

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

The *Vedas* are the origin of all Indian Philosophical systems. The last portions of the *Vedas*, i.e., *Upaniṣads* are called *Vedānta*. So, *Vedānta* is the philosophy of systematization of the *Upaniṣadic* thoughts propounded by the *Bhagavad –Gītā* and the *Brahmasūtra*. It accepts three methods of investigation – *śruti* (scriptures), *yukti* (logic) and *anubhūti* (experience).¹ It is all – comprehensive and the essence of it is that Brahman alone is real and the world is illusory. It is noteworthy that *Vedāntic* Renaissance in Hinduism was led by *Śaṅkara*.² *Advaita Vedānta* (Non – dualism) of him is the first interpretation of *Brahmasūtra*; and it has supremacy over other forms of *Vedānta*. *Dvaita* (Dualism) and *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (Qualified non-dualism) are also two major schools of *Vedānta*. These various *Vedāntic* schools are not contradictory; rather, they all fulfil each other. But, unfortunately in India, there occur fights between *Advaitins*, *Viśiṣṭādvaitins* and *Dvaitins*. In such a situation, Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa came whose whole life is the working out of harmony.³ The central message of Śrī Ramakrishna is *Advaita* (the non-dual Reality called Brahman). However, his *Vedānta* philosophy cannot be called *Advaita Vedānta* in toto for he never rejected *Dvaita Vedānta*. Besides this, his concept of '*nitya-līlā*' (the absolute and the relative) modestly restricts the concept of '*satya-mithyā*' (truth and falsity) of *Śaṅkara*; and thereby adds a scientific temper into the *Vedānta* Philosophy.⁴ We cannot even regard his *Vedānta* as *Dvaita* because he stated that there is only one Ultimate Reality, neither two nor more than two; and this implies that he has not

refuted *Advaita Vedānta* as well. Though he contemplated a Personal God and found Him in Mother *Kālī*, he never denied the idea of an Impersonal God. Hence, his *Vedānta* cannot also be characterized as *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta*. His philosophy is, as a matter of fact, ‘*samanvayī Vedānta*’ since it brings about a reconciliation (*samanvaya*) of all the schools of *Vedānta*. In other words, it reconciles the salient features of all the *Vedāntic* schools.⁵ It can also be called ‘*Neo-Vedānta*’ or a new kind of *Vedānta* in the sense that it has brought all the sects of the Hindus as well as of all other religions together in a golden bond of understanding, love and sympathy. It gives a new life, a new fragrance to *Vedānta* without rejecting its basic truth. It is a new spirit though it is a *Vedāntic* spirit. *Bhakti* is the essence of Śrī Ramakrishna’s *Vedānta*.⁶

The *Vedānta* philosophy as lived by Śrī Ramakrishna can satisfy to a great extent the need for universal philosophy because it contributes to world peace and harmony. The French thinker Romain Rolland maintained that Śrī Ramakrishna is not just an echo of India’s ancient *Vedāntic* voice; rather, it is a new voice giving a new message, and this message is creative synthesis of the major doctrines of Indian Philosophy. Christopher Isherwood said that Śrī Ramakrishna is ‘*Vedānta*’s greatest human exemplar’. *Swami Vivekananda* called his Master Śrī Ramakrishna – “ ‘a living *Vedānta*’⁷”. As a *Vedāntist*, Śrī Ramakrishna rises above *Vedānta*. Akshay Kumar Sen in his verse biography of Śrī Ramakrishna entitled ‘*Śrī Śrī Rāmkrishna Puñthi*’ stated –

“... *Caramer upalabdhi Prabhur kīrtita*

Vedānter madhye tāhā nā pāy paṇḍit

Hethā ye Śrī Prabhudev Vedānter pār

Kemane Vedānta pābe samācār tār...”⁸ (Sen, 1356).

Though it is difficult to analyze the deep spiritual experiences and realizations of Śrī Ramakrishna on the basis of reasoning; yet, an attempt has been made with the finite mind to analyze these from the outcomes of the chapters of the thesis on rational grounds under the following headings:

5.1. **The Divine Foundation:**

Śrī Ramakrishna, an ordinary priest of a *Kālī* temple tried to discover the limitless spirit of God through devotion, dedication, detachment and complete surrender of everything that he possessed. His search for the oceanic and infinite Divine spirit has broken the age-old convention that God-realisation is a post-retirement plan. His ideas on God paves the way to unlock the nuggets of wisdom lying hidden in the ancient religious texts like the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads* and so on due to the language used therein; and helps us to practise them in our lives in a methodical way. The deep intensity of feeling and emotion for Mother *Kālī* gave him an easy access into the transcendental reaches of consciousness ; and he was ready to serve the suffering divinity in the shape of man. He saw the expression of the Divine Mother in all women, whether noble or fallen. So, he calls every women ‘mother’ – ‘an invocation with devotion’. This shows his respect for womenfolk and contradicts the long-standing male-dominated structure of society. He has taught us through his divine ideas that endless possibilities of life will

open up if we are aware of the true personality of ourselves; and realise that man cannot be limited by anything. It is at this summit that our life begins. Śrī Ramakrishna's divine realization invigorates the ideas of *Vedānta* and the insights of Indian values and culture. And, it has been spreading the spiritual nectar in a movement form globally.

5.2. The Gospel of Spirit and Śrī Ramakrishna:

Śrī Ramakrishna has given us the gospel of spirit instead of any theological creed or a philosophical theory. He stressed the movement of spirit and its expression through the finer rhythm of the mind as he used to sang 'shyamā sangit' (devotional songs) for the Mother *Kāli*. For him, spirit takes possession of every organ of the human being as in the case of his *mahā-samādhi*. Every chord of his being vibrated with spiritual currents; and he opened the flood-gate of spiritual currents for the future generations who are enjoying today the fruits of his *sādhana*.

Things that we come across most of the times, assume a different meaning when seen with wrong perception. It is a major problem of the human being that our senses can see only outside, the external; and not the inside. The problem has two dimensions – the individual and the collective. At the individual level, the problem keeps us pre-occupied with the problem of others. But at the collective level, we are busy finding defects elsewhere and forget to do soul-searching ourselves. The solution of these problems need a monitor which will constantly watch out our passions, troubles and wrong perceptions. Here, spirituality acts as a monitor correcting our outward gaze and turning it inwards. So, spirituality is

the search for our true nature; and this searching had been done by Śrī Ramakrishna throughout his life. He attained that state of spirituality which helped him to go beyond the gross body and beyond all orientations. He established his life in such a state of peace, self control and radiant joy that could not be affected by any sort of material gains. Contrary to popular perception, Śrī Ramakrishna has shown that spirituality is something we need when we are at a loss what to do; when we want to take a road, but are still standing perplexed at the cross-roads. His life is a lesson for all the spiritual aspirants who do not want to be caught up by the pulls of the flesh; but want to surpass themselves to realise the transcendental nature. This transcendental state of mind may be described in the words of Śrī Ramakrishna as ‘*bhāvamukha*’ in which the mind dwells in the Divine (Supreme Reality) both in its absolute and relative aspects. It is the meeting place of Being and becoming, *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa*.

5.3. ‘**Bhāvamukha**’ – Śrī Ramakrishna’s Unique contribution:

The ‘*bhāvamukha*’ state of consciousness could be philosophically understood in the light of the *Tantra* paradigm of *ṣaḍ – cakras* (six centres of consciousness) and *Vedānta* paradigm of *pañca-koṣas* (five sheaths) and *avasthā - traya* (three states of consciousness). Śrī Ramakrishna is quite at home with both the *Tantra* and the *Vedānta*.

Śrī Ramakrishna introduced into Indian spiritual tradition the concept of *Vijñāna*. A *Vijñāni* is a person who, having realised *purṇa jñāna* (complete knowledge) in the form of complete merger into Brahman, emerges therefrom, mysteriously as it were by the Divine Will for the good of the world, to liberate

others in bondage, out of great unconditional compassion and love for all beings. For a *viññāni*, the world is not *mithyā*, but *līlā*. Thus, the *satya-mithyā* paradigm of *Vedānta* in ‘*Brahma satya jagat mithyā*’ gets transformed into the *nitya-līlā* as ‘*Brahma nitya jagat līlā*’, which is a kind of *Vedāntic- Tantra* paradigm, rather than a conventional *Tantra* paradigm.

Śrī Ramakrishna’s philosophy of the *viññāna* abiding in *Bhāvamukha* is supra-logical and mystical. *Viññāna* is a special *jñāna* combining the *jñāna* of the seer of the Absolute, Impersonal, Transcendent Reality and the *bhakti* of the sage. *Jñāna* and *Bhakti* meet in a *Viññāna* and fuse into *Viññāna*. ‘*Bhāvamukha*’ is the state of the *Viññāna*. The state of ‘*bhāvamukha*’ is the state of *Īśvara*. The ego of the *avatāra puruṣa* who dwells in the state of *Bhāvamukha* after the realisation of the Absolute Brahman, choosing to ‘come down’ as it were for the spiritual welfare of the world, is what Śrī Ramakrishna calls the ‘ripe ego’(*pākā āmi*) transformed and transfigured as the ‘Cosmic I’ (*Virāt āmi or Vaḍa āmi*). Swami Saradanandaji, in his magnum opus, *Śrī Śrī Rāmkrishna Līlāprasaṅga*, has defined *Bhāvamukha* as:

“ ‘The Cosmic I-ness that exists between the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of Brahman is called Bhāvmukha... This Cosmic I is the ‘I’ of God or the Divine Mother... when the Master’s I – consciousness was completely dissolved, he dwelt on the Nirguṇa aspect of the Divine Mother that is beyond the limit of the Cosmic-I. At that time he had no experience of the Cosmic I and Its innumerable waves of ideas, which we call the world. And when the Master’s I-consciousness became slightly manifest, he saw the

Saguṇa Cosmic-I and Its waves of ideas to be connected with the Divine Mother's Nirguṇa aspect. Put another way, as soon as the Master ascended to the Nirguṇa state, his experience of the difference – in – itself (Svagata –bheda) dissolved in the One without a second. And when he experienced the Saguṇa Cosmic – I, he saw that what is Brahman is Śakti; What is the Nirguṇa is Saguṇa, what is the Puruṣa is the Prakṛti. The same snake is both motionless and moving. What is truly Nirguṇa is Saguṇa in play (līlā). After he had experienced the full vision of Divine Mother, with Her Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects, he received the command: 'Remain in bhāvamukha'. That is 'Do not dwell in the Nirguṇa State with I-consciousness dissolved completely. You are that Cosmic-I from which all the ideas of the world continually evolve. Now that you can maintain direct awareness that God's will is your will and His action is your action, you must live in this world, doing good to humanity'⁹⁹ (Chetanananda, 2003).

5.4. A New Legacy of Reality and Consciousness:

Unlike his predecessors, Śrī Ramakrishna's view of Reality does not revolve round the statute of a particular attitude. It is sublime, but not ethereal. It is comprehensive; and signifies the all-round development of a human being combined with a magnanimity of heart to love others. In his opinion, the greatest conquest is the conquest of the mind. Conquest of the mind or transcendence of ego results in liberation; and merging of the individual soul in the universal soul. Disappearance of egotism gives us the power over the whole Nature through the power of love; and it is the essence of consciousness. Consciousness unlocks the

real nature of humanity. Hence, there is no need for laser-guns and space-ships; rather, there is a need for contemplation to develop consciousness. This teaching of Śrī Ramakrishna envelops the whole idea about Reality; and has left an indelible mark on world's spiritual development. Consciousness as envisioned by him is multi-farious in nature. It splits into various levels. Knowledge gathered from each level is inter-linked. It has always expanded the region of human minds; and thereby enabled man to realise the identity with the Supreme Reality. Here lies the importance of Śrī Ramakrishna's way of looking at consciousness.

Śrī Ramakrishna's view of consciousness has revived the ancient *yogic* principles and practices of life. The practices of *yoga* and meditation has a very old history in India. Different *yogis* evoked numerous new methods; which were kept secret in their own respective sects. But with Śrī Ramakrishna's hands, *yoga* and meditation were unyoked from all dross and superstitions; and were used for the well-being of humanity. Though he himself possessed some *yogic* or psychic powers, yet he hardly used them. He regarded these powers as filth because these obstruct a man from realising the Ultimate Reality. He repeatedly told that each person is potentially divine (*yogi or yogini*). His ideas and teachings about the high states of *yoga* are preached throughout the world later on which is an unprecedented explosion of knowledge for the sake of humanity.

5.5. Śrī Ramakrishna's reading of Religion through scientific insight:

To Śrī Ramakrishna, religion is always a sense-awakening or deep realization from the profound and wide universe. It is, according to him, without forms in outer shape; and so ritual-based religious practices do not carry any

meaning to him. Religion is science to this unlettered village-man as it helps to know Truth which comes from the ‘*cetanā*’. *Cetanā* , for him, denotes sincerity, persistence and patience to get a desired goal. This description of religion actually come from the experiences of his life which are absolutely inherent. So, to Śrī Ramakrishna, religion is not a miracle or a mesmerization. He realised that one’s faith is strengthened by reasoning; and showed us that religion needs not mere faith, but also astute reason. The need for having both faith and reason was emphasised again and again by his practising one after another religion. He assimilated the knowledge gathered from different religious paths – from Islam to the Christianity to the Hinduism. This togetherness made him a unique product of the unique land of ours.

He always upheld the religious and moral standard of our nation, which can be aptly proclaimed as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation where there is a space for each one of us to practise deeply-felt religious principles. That is, one can practise any religion depending on his or her own taste or ability because the goal of each and every religion is same. In this context, we can quote *Kathāmṛta* where it has been stated –

“Dekho, amṛtsāgare jābar ananta path.

*Ye kono prakāre houk e sāgare porte pārlei holo...”*¹⁰

(Gupta, 2012).

He taught more by his life than by words. He imparted all his religious teachings in the shape of informal conversations. People who came near him were awestruck by the ease with which he delivered his lectures on religion. If we

follow the sayings of Śrī Ramakrishna, we will surely continue to survive and thrive in modern world. Śrī Ramakrishna's thought of religion is truly democratic in nature in which there is a space for individual freedom; and this democratic abode is actually the perfect nurturing place of religion, which is free from all constraints, all limiting adjuncts and from ignorance. This kind of freedom of our free religious thoughts inspires us to have a multi-faith society where people would not be questioned about their beliefs, where people would not be discriminated against because of their religion, where people would live in peace and harmony with love for all living beings, where there would not be dogmatic allegations to any particular thought; and where the great saying of Śrī Ramakrishna – '*yata mat, tata path*', would be practised.

Suggestions:

1. A comparative study may be made between the modern and the traditional feminist theories with special reference to the status given by Śrī Ramakrishna to women.
2. The research may be done on the contribution of Śrī Ramakrishna in the ongoing spiritual transformation of human consciousness.
3. The research may also be done on Śrī Ramakrishna's philosophy of social service.
4. There is a further scope for research on the foundation laid by Śrī Ramakrishna for a moral revolution in this hi-tech epoch.

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