

**Swami Turiyananda's Letter on Sri Ramakrishna's Philosophy (April 18, 1919)**  
(Bangla: *Svāmī Turīyānander Patra*, pp. 254–255; Translated by Swami Medhananda)

Dear Sharvananda,

I received your letter a little while ago, but I was not able to respond until now due to ill health. Today I will give you a response. The subject is a difficult one, but I will try my best to address it. By God's grace it may be possible to do so.

[1] It is not easy to say what Thakur's philosophy is. I believe it was to give support to all religious doctrines that he said, "As many doctrines, so many paths."

Thakur made this statement after having practiced all paths and realizing that they all lead to the same Truth.

[2] The ultimate truth is the one Advaita, which has been called "Brahman," "Paramātmā," "Bhagavān," and so on.

Those who have realized this Truth have tried to express it in accordance with their latent tendencies (*samskāra*) and preferences (*ruci*), giving it specific names.

[3] But no one has been able to express the "complete, whole Truth." "God is who He is"—this attitude represents the highest view of all illumined beings.

[4] Gauḍapāda's Ajātavāda [doctrine of non-origination], Śaṅkara's Vivartavāda [doctrine that the world is an illusory appearance], Rāmānuja's Pariṇāmavāda [doctrine that the world is a real transformation of Brahman], and Śivādvaitavāda are all true from different levels of spiritual consciousness [*avasthāviśeṣe*].

[5] Besides this, the Divine is also beyond the reach of speech and mind. The founders of all those doctrines performed austerities, and having received the special grace and blessings of God, propounded various doctrines at His command.

[6] All doctrines concern God, yet God is beyond all doctrines and intellectual reasoning. I believe Sri Ramakrishna's doctrine is to propagate this very truth.

[7] "When I identify with the body, I am Your servant. When I identify with the individual soul, I am a portion of You. And when I identify with the Supreme Ātman, I am You. This is my firm conviction."

[8] Sri Ramakrishna used to say that this was the highest standpoint [*uttam siddhānta*].

[9] So, why can't the worship vessels be manifestations of Divine Consciousness? "Nothing in this world, whether moving or unmoving, animate or inanimate, can be without Me" [*na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtaṃ carācaram, Bhagavad Gītā* 10.39]—there is nothing except God; everything without exception is God. We see other things precisely because we do not see God; but when we do see God, then we find that God alone is everything.

[10] After all, names and forms come from the Divine and abide *in* the Divine. Waves, foam, bubbles—these are all nothing but water. In light of this truth, I don't care whether your Vivartavāda stands or falls. One who has seen this Truth cannot say that this world is unreal.

[11] Nonetheless, Thakur would sometimes attain a level of spiritual consciousness that transcended all spiritual attitudes [*bhāvas*]. At those times, there would be no names and forms; he went beyond them. That is the state beyond words and mind. Even then, there is the same One—Advaita—nothing else.

[12] In that state, where is Vivarta, and where is Ajāta? Vivarta, Ajāta, Pariṇāma all concern the One Divine Reality. That One Reality alone is true. Again, individual souls and the world also come from that One Divine Reality. Individual souls and the world are also real so long as we do not forget the One Divine Reality. The world becomes unreal only when we forget God and see only names and forms. Why? Because they are impermanent. But if we remember God, then we can understand that “the pith [of a plantain tree] goes with the sheaths and the sheaths go with the pith.” One can then understand scriptural statements such as “Everything is pervaded by Me” [*Bhagavad Gītā* 9.4], “Everything is strung on Me like pearls on a thread” [*Bhagavad Gītā* 7.7], etc.

[13] The main thing is to realize God. When one has seen God, nothing else exists. One realizes that everything is a manifestation of God.

[14] All troubles and doctrinal disputes last only so long as one has not seen God. Once one has seen God, all troubles cease. Only by realizing God does one attain unshakeable peace.

[15] Therefore, this is Thakur's doctrine: One must realize God by any means. “Tie the knowledge of Advaita in your loincloth and do whatever you please”—this means: if you have once realized the One Divine Reality, then you can adopt any doctrine you please depending on your preference. Liberation is guaranteed to one who has attained knowledge of God. Then there are no longer any bondages. After death, you can choose whether to come again in another body, depending on your preference.

[16] Those who seek Nirvāṇa look upon this world as a dream. They immerse their minds in the impersonal Brahman, free from all limiting adjuncts, and merge in it. Those who are *bhaktas* [devotees], who are attached to the personal God, they see the world as a manifestation of God, they know that the world is a manifestation of God's own Śakti. These *bhaktas* keep themselves connected with Saccidānanda Bhagavān. They are not afraid of taking birth again and again—they think of themselves as playmates of God and come to this world to play. They want nothing from God. Finding bliss within, they remain lovingly united with God. Even if Nirvāṇa is offered to them, they do not accept it. This is enough for today.

Turiyananda