedānta in politics. And yet patriotism is not quite opposed to his Vedānta: rather, it is an important step towards universalism. He is eloquent. “A person can never realize his unity with God the All except when unity with the WHOLE NATION throbbs in every fibre of his frame.”15 Deifying the Motherland as the Goddess Durga,
much more real than a mere temple-image, he advises us to put our hearts together in her service. Our hearts put together, he says, our heads and hands will naturally unite.\(^{16}\) He calls upon us to serve Mother India in every spirit and in all capacities.

“To realise God, have the *sannyāsa*-spirit, i.e., entire renunciation of self-interest, making the little self absolutely at one with the great Self of Mother India....*Brähmaṇa*-spirit, dedicating your intellect to thoughts for the advancement of the nation .........*Kshatriya* spirit, readiness to lay down your life for the country at every second........*True Vaiśhyar spirit*, holding your property only in trust for the nation.......you have to work this *Sannyāsa* spirit, *Brahman, Kshatriya* and *Vaiśya* heroism through your hands, and feet in the manual labour once relegated to the holy *Śudras.*”\(^{17}\)

Nationalism and religious life in the light of Śvāmī Rāma’s Practical Vedānta are coherently knitted together, each promoting the other, so that while nationalism enlarges and catholicises an individual’s heart, religion provides the real foundation for essential unity of the people. The terms of patriotism and the terms of religion, especially in an Indian setting of the greater term ‘*Dharma,*’ are harmonised into a mutual comprehension. ‘Local personal *Dharma*’ and ‘*National Dharma*’ have a hierarchical fitness.\(^{18}\) “Doing anything,” he says, “to promote the well-being of the nation is serving Cosmic Powers, Devas or Gods.”\(^{19}\) Nationalism of Śvāmī Rāma’s conception is grounded not in an ignorant sentiment of regarding the country as an end in itself, but in an awakened consciousness of all being one and a consequent consecration of the individual for the good of all. The highest principles of universalism, Brotherhood, Unity of religions, broad sympathies for the whole world, moral purity, self-renunciation, love and non-violence, catholicity of the heart and goodwill are as much the essentials of *Vedāntic nationalism* as of *Vedāntic religion.*\(^{20}\) He earnestly believes that all national reform in India could be effectively brought about in the name of religion, through, he says, “.........preaching of practical *Vedānta* which embraces political, domestic, intellectual and moral liberty and love, which marvellously harmonises freedom and peace, energy and

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\(^{16}\) G.R., VII., p. 13.  
\(^{17}\) Ibid., pp. 18-19.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 18.  
tr tranquillity, bravery and love...”

21 True national life cannot be divorced of vedântic principles. He says, “Domestic, social, political or religious salvation of every country lies in Vedânta carried into effect.”

22 Spiritual awakening is both the essence of religion as well as the vitality of our national life. “A country is strengthened not by great men with small views, but small men with great views.”

23 Patriotism, therefore, implies on the one hand the great truth of our essential unity and on the other an effective and useful life of action in tune with that truth.

THE SPIRITUAL WAY TO REFORM

Problems of India, as of any other country are varied and interlocked so that none of them could be solved in complete isolation from the rest. The fundamentals of them all, however, are seizable through what Swâmî Râma calls ‘Vedânta.’ The maladies being many or multi-symptomatic, their root cause, he says, is Vedântic deficiency and their remedy lies in the vision and vigour of Vedânta. There being an essential unity behind the universe of diverse phenomena and the whole nature being secretly governed by the innermost spiritual laws, all attempts to remould our practical life must be directed to effect an inner awakening of man. The Self being the centre of all things, all reform had to be guided by the Truth of the Spirit. ‘Jñânam or Knowledge-spiritual, and Lovedivine alone could ensure successful all-round reform in life. “Without keeping alive the flame of Faith and the torch of burning Jñânam in your breast you cannot advance a single step.”

24 Every reform has, thus, to be inspired by an inner awakening into spiritual wisdom. A change of heart and attitude and not mere external arrangements of things or organisational devices can bring about a real reform. No amount of compulsions with frowns and punishments, no superimposition of extraneous discipline can improve man, unless he rises from within to the heights of his own sublimity. 25 Like a pedagogical principle “No true reform is possible which is not in its essence a development, i.e., which is not already

21 G.R., VII., p. 162.
23 Ibid., p. 27.
24 G.R., VII., p. 41.
25 C.W., pp. 142-143; G.R., II., pp. 140-141.
contained in germ in that which has to be reformed. The *vedāntic* attitude of Swāmi Rāma Tirtha towards reform goes a step further in maintaining that from spiritual realization all reforms automatically issue forth. The whole world will receive a reformative inspiration from the self-realized other than whom all reforms are ‘self-deluded’ noise makers. The Self being the hinge of all existence, to rise to one’s own realization is to uplift the whole world. “Give your personality a lift,” he says, “and you lift the whole world.”

The spiritual way to reform is two-fold, to live Truth ourselves and to love others impersonally. To live a spiritual life is the greatest self-reformation and also the best way to spread truth. He says,

> “.........the best way to spread *Vedānta* is to live *Vedānta*, whether it be in the midst of others or alone. Live it, the air is bound to take it up, the sun, the moon, the stars, the skies, all are bound to take it up, and it must spread.”

To live Truth means to see the Divine in others and to love them. “Proceed on the axiom that all are godly and everyone must behave as God if only you behave as God towards them.” The spiritual way and perhaps the only sure way, therefore, to reform the world is self-reform, patient and honest. Devolved of spiritual standpoint we look at others as sinners and the world as an evil and take to reform, if at all, through bitter criticism and presumptuous sermons. In so doing we defeat the very purpose of reform and meet frustration. In the absence of self-reform all seems to go wrong and by self-reform is everything set right.

> “When anything is apparently going wrong, to quarrel with the surroundings instead of setting us right with the law of love is like breaking the telephone receiver for hearing the bad news from the friends at the invisible end.”

Love for all and not mere rational appeal, is the essential requisite for all reform, best sustained by the truth-vision of God’s
immanence in all beings. In his stylish fashion Swāmī Rāma writes, ‘On all doors of life is written ‘Pull’ but you misread and begin to ‘push’…….Pushing is arguing, pulling is drawing within your own self through Love.’ An appeal to the hearts through love is the surer way to reform others. “The fools of reformers care only for the silver ring of intellect in which that diamond (heart) is set. He turns out to be a Prophet who picks up hearts and values all hearts alike.” His approach to reform, its spiritual basis and Vedāntic import is represented in his advertisement:

“WANTED
Reformers
Not of others but of themselves
Who have won
Not University distinctions
But victory over the local self;
Age: the youth of divine joy;
Salary: Godhead.
Apply sharp: With no begging solicitations but commanding decisions to the Director of the Universe, Your Own Self.
OM! OM! OM!
—Swāmī Rāma.”

RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL REFORMS

The fundamental principle of all reform being self-spiritualization and universal love, we now turn to the specific reforms Swāmī Rāma has suggested for our religious, cultural, educational and social life. Religion and philosophy signify essentially man’s intimate quest for the Highest Value or Perfection of his life, which in its own turn controls and guides his multifarious activites. Conversely, every reform in our practical life has to be effected by a change in our attitude towards life and its values, both conceptual as well as emotional. “True action” he says, “is not separable from true love and true wisdom.”

Our philosophical malady is that living wisdom of the Upaniṣads

33 G.R., V., p. 31.
34 C.W., p. 292.
35 G.R., VIII., last page.
36 G.R., VII., p. 57.
has degenerated into a grammarian’s scholasticism. Cramming the grammatical rules of old Sanskrit and memorizing and quoting ancient texts foolishly constitutes the superiority in learning over all original thinking and free research. Mental energies of young men are being lavished and wasted on futile discussions over unimportant issues. Scholarship and life have no bearing on each other, and the glorious and sublime teachings of the great philosophy like the Vedanta is nothing more than ‘spiritual constipation’ or ‘mental dyspepsia’ of the Pandits.\(^{37}\)

Our religious degradation is that love of God has petrified into mechanical rituals, faith has rotten into sectarian affiliations and revelational truths have frozen into dead dogmas, so that “merest trifles and meaningless symbols have become the centres of deep-rooted feeling.”\(^{38}\) There is an ‘eccentric regard’ for superstitious rituals and a suicidal submission to sectarian authorities and India is a ‘house divided against itself.’ Instead of love and purity of the heart there have cropped up mutual jealousies, division and corruption that have spoiled the life of the people.\(^{39}\)

Our philosophy and religion being so devitalized, the practical life of our community eventually suffers from social evils, like caste-prejudices, untouchability, extravagant kitchen-code, etc., etc. In his appeal to Americans on behalf of India as well as in other articles Swami Rama has expressed his deep concern on caste-restrictions in Indian social life and has regarded untouchability of the śudras as a social crime. He is confident that the caste-system originally served the purpose of social organisation on vocational grounds and contributed to social efficiency through division of labour. The four classes of Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śudra, respectively suited for the intellectual, chivalrous, financial and labour-occupations, were distributed for the purpose of vocation alone, otherwise they were all united in a common bond of love. Unfortunately the basis of their classification shifted from vocational fitness solely to heredity and then mere birth and eventually the whole system corrupted into confusion of vocation and the high-low caste-complex to disrupt social unity. Division of labour and unity of love, the secrets of efficient social economy degenerated into mixture of labour and

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\(^{37}\) G.R., VII., pp. 152, 163, 164.  
\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 152.  
\(^{39}\) Ibid., pp. 144-145, 152, 155, 156.
division of love so that the society disintegrated into rigid caste-distinctions and stupid concentration on skin-purity. Too much of importance was lavished on formalities of social intercourse and fanatic intolerance developed against class-fluidity. Kitchen-hygiene plus undue emphasis on touch-restrictions minus health-awareness became an essential of religion, (styled by Swāmī Rāma as ‘Kitchen-religion’) the rules of which sadly determined a man’s moral and spiritual cleanliness.40 “Sad indeed is the Kitchen-religion which allows the Infinite Immortal soul to be sullied by the foreigner’s soup.”41

The ultimate cause of all our maladies being lack of Practical Vedānta, he believes, the most effective remedy lies in restoring our spiritual health. A correct perspective to look at life and its values is the first necessity, for which an investigational spirit has to be blended with a respect for the past knowledge. Ancient wisdom of the seers and saints has to be combined with the researches of modern science; meditative contemplations on eternal secrets of existence have to be effectively harmonised with experimental efficiency for a practical life. The segregating view that the east and west ‘shall never meet’ has to be replaced by an integrating conviction that the two will inevitably combine.42

Referring to the Śrutis and Smṛtis respectively containing the eternal spiritual truths and the temporal laws of conduct, Swāmī Rāma Tirtha holds that while the former remain a universal source of light and truth, the latter need a regular modification answering to the demands of time and place. The Hindu Society has to free itself from its self-enslavement to the old codes and formal injunctions of the Smṛtis and to rise afresh into the spiritual light of the Śruti.43 To miss the spiritual essence and to retain the form of a custom is dangerous. Change we must or else we perish. The Smṛtis are for man and not vice versa.44 The old forms of customs have to be changed and new knowledge of science has to be assimilated. “If you are not willing and ready to assimilate the New Light......go and live in the Pitṛloka with your forefathers.”45

40 G.R., VII., pp. 49-50, 54, 131, 132, 134, 141.
41 G.R., V., p. 16.
42 G.R., V., pp. 113-114 ; G.R., VII., p. 3.
44 G.R., VII., pp. 50-51.
45 G.R., VII., pp. 52-53.
must, however, be borne in mind that reformatory change does not mean self-destroying revolution. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha warns the reformist not to decry the old customs as entirely useless. The past has its own importance in so far as it provides to the community an insight to mould its future. He says,

"We cannot do without our inheritance from the forefathers; the society which renounces it must be destroyed from without. Still less can we do with too much of it: the society in which it dominates must be destroyed from within."\(^46\)

Swāmī Rāma has impressed the necessity of reforming the old Karma Kānda to suit the present needs of our society by making a liberal interpretation of their central principles.\(^47\) He offers an essentially humanitarian view of the ‘Yajña’ and ‘dāna’, (sacrifice and charity) and appeals to his countrymen to adapt them to all their socio-political callings, applying scientific technique for successful accomplishments. He says,

"If you want to live in the present century of marching and advancing industries and arts, and not die by inches of Political Consumption, do capture the mātrṣva of Electricity and enslave the Varuṇa of steam, become familiar with the Kuvera of science of Agriculture. The Purohita to introduce you to these gods is the scientist or Artist who instructs in these branches of Knowledge."\(^48\)

The Gāndhi-Tagore spirit fore-ran in his appeal to worship the ‘hungry Nārāyaṇas’ and ‘Labouring Viṣṇus’ instead of erecting ‘towering temples.’ Commenting on the performance of Yajña, he says, "......instead of wasting precious ghee into the mouth of artificial fire, why not offer even hard crusts of dry bread to the gastric fire (Jatharagni) which is eating up the flesh and bones of millions of starving but living Nārāyaṇas?"\(^49\) The principles behind religious practices remaining the same, their practical application today should be in the fitness of things of our times. "Sacrifice averts evil" he says, "is a saying as true today as in those good old days; only it is not the vicarious sacrifice of innocent animals but the sacrifice, (Havana Yajña) of our party-spirit, caste-feelings, jealousies, etc., at the

\(^{47}\) Ref. His articles on the ‘Spirit of Yajña’ (G.R., V), ‘The Problem of India’ (G.R., VII), and ‘Labour and Love’ (G.R., V).
\(^{48}\) G.R., V., p. 97.
\(^{49}\) G.R., V., p. 92.
altar of Love that brings heaven to us in this world.”

Yajña, again, implying offerings to the Devas which mean the Powers that give light and life, the import of offering would be ‘dedicating.....individual faculties to the corresponding Cosmic Powers,' 'identifying little self with the Self of all,' and ‘merging one's will in God’s.’ And the Cosmic Powers being immanent in all the beings, its humanitarian implication would be that all the faculties of an individual should work in consecration to the corresponding collective faculties, so that every hand is offered to the Hands of All, every eye to the Eyes of the entire Community, every mind to the All-Mind, etc.

“Putting our hands together for the common good is sacrifice to Indra, Putting our heads together for universal good is sacrifice to Bṛhaspati; putting our hearts together is sacrifice to the Devatā of hearts or Chandra, so on with other gods.”

As in Yajña (sacrifice) so in dāna (charity) the principle of human good should guide our acts. Merely giving alms in the form of bread or clothing to the beggars will not do, rather it will spoil the recipient of the alms into idleness, beggardom and dependence on others. Right type of charity is to train a person into some productive art so that he may earn his own livelihood. This principle he believes, would very greatly reform the institution of pilgrimage in the country. The large number of sādhus, mostly religious misleaders and social parasites, has also received Swāmī Rāma’s reformative attention and he has prescribed to them dignity of productive labour and enlightening of national education and thence, through them, an awakening of the masses.

Apart from some specific reforms in the religious practices of the Hindus, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha’s approach has an appeal for a universalistic harmony of religious faiths to be cultivated in masses through combined prayers, without distinction of caste or religious denominations. His ideal religious synthesis is “intellectually Vedānta, morally Buddhism, practically christianity, religiously vaishnavism; feeling Islam intense.” Religious reforms of his choice were

50 G.R., V., p. 22.
52 G.R., V., p. 102.
53 G.R., V., p. 102.
54 G.R., V., p. 93.
55 C.W., pp. 414-415.
all designed to bring a unity of hearts, harmony of thoughts and
effectivity of concerted efforts of the people for collective good.

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Upholding the cause of the downtrodden, Swāmī Rāma says
that in a dynamic society all works are equally important and, as
such, the śūdra-dignity must be maintained on par with others'.
The treacherous treatment to the ‘low-caste’ at the hands of the
‘high-caste’ is a social sin. Caste-rules, he appeals, must be relaxed
and designed to promote fellow-feeling.56 For the upliftment of the
common masses and to bring about closeness of hearts amongst
people of all castes, Swāmī Rāma Tirtha offers a scheme of collective
programmes like national festivals to be organised with sincere spirit
of gentleness, amity and service, having healthy natural environments,
free platforms for exchange of views, Om-Mandirs open for all,
national theatres, art exhibitions, industrial stalls, libraries, museums,
playgrounds and such other provisions to infuse in people a sense of
unity and brotherhood. Open air exercise with spiritual suggestions,
congregational prayers, singing of sanctifying hymns, community din-
ners, national chorus, Nagar Kirtana and other programmes of social
intercourse would produce healthy influence on the minds of people.57

Among the many social evils, Swāmī Rāma refers to infant or
child-marriage, early widowhood, and superstitious regard for large
progeny in ‘heaven-ward progress’ as simply horrible. But the real
reform in all these matters can be brought about only by social
education. All collective problems are, after all, individual problems
and the effective solution is education of man in the widest sense of
the term.

Intimately speaking, Swāmī Rāma regards true education to be
the virtue of God-vision and spiritual freedom. In the context of our
national life, however, he does recognise the necessity of spreading
literacy, and of imparting scientific, social, industrial and technical
education. Child education, women education, adult education,
etc., are also felt by him to be indispensable items for an over-all
educational reform. He bids us respect our mother tongue and
recommends Hindi characters for folk-languages. He prophesies
Hindi becoming our lingua franca, and suggests the publication of

57 G. R., V., pp. 106-111.
papers and periodicals in vernacular for the spread of healthy views and useful informations. He appeals for wide literacy-campaigns and community service programmes. Quite a number of reforms of Śvāmī Rāma’s conception are happily coming up in our national plans now.

Śvāmī Rāma Tīrtha has an appreciation for the educational work done in his times by the christian missionaries and the British Government, but he criticises it for its shortcomings, incompleteness and the accompanying religious exploitation. School and University Education, he observes, is extremely theoretical and does not prepare the talented youth of the country for a useful productive social life. According to him education should be able to bring about an all-round development in our individual as well as collective life. He says:

“The object of Education should be to enable us to utilize the resources of the country. Proper education should enable the people to make the land more fertile, the mines more productive, the minds more original, the hearts more pure, the industries more varied and the nation more united.”

The educational reforms proposed by Śvāmī Rāma Tīrtha speak of his integral and eclectic philosophy of education, wherein the individual self-illumination and self-emancipation in communion with nature is in complete harmony with the spiritual ideals of universal consciousness in identity with his community. Education of the intellect, the emotion and the practical efficiency, are all combined to produce a healthy individual of a Vedāntic Society, and thus we have in him a happy reconciliation of the individualistic and socialist, naturalistic, idealistic as well as pragmatic views of education.

The problems of Indian Economics have not remained untouched at the hands of Śvāmī Rāma. His attention has been drawn by the problems of growing population, want of industrial productivity, wild wants, scarcity of means, colossal waste, and foolish abhorrence of the people for manual labour. His categorical advice, in the light of Vedānta, is for minimizing the wants, love of labour, industrial education of young men, family-planning, and emigration to less populated countries with the vedāntic attitude of regarding the wide world as home. All these reforms, evidently, follow from the same spiritual outlook on the whole of life.

59 G.R., VII., p. 53.
The views of Swāmī Rāma Tirtha have the characteristic merit of harmonising spiritual quietism of a transcendental nature with vital activism of a secular brand. For him, in fact, they are almost concomitants of a true vedāntic life, very well comparable to the Gītā Yoga of divine action. Intense activity and spiritual poise are one and mutual.\(^{40}\) “Incessant work,” he says, “unwittingly leads to the highest Yoga.”\(^{61}\) The modern Industrial Psychology is labouring to study the relation of work and rest, and scientific management is anxious to achieve their best alternations for maximum efficiency. Swāmī Rāma says “Intense work according to Vedānta is rest.” “All true work is rest.”\(^{62}\) The two terms, ‘work’ and ‘rest’ however, have an import quite different from a mere physiological sense. ‘Rest’ is spiritual poise of the transcendental self and ‘work’ means the spontaneous natural dynamis of the free. In such a setting spiritual purity and love are the springs of useful and creative activity and success is the attendant. Real work issues from God-vision, and delight is its beauty.

“When industry and virtue meet and kiss, Holy their union and the fruit is Bliss.”\(^ {63}\)

Success and Progress in the world, again, are never opposed to spiritual excellence, “Life-success and spiritual success,” he says, “must go together. Deluded are they who divorce one from the other.”\(^ {64}\) The true secrets of success in life according to him are spiritual virtues and not the wicked or crooked ways of the ignorant. Incessant work, application and industry, complete self-transcendence through intense concentration, self denial and universal love, cheerfulness, fearlessness and self-reliance are the keys to all success and prosperity in life,\(^ {65}\) as much as to all spiritual attainments. With all the reform of outlook and faith, and all the intense industry and application which Rāma advocates and sincerely appeals for, it is no wonder that India would accomplish the dream of heaven on earth and promise to the whole humanity a hope for its cherished happiness.

\(^{40}\) G.R., II., p. 29.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 30.
\(^{42}\) G.R., II., p. 29.
\(^{43}\) C.W., p. 262.
\(^{44}\) G.R., II., p. 64.
\(^{45}\) ‘Secret of Success’ (G.R., II.).
CONCLUSIVE REVIEW

Śwāmī Rāma, we have seen, is like a divine star, diversely radiant with a saintly philosophy, mystical poetry, spiritual religion and creative reforms. In his life and teachings is present a variety of important phases, at times seemingly incongruous and casually unbalanced in their stress, and yet possible of a deeper harmony, if constructively comprehended. Our approach to him can be superficially critical to find the lack of logical consistency of his ideas, which may lead us to remark with Mr. Puran that "Śwāmī Rāma contradicts himself in a thousand ways." But it can afford to be deeply constructive, penetrating to find the missing links of his ideas suffering from expressional contradictions and venturing to resolve the apparent inconsistencies into a synthetic system, unless we start with the presumption that he was a divided or a disintegrated personality. Dr. Atreyā’s advice for a ‘sympathetic attitude,’ decidedly carries the promise of greater understanding of a philosophical school or thinker than through ‘extra-philosophical’ considerations.

Rāma’s approach to life, reality and the world is intimately personal, fresh and emotional, and his experiences mystical. As such, effective faith and conviction are greater and more important for him than reason and logic on the one hand, and superstition and scholasticism on the other. He scrupulously encourages all freedom of researchful spirit with experimental adventures in philosophy, religion and social values, and characterises it as the true vedāntic spirit. Truth, he holds, is Universal, Eternal and Impersonal and its discovery is pragmatic, progressive and personal, integral and intimate. If a relative importance to man’s various faculties must needs be given, Rāma stands in favour of the heart of feeling first and the head of reason last, his own emotional temperament being, perhaps, his own strength. The modern extra-rational emphasis on philosophical methods, does really favour an undue reliance on and an extreme or exclusive importance of the faculty of reason. Śwāmī Rāma is almost

1 S.R., p. vii.
2 Dr. B.L. Atreyā: The Philosophy of the Yoga Vāṣiṣṭha, pp. 581-82.
a challenge to such a trend and upholds the primary importance of the heart for a direct experience of the Reality. One might feel that his emphasis on the faculty of heart is equally undue when, like most of the intuitionists, he discards reason to be futile. It, however, remains definitively more convincing that if Reality is Integral, the whole man, integrally through his reason, emotion and will, must realize it and hence the great importance of the heart. The great tradition of the mystics bears out that the heart is more capable of the two faculties for a primary experience of the Real, even though, perhaps, the primary experience transcends all head-heart-diversity.

Swāmī Rāma’s metaphysics is much more inspirational than logical. With the advaitin of the lore his Brahman is the Transcendent Absolute, utterly secondless in Its Pure Status. But his advaitism is not based on a logical rigor which negates the differential finite in order to establish the Identical Infinite. It is inspired in a poetic affirmation of the All Comprehensive Divine, immanently informing every detail of the finite world as much as transcending all its limitations. The Brahman of the absolutistic Advaitism is as true as the Glorious Lord of the Vaiṣṇava, so that It’s Being is not opposed to Its Becoming. If reason demands its own transcendence into the Absolute, the heart aspires to beat with the Beautiful Divine and the will seeks to discover and establish the Eternal Law that is Good in life. And it is unreasonable to hold either that the search of the Real is exclusively or even primarily the task or privilege of a rational logic, or that reason and emotion must, of necessity, oppose each other in their approach to the Highest. Swāmī Rāma has not invented, like Sri Aurobindo, any ‘logic of the Infinite’ to reconcile the terms of the being with the terms of the becoming, but his views, despite their great resemblance with those of Śaṅkara, do not probably entertain the want or necessity of a logical balance which mostly compels the Śaṅkarites to discard the ‘vyāvahārika’ in order to establish the ‘pāramārtika.’ His is essentially the mystic way, and even without the demonstrative perfection of a strictly philosophical method, his Brahman need not suffer from contradictions when held out to be something like ‘Gūḍādhāra Nirguṇa’ as against the Śaṅkara Nirguṇa or the Rāmānuja-Saguṇa. In fact the traditional differences between absolutism and immanentism seem to be greatly due to over-emphasis on analytical reasoning and dogmatic affiliations with the mere word of the authority, and, Swāmī Rāma’s sincere, harmonious and independent spirit greatly suggests the imperative of a total realization of the Total Reality.
The World of multiple forms and relations, although having no independent ontological status, has not been regarded by Rāma as utterly false, and illusory. The ‘māyā’ and the ‘īlā’ are not irreconcilable terms in his philosophy, in spite of his casual leanings towards Śaṅkara māyāvāda, for, again, the Existent Being and the operational becoming present a mutual contradiction only to our finite reason. Immanence of God in the world renders it identical with Him and the terms of the One God are in perfect harmony with the terms of the multiformal world. He declares the world as utterly unreal from substantial point of view and yet loves it as a glorious manifestation of the Beloved Lord. If logic were the only criterion of the Truth, his views are self-contradictory. But if the Truth has to be its own evidence and if it has to be known by identity, there is no warrant to hold on the terms of our finite reason in the realms of transcendental illumination of the primary experience. If the world of sense-perception is illusory on a logical examination of the different levels of waking-dreaming-sleeping experiences, the conceptual judgment of its being illusory may equally be false in the light of the spirit. Still further, if the world-experience is explained by a subject-object-duality, the subject-object duality itself demands its own explanation, and a successful adhvaistam must find one in the very nature of the Non-Dual. We have already said that Swāmī Rāma has not worked out a system to meet all such philosophical demands, but his poetic affirmations and mystic visions as well as his inspirational teachings do contain in them a harmony not only between the disagreeing systems of Vedānta-philosophy, but also between the antagonistic approaches of religion and science as regards the nature and purpose of the world, if, of course, constructively and sympathetically studied.

The Self, consistently is divine in its essence and identical with the Brahman. Swāmī Rāma’s approach to the self is negational just for a rudimentary method, but profoundly affirmational in development and effect. If we were to accept Hiriyanna’s observation that Šaṅkara teaches non-dualism by denying the many and not monism by affirming the one, although it sounds to be more of a logical precaution than a metaphysical truth, Rāma may be said to be an inspired monist, for, to him, the Real self is not merely what transcends the empirical self and which undeniably escapes nihilism but which supremely, gloriously and sovereignly exists as the only Reality and dynamically manifests in the cosmos. It is the Lord and the

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2 Hiriyanna: *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 154.
Master, the centre of all Joy and the ocean of all Beauty. The individual ego, although an ignorant appearance to the deluded and, as such, subject to all the laws of Karma and moral governance, has the support and promise of its own freedom into a blissful realization of its eternal identity with the Supreme Self. His views, however, do not explicitly suggest any explanation of the necessity or the inevitability of the cycle of birth and death of an enduring soul from form to form, plane to plane and stage to stage like the one we have in Sri Aurobindo's views of an involution-evolution-processed universe, and the individual's progressive self-recovery through it.

Non-dualism strikes as important a note in the metaphysics of Swāmī Rāma as in Śaṅkara's, but it is mystical rather than dialectical, much more of emotional affirmations and elational intimations than mere discriminative negations. His philosophy, as such, is his dynamic religion, which promises a fulfilment of the highest aspirations of man. Self-Brahman-identity is the philosophers' stone that transmutes life into Glory, Knowledge, Power and Ānanda. The greatest ideals of man's conception and his natural and instinctive seekings are at once the supreme inevitables of his life with the secret sanction of the Sovereign Reality. Godhead is the foundation, Godhead the aspiration and Godhead the goal of life, called by Rāma as 'Vedānta.' Liberation or salvation is only a negative expression of a positive attainment and Swāmī Rāma exuberantly sings the glories of 'Vedānta-life' closely comparable to the divinities of Sri Aurobindo's 'gnostic life', both being in tune with the upanisadic import of the Self-realized.

Religion, he believes, is essentially the intimate quest of man for the Supreme—the origin as well as the finale of his being, whatever the outer forms or denominations thereof. As such, all religions are one in spite of the diversity of their mythological figures and ritualistic performances. He holds his vedānta to be the universal religion, the religion of Nature, of Fact, of Truth, independent of any authority, open to all and realizable everywhere to everyone. The essential spirit of religion being one and universal, its formal diversity is indicative of man's religious vitality and progress. Even the variety of religious experiences does not militate against the universality and unity of essential religion. True religion is not only a remote concern for the hereafter, but is operative in our life here and now, for,

4 Compare the upanisadic self-divinizations and self-cosmicisations: Tait. Bhṛgu Valli X.
the quest for the Supreme is not a mere aspect of human endeavours: it is the integral and comprehensive preoccupation of life, “the reaction of the whole man to the whole reality” as Radhakrishnan puts it.⁵ His conception of religion, evidently, is much wider than what the term usually connotes and in its totality it is mysticism, philosophy, science, belief, ritual, aesthetics, social morality as well as practical policy and conduct of man.

Godhead being the highest value of life, both, personal righteousness and social ethics have to be spiritually directed. Good and evil have no significance except in relation to spiritual life. Virtue is that which leads to self-realization and vice or sin the opposite of it, both of them being relative. Moral purity, he holds, is the teaching of Nature and the Law of Karma equally governs all. But morality is not a conformity to traditional or institutional standards; it is a means to spiritual awakening and grows freely and naturally in an individual in accordance with his inner developments. The traditional antagonism between freedom of will and moral determinism is greatly resolved in Swāmī Rāma’s views that nature’s compulsion and man’s impulse, both correspond to the Law Spiritual which imperatively ensures God-realization. There is a frequent stress in his teachings that true morality is spiritual wisdom in operation, so that all good actions spontaneously spring forth from self-illumination and sound ethics has to stand only on spiritual foundations. Moral values being so spiritually transposed, his ethical thought has a supra-ethical aim. Moral purity, Swāmī Rāma maintains, is important for our spiritual life, but it is not the essence thereof. He is critical of those who over-emphasize its importance and take arms against the so-called impure, for, he believes, there are evolutionary stages in our moral life, and a spiritual insight of this fact should inspire in us a universal love. Spiritual wisdom thus being the very foundation of moral virtues he advises us to take to spiritual sādhanā for self-realization.

His sādhanā is not an exclusive practice with ascetic privations or other-worldly concentrations, but a sincere and truthful undertaking for a total self-culture aiming at spiritual self-perfection. As such, the body, the life, the mind, the psyche—every bit of our constitution has to perform sādhanā. Physical fitness, vital vigour, mental balance, discriminative knowledge, moral purity, catholicity of the heart, good actions, desirelessness, devotion and love, self-

⁵ Radhakrishnan: An Idealist View of Life, p. 88.
transcendence and divinizational self-suggestions—all constitute together the sādhana of the seeker. It is a whole-life, may be even life-after-life-preoccupation of the entire man and not merely a part-time job of a part of his being. Like the Gītā-Yoga it is an integral direction of our total being for a complete communion and supreme identity with the Divine, and, as such, harmoniously comprehends all our thoughts and feelings and actions into a spiritual culture. He recognises the utility of the various traditions of spiritual discipline for an effective development of the sādhaka, and even praises some in comparison to others, but he ardently stands for a harmonious integration of them all in the light of the Truth. The mind has to seek an illumination, the heart has to enlarge in love, and the hands have to make a dynamic offer of all their capacities to work for the All.

Spirituality naturally, has an intimate bearing on our practical life in its socio-political setting. In the light of the spirit, the individual and the collective are only complementary aspects of the same human life and their emancipation is mutual. All the various phases of our community life, economic, political, educational, have to be enlightened by spiritual wisdom. Education has to aim at an illumined perfection of the individual, the society has to be a community of gods and the state has to resolve itself into something like a ‘free and fluid association’ of the awakened beings. The entire humanity has to rise to a spiritual unity and waking peace and love have to dwell on earth. All this is not merely the cherished ideal of human existence, but the promise of Nature which secretly governs its destiny. Swāmī Rāma, despite the lack of that thoroughness which we have in Sri Aurobindo’s vision, is sufficiently eloquent about the great future of human life on earth.

He has been one of the greatest reformers of India, not so much through organisational methods as through his personal compassionate zeal and wide universal sympathies, his free and constructive thought and spiritualized patriotism. The wretched India of his problem is promised, prophesied and visualized to be the glorious India of his hope through an all-round self-reform to pioneer the redemption of the entire humanity. Whatever the prophecies, on principles it sounds perfectly cogent that, if humanity is not a mischievous display of some satanic genius, its aspirations for a Perfect Life must be fulfilled through its self-awakening excellence and self-unveiling divinity, whether today or tomorrow.
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24th June, 1890.
It would certainly be bad for me to devote myself to studies for personal ends and to forget you. But it is not so with me; I assure you that though there is some selfishness no doubt, I consider devotion to studies to be your service, for I believe that study will make me fit to serve you a hundred thousand times better than I can do now.

5th July, 1892.
Last night when I went to have a cup of milk in the bazar, I lost one of my shoes. It must have been pushed into the gutter. I tried hard to get it, but could not find it. Next morning I had to go to the college with one shoe of my own and the other an old one of a woman which was lying by chance in the house. This shoe of mine was very very old. So I went and bought a new pair for nine annas and three pies.

5th June, 1894.
Rama writes to Dhanna Bhakta; Maharajji God is very good. I like Him immensely. He is so sweet. You ought to live, on terms of peace with Him. He is never harsh. Only He is playful and at times what we consider our suffering is His humour. I know many things about Him now.

On this table, at which I am writing this letter, are lying a few grains of sand. And round the sugar collected three or four ants. And they all began looking towards my black letters, as my pen went on writing them on the paper. And they talked a lot about it all.

The first baby ant said "Look sisters! look! The art of this pen! How it goes on writing round and round the beautiful letters. It is spreading pearls on paper. What colours! what designs! Some letters look like us and our cousins (the other insects)! Oh how beautiful! The pen says: I am the emperor of the world, I bestow wealth on him who wields me! Then the elder ant with keener eye-sight spoke: My sisters you see not! The pen is a dead thing. It is the two fingers
holding the pen that are working the miracle. And yet another spoke: “Both of you are ignorant. It is the wrist above the hand that makes all the fingers work. And the mother of these ants spoke: No! No! It is that huge trunk that does all this. When the ants had their say, I told them “O my alter egos. The trunk is also dead. It is moved by the soul.

When I had said that, I heard you speak to my mind, and I told the ants what you had said. It is like this: There is something beyond the human soul, viz., the over-soul. It moves everything that exists. Man can do nothing without His will. The sword cannot kill unless wielded by a human hand. Similarly however bad one may be, he can do no evil, without being moved by Him. Just as the entire administration becomes friendly to one who cultivates the king’s friendship, the entire universe becomes the slave of one who becomes the friend of God. I never feel angry with anyone. I am very happy. People get into tempers and say things in an irresponsible way. We should forgive them. You must have peace between man and man. The ornament of sadhus is forgiveness.

27th September, 1894.

God is extremely kind to all. It is the mischief of our mind that it reposes no confidence in God and makes us miserable; mind comes under control by practice. One must study good books like Yoga Vashishtha. To take a little food or to fast is of supreme importance.

5th June, 1896.

It is no joy to me to gather the wealth of this world. It is no pleasure to me to get ornaments for my wife. I need no furniture either. For me I require the shade of a tree for a house, ashes for my wear, the bare earth for my bed, and the bread begged from a few doors for my food—if I get these, I feel very happy...mine si to work, work and build a little sacred shrine for God in my heart. This inner peace gives me that joy which nothing of the outside world can give me. I am Joy Absolute.

23rd June, 1897

The mere sound of the recital of the Vedas brings on a trance and I am immersed in unfathomable bliss.

5th August, 1897

These days I have to devote myself entirely to self contemplation (Vedanta vichar), prayer (bhajan) and solitude (ekant sevan). I am so happy that I cannot give them up.
8th Sept., 1897

I have read many English books on Vedanta, but reading is not so interesting as contemplation in solitude and practice of Vedanta. Whatever, by your blessings, I acquire, I distribute among seekers in English speeches. I mostly reside now in my real self. The society of books gives an impetus to practice; it is practice which yields real Bliss. To stop desire (क्षुरान) and will (संकल्प) leads to automatic fulfilment of desires (संकल्प रिद्ध), just as a seed grows by being buried under ground. Renounce Maya and the world, and they become your slaves; if you turn your face against shadow and proceed towards the sun, the shadow follows you. My mind is fixed in the Self and enjoys bliss. This is the true wealth.

25th October, 1897.

My dear father I salutations to you! The body of your son, Tirtha Rama, is now sold; it is sold to Lord Rama. It is no more his own. Today is Dewali; I have lost my body in the gamble, and I have won the Lord; I congratulate you. Now whatever you may need, ask of my Lord. He will provide you with it or will make me send it to you. But for once call upon Him with faith.

9th December, 1897.

I myself do nothing, but everything is, however, accomplished at the proper time. How am I to blame if madness and unconsciousness of the world come upon me someday uncalled? The Sun and Shesha Nag are our slaves. My task is to rest on the sofa of Shesha Nag. We illumine the Sun, and he dances according to our commands.

16th December, 1897.

"My own self! Why do you enquire about my health? Do you not know that my soul is the very life of Bliss; but the body is changing every moment, proceeding towards death and can never be happy. You cannot put this question about the soul, because it is always Bliss personified. You cannot enquire about the body as it is always extremely unhappy. I give the following allegory in answer to the question what is the world?

It was 4 o'clock in the future; the Sons of a barren woman were running about;

Bathed in the waters of a mirage and the stars of the day stuck on their foreheads,

They all then rode the sphinx and shot arrows made of the horns of the hare.
O sky! Surrender to me, they indigo, or the ghost is...coming to my assistance."

25th December, 1897.

My inside is quite pure and full of Bliss. I remember you with love. Blessed are you, on account of whom I am bathing in the ocean of Bliss. There is complete identity; this time there is no difference between you and me, not even of a hair's breadth:

"I became you and you became me, I became the body and you the soul, so that no one may say hereafter that you and I are different."

8th March, 1898.

This time there is great hubbub near my house on account of Holi. But by your grace, there is no tumult in my heart. Just as Shiva's Samadhi is not disturbed by the dance of the ghosts and goblins around him, similarly I am enjoying peace, as if in Kashir Sagar, while the people of the world around me are making noise, having concealed their real self with black and red powders of ignorance.

18th March, 1898.

A Raja asked a Mahatma, "How do you do?" He replied, "Raja! There is no end to the happiness of that All-powerful One, without Whose permission not a single leaf can move, Whose bidding the sun and the moon obey; Who distributes happiness and sorrow where and when He pleases; in fact, without Whose sanction, you, Raja cannot move your teeth, nor can your blood course through your veins. The Raja said, "Yes, it is so. One, who has cast off his little self or body-consciousness, and become one with Brahman, rules the world. His desires are always fulfilled and he is the ocean of bliss.

17th April, 1898.

The lesson taught by the way to Katasraj is perfectly true. Happiness which one finds in solitude and self-concentration, is found nowhere else.

"O deer, thy musk has filled the whole forest with sweet scent. Musk is within they self; why dost thou run about in search of it?"

One's own happiness reflects itself in outer objects. All the Vedas and sacred lore are within ourselves.
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