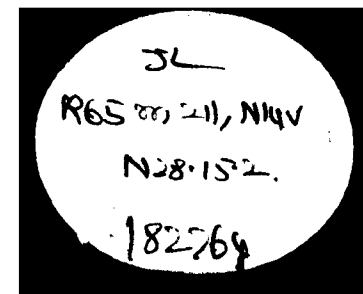


Vedanta Kesari .

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THE VEDANTA KESARI

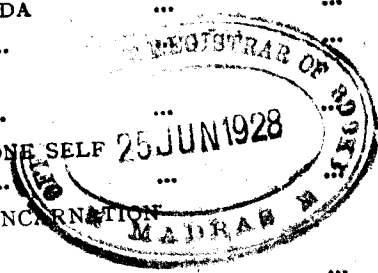
"LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR."



VOL. XV, No. 2 : JUNE 1928.

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And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman'."

Vol. XV]

JUNE 1928

[No.

PRAYER

ॐ

न जानामि दानं न च ध्यानयोगं

न जानामि तन्त्रं न च स्तोत्रमन्त्रं ।

न जानामि पूजां न च न्याययोगं

गतिस्त्वम् गतिस्त्वम् त्वमेका भवानि ॥

न जानामि पुण्यं न जानामि तीर्थं

न जानामि मुक्तिं लयं वा कदाचित् ।

न जानामि भक्तिं व्रतं वापि मातः

गतिस्त्वं गतिस्त्वं त्वमेका भवानि ॥

Oh Mother, I have made no charity ; I have done no meditation ; I have observed no sacred rites or rituals ; nor have I uttered any holy text in prayer. I have performed no worship ; nor I have ever renounced. I have done nothing. Therefore, Thou, Mother of the Universe, the only hope, Thy helpless son seeks refuge in Thee.

Good Mother, pious deeds or pilgrimage to holy land I have performed none. I maintain no desire for salvation ; nor wish to be merged in Thee. I observe no vows ; I possess no devotion ; I am void of all. Therefore, Thou, Mother of the Universe, the only hope, Thy helpless son seeks refuge in Thee.

SANKARA

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF
SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.

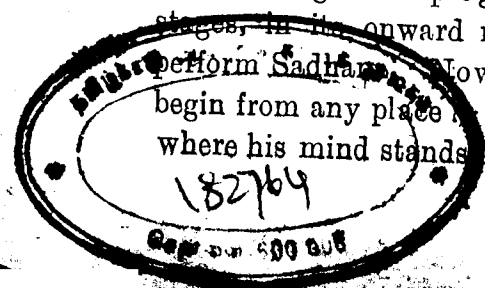
D.:—Maharaj, these different forms of worship and rituals, these different gods and goddesses,—do they mean anything special?

Swami:—All these are meant for the one and the same purpose—God-realisation. There is so much difference between one man and another in their taste as in their temperament that no one golden mean can be assigned to them all for their Sadhana or spiritual advancement. Different temperaments require different ways of Sadhana or worship. To meet these varying demands the Scriptures have, therefore, prescribed four principal modes,—Samadhi, Dhyana, Japam and prayer, and external worship. The best kind of worship is Samadhi or the direct worship of the Brahman—the realisation of the Omnipresent Reality face to face. The second in importance is Dhyana or meditation. In it exist two things, 'Himself' and 'myself';—Japam and prayer and the like have no room there. When meditation deepens, one constantly experiences the holy form of one's Istam or Chosen Deity,—form, pure and simple, Japam and the rest being totally left out of account. The next step is Japam and prayer. At this stage one sings the glory of the Lord in prayer or chants or mutters the hallowed name of one's Chosen Deity, simultaneously meditating upon the blessed form that is borne out by that holy name. The last is the external worship. This consists in worshipping the supreme Being in Pratika or images. These different forms of worship, different gods and goddesses—all these are but the creation of the human mind. They mark the different degrees of progress of the mind, its evolutionary stages, in its onward march to God. A man desires to perform Sadhana. Now, what should he do? Should he begin from any place? No. He must start exactly from where his mind stands and gradually proceed stage after

stage till the Goal is reached. Take the case of an ordinary man : if you ask him to meditate upon the supreme Brahman who is without name or form ; or if you ask him to practise Samadhi, he will not be able to comprehend anything ; nor will he be well-disposed towards it ; and consequently the result will be that he will give up his Sadhana altogether. But on the other hand if he worships the Brahman in an image with offerings of flowers and sacred leaves, he will think he has done something. For sometime at least, his mind will be free from all distractions to which every moment it is liable to fall. He will be unperturbed, and verily he will rejoice in it ; and by and by will he 'outgrow' that state even.

The finer the mind grows, the lesser becomes the joy of a man in the enjoyment of things 'gross' and secular. If you begin Puja or external worship now, some time after, you will naturally feel the impulse that Japam is a better substitute. Some time still later, you will again find in meditation a far better substitute, and so on. This is therefore called the 'gradual process' for the 'natural growth' of the human mind. In the course of this mental evolution, the little experiences the mind acquires do not get spoiled; it retains them and stores them up in the memory.

Take another illustration : you are standing down in the court-yard and you are to get on the terrace. What will you do ? Surely you are to find out the stair-case and crossing over the steps one after another you reach the roof. Instead of this gradual process if you are thrown across the air right up to the house-top, that certainly means a great deal of trouble and hardship to you. You can avoid any hurt or injury only by following the gradual process. Similar is the case with the world within. To avoid all untoward circumstances in your march towards spiritual realisations, you are to follow the graduated path that is chalked out for us by the seers of the past. And



these different forms of worship constitute that path. Ways and means, processes and procedures, rules and regulations—these exist in the physical world as well as in that of the mind. The same phenomenon rules both.

D.:—If a distracting thought, well-known to me, persists in appearing in the mind, what shall I do then, Noble Sir,—how shall I check it?

Swami:—“This thought is immensely harmful to me; this can bring about ruin unto me,—nay this can kill me; this is my worst enemy;”—impress this idea on your mind by repeated efforts. If you can stamp this impression once upon the mind, you will find the distracting element vanishing into air in no time. Take for example, this boy who is sitting by. “This boy—who is that? I don’t know him. He is good for nothing; he is worthless;”—if you persist in thinking this wise for sometime, ere long, you will find, to you he has become so; he will be of no importance whatsoever. Your mind will no longer turn towards him. And why? It is because you have pressed upon the mind that idea. To take one more illustration, a little child: it does not know what results from taking poison. If you give a little of it unto the child, it won’t care; it won’t be afraid of the poison. But if that very same thing is given to you, you will startle and at once jump off to a safe distance. It is because you know the effect of poison; you know, to take poison is to die. So we see the mind is a funny thing; whatever you hold before it, it will learn.

One thing, and a very serious thing I tell you: first of all fix your ‘ideal’, and then struggle on to realise that ideal. And ‘the ideal must never be lowered.’ Indeed, God is the highest ideal, God who is smaller than an atom and bigger than the solar system that we know of;—He who shines forth everywhere, at all times and in all beings, in you and myself as well as in the little,—only differing in manifestation, greater or smaller. It is again

the same Being, the Atman that pervades the entire universe. Verily, nothing is superior to Him. Make Him therefore your ideal, Him and Him alone. Try a little, and you will realise what an inexhaustible fount of joy is He. The world, you have had enough experience of it! Now try the otherside,—seek God. The veil of Maya (ignorance hangs before you obstructing your vision of God;) break it off and lo, He is there! To cross the Maya’s bounds is indeed a hard task; but not an impossibility,—not that man cannot do. Man has crossed and you can also do. Strive on and the success is at hand; ‘knock and it shall be opened unto you.’ The world shall stand transformed to these very eyes.

D.:—Regarding the Scriptures, what attitude should we maintain? Should we put faith in their authority?

Swami:—Certainly, you should! All these are true—these scriptural injunctions. For the good and guidance of mankind through ages, have all these been formulated by them of the past, and handed down from generation to generation, from father to son, upto the present day. You must obey them.

One other thing: as regards Karma (work), you must never give it up wholly. For, without it your very existence would be impossible. It will lead you to the end (to God-realisation). Man does not know when Karma began, but he knows where it ends. Verily, with God-realisation all shackles of Karma fall off; it is when no work remains to be done any more. But before that state, you are within the bounds of Karma; you are to work. Verily, verily, I tell unto you, by doing your Karma for the sake of Karma you shall attain to the greatest Good.

D.:—And what sort of food are we to take, Sir? Any discrimination about it?

Swami:—A very difficult question you ask; it’s very hard to answer, indeed it is so! For men differ so widely

in their constitution as in this system that it is hardly possible to lay down any hard and fast rule about food for them all. One thing may be suitable to your constitution, but the same may not suit mine. You may easily assimilate a thing but I may not. Our Scriptures therefore have not laid much stress on the point. In the Gita we come across certain passages referring to the discrimination of food; but that is a too 'general classification'. Roughly speaking, it can be said that all sorts of rich dishes should be avoided. And in the light of this general remark one should choose out one's own food according to the powers of assimilation.

D. :—Maharaj, this non-vegetarian diet,—does it not involve sin,—sin for killing animals?

Swami :—No. This is no argument at all. That they say, Ahimsa (non-injury) is the greatest virtue,—when that? That is indeed after Samadhi, when the supreme knowledge has been attained, when God has been realised in all creatures. Then only, Ahimsa. Before that no amount of talk can make it so. It is when you realise that the same Atman resides in you as well as in the little ant, and no difference exists; then only Ahimsa. Before that it is impossible. You speak of Ahimsa, but truly speaking, can you avoid Himsa? What food you take?—Potato? That shoots forth young sprouts when planted; these bring in new crop;—is that lifeless? And you eat it. You sow the paddy grain; it grows into plant; and this again bears new paddy. Is it then lifeless? Take for instance 'water'. Test it with a microscope and you will find millions of little lives abounding in a single drop, and you drink it! Again, to live is to take breath. Now, with every breath you kill millions of little creatures. Take the case of those who make much of this vegetable diet. What food do they prescribe?—Milk and Ghee? Now, how do you get milk!—By depriving the poor creature, the tiny calf, of its legitimate

suck. That's an extremely cruel act. That is no sin,—all sin in a bit of fish or meat! Such a flimsy argument cannot stand. Such a thing never the Hindus had. It is a Vaishnavite interpolation.

IDEALS OF INDIAN EDUCATION

The history of Indian life during the last century and a half exhibits a struggle and a compromise between the two conflicting ideals;—one being the synthetic cultural heritage of India and the other, the patented Occidental philosophy of life. And it is needless to point out that the educational institutions of this country stand as visible symbols and the meeting-centres, as it were, of these mutually repellent cultural forces of the East and the West. In fact the educational problem,—the most vital of all the problems of the land, has now become an All-India concern in as much as the future drift of Indian life depends entirely upon how India should tackle this problem and chisel out the educational machinery to facilitate the growth of budding Indian nationalism. The veteran educationists of the country have therefore bestowed their most careful thought and attention upon this all-absorbing question of the day, as they have realised in their heart of hearts that the moral aberration of Indian life from its own spiritual orbit is unmistakably a resultant of the interplay of the two opposite ideals and the unwarranted leaning of the Indian mind to the dazzling ephemeral products of the Western culture. The long-drawn arrays of academic corridors are now ringing with the swelling chorus of protests and dissatisfaction as the intellectual vision of the people is growing clearer day by day. After age-long torpidity the magic curtain has been rolled off from the horizon and the baneful effects of the much-vaunted culture of the West have been brought home to the thinking section of the Indian people. Rightly has Dr. Tagore remarked in 'The centre of Indian culture';—"English education as now given is for the Indian mind a kind of food which contains only one particular ingredient and even that not fresh, but dried and packed in tins." Persons of the high eminence and intellectual attainment of Sir John Woodroffe likewise have felt not the

least scruple to characterise the present system of Indian education as 'deracialising, demoralising, and deforming'. Forsooth, the Indians have been taught to give the go-by to the glorious heritage of the past, their arts and science, literature and philosophy and, to crown all, their transcendent spiritual ideal in a medley of Occidental cultures that have received a right royal reception in every field of our activity. What a greater tragedy can there be in the life-history of a nation than this self-hypnotisation and the total negation of the accumulated wisdom of ages in blind pursuit after a system quite uncongenial to its temper and genius, and deterrent to the all-round growth of sturdy manhood.

To-day at a very late hour we have been awakened to the depth of moral turpitude, to which our blind apism of everything foreign, has dragged us unconsciously down. The Indian life stands in the danger of being foundered in the very back-wash of Westernism. No more do the flowers of Indian youth grow bright and radiant with the lively impulses of budding manhood, nor do their unsophisticated hearts beat with pride and jubilation at the thought of their hoary civilisation and the glorious traditions of the past. They unhesitatingly yoke themselves to the grinding wheels of the educational machinery and emerge out a spent-up polyglot with a heavy mass of ill-assorted and undigested materials in the brain. The very back-bone of their life is broken and they exhibit a woful lack of confidence in their innate strength and possibilities, and disclose a moral and nervous breakdown in the very prime of life as a result of habitually feeding their imagination upon the god-less ethics of the West in the stifling green-house of intellectual culture. These are some of the best guerdons they earn at the expense of their 'sweet wine of youth', health and money, and the juvenile plasticity of mind!

In fairness it must be admitted that western education is not an unmitigated evil. In spite of its various drawbacks, it has its redeeming features as well. It has, nonetheless, contributed a great deal to the creation of 'Modern India'. The bold spirit of adventure; an accession of political consciousness; an irresistible desire to peer into the mysteries of the unknown quarters of the globe; in fact, a spirit of self-assertiveness in every sphere of material activities;—is, after all, not an unwelcome legacy of the

West to the people of India. It has furthermore broken down the artificial barriers and unlocked the hidden treasures of the European world, its philosophy and science, to the Indian genius. It needs no stretch of imagination to realise that to attempt to fall back upon the past without any reference to the modern age with its many-sided activities, is as preposterous as to command the Ganges after these countless æons to recede back to her original source! It will be, as well, a narrow-minded chauvinism to expect that the Indian Universities which have installed Western learning to the exclusion of Oriental culture, should altogether be levelled to the ground, and life should be started anew on their ruins with purely Indian culture to feed our imagination upon. Nor is it wise to withdraw ourselves altogether from our past glorious traditions and stuff our mind with exclusively foreign knowledge and ideas; for to do so is to train a waif in the alien atmosphere of a stranger's home. The problem therefore is how to meet the cultural impact of the West beating on the shore of our experience, and to restore India again to her enviable position of eminence.

Education has been defined in various ways from different perspectives. Mr. Fisher seems to be partially right when he says that education should be the education of the whole man, spiritually, intellectually and physically. In fact an education that fails to draw out powers that lie dormant in man and stimulate the creative instincts of human nature is a failure. "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-building assimilation of ideas. Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man."—This is how Swami Vivekananda has defined education. In every scheme of education there must be a happy accommodation of all the aspects of culture, moral, physical and intellectual in their balanced proportion. The present system that accentuates the development of the intellect to the neglect of the other two sides, has dragged many an unwary aspirant to a bog of unprofitable life. In India the cultural basis being wholly spiritual, the be-all and end-all of education has, since remote antiquity, been the attainment of perfection, and any other culture except the culture of the Self has been

treated as secular and of secondary importance. So proclaim the Vedas:—"There are two kinds of knowledge to be known, the higher and the lower knowledge. Of these, the lower knowledge is the following: the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda, phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody and astronomy. The higher is that by which the Imperishable is reached." Thus the Sruti here means to relegate all knowledge that is merely intellectual and deals only with the relative aspects of life to the category of lower knowledge, and holds up the realisation of the immutable Atman as the highest knowledge. So an education that produces merely intellectual prodigies, utterly fails in its purpose when it cannot awaken man to the 'Visions of the Golden Threshold', develop the latent possibilities and throw open channels for a full and healthy expression of manhood. It would therefore be a sheer suicidal act if we shut our eyes to the actual fundamental of our indigenous culture in our frenzied attempt to readjust our educational programme to the modern ideas of progress.

At the present stage of the world when the currents of life do no longer eddy round within the limited geographical boundaries of a particular race or nationality but pulsate from one end of the world to the other, any educational scheme that would taboo altogether the synthetic cultural achievements of the rest of the world would be an incomplete and maimed one. But we must not forget at the same time that "a national education is first and foremost an education in the national idealism,—its aim is the emancipation of sympathy and intellect". As the external must be in organic continuity with the internal in individual life, so also in the corporate life of a nation, anything that would not suit the genius and temper of the people but would interfere with the spontaneity of its growth, must be shunned like a deadly poison. English, though now an international language, has practically ousted all our rich provincial languages and has been the moulding and guiding principle for about a century and a half in the domain of culture. As the matter now stands everything from the top to the bottom has to be dyed in the tints of English language;—indeed a life-crushing proposition in the progressive realisation of educational end!

Mrs. Besant speaks out the whole truth when she bursts forth in righteous indignation:—"Nothing can more swiftly emasculate national life than allowing the education of the youth to be controlled by foreign influences. It must be controlled by Indians, shaped by Indians, carried on by Indians. It must hold up Indian ideals of devotion, wisdom and morality, and be permeated by the Indian religious spirit;" for maintains Mr. Spinoza that the Government will, if it controls the education of the nation, aim to restrain rather than develop the energies of men. Time is indeed ripe when in view of the rank demoralisation of the children of the soil, the provincial languages and literatures of India must occupy their pristine position of honour, and English must go back to a subsidiary position in the curricula of Indian academies. But how to cope with the diversity of languages is another great problem that confronts India today. Optimists are not wanting who advocate the principle of introducing one language throughout the country as the medium of instruction, for it is contended, and not unreasonably, that the want of uniformity in the medium of instruction, while promoting exclusiveness and narrow provincial outlook, cuts at the very root of Indian solidarity and nationalism. So Sister Nivedita emphatically declares that if all people talk the same language, learn to express themselves in the same way, if all are trained and equipped to respond in the same way to the same forces, then our unity will stand self-demonstrated and unflinching. We shall have then acquired national solidarity and a power of prompt and intelligent action. The greatest personalities of the present age have not therefore laboured in vain to break down those linguistic barriers that have divided India into narrow groups and have rendered the task of unifying the heterogeneous elements into a homogeneous whole, all the more difficult. To remove this stumbling factor, they have gripped Hindi, the most widely spoken and cultivated language in India as the only suitable Lingua Franca, and it is not premature to anticipate that with the Indian spirit of adaptability the non-Hindi speaking communities would accommodate themselves to this language with the least possible effort to bring the various units together on a basis of linguistic synthesis.

But in a politically subordinate and economically helpless country like India, the universities are, *ip-so-facto*, under the

financial thumb of the Government and are therefore to sail close to the humour of the 'Pay-Master' with the result that the education that we are receiving is a negative and not a man-making one. It is needless to point out that the academic freedom—freedom from state-interference and control, is an indispensable desideratum for the intellectual uplift of the entire people of India. History bears an eloquent testimony to the absolute freedom from state-control, enjoyed by the ancient universities of India in the halcyon days of hoary antiquity. The history of education, thus, in ancient India reveals two primary types of university life;—the old Hindu type with its domestic organisation of the teacher and the taught, represented in later days by the universities of Mithila and Navadwip, and the Buddhist type with its monastic organisation which developed into the universities of Odantapura, Nalanda and Vikramasila. Every student of Indian history now fully knows that except for occasional visits of courtesy there was absolutely no interference by the state with its university life though the splendid buildings of the universities sprang into existence through the munificent donations of successive kings and wealthy patrons. But times have changed and with them the system of Indian education has suffered a great set-back. Now in our weak-kneed impotence most of us bent down with a slave-mentality, look up to the 'Masters' for a drop of manna to quench our thirst and do not care in the least for the past educational history of India built upon the labours of centuries and the sacred traditions of our forefathers. It is now high time that we must gather from the story of the past the dynamic forces of the future and stand on the solid ground of self-reliance to come to our own in every sphere of our activity and roll back the bugbear of dependence from our mental horizon.

Our educational system must provide for the cultivation of Indian art and science, philosophy and literature, epics and mythologies which will foster in every individual a healthy spirit of pride in his indigenous culture and civilisation, and stimulate patriotic sentiments. "We must study independent of foreign culture different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and science." We must be inspired by a shining vision of the society that was and that is to be, of

the triumphs that thought will achieve in time to come, and of the ever-widening horizon of man's survey over the universe. What is now needed is to "nationalise" in spirit the entire outlook of Indian education by a change of heart and the angle of vision though in a dependent country like ours it may not be possible to make it fully "national" all at once. A systematic effort should be made to stir up and create an unfailing interest amongst the students in what constitutes their glory and justifies even now their pre-eminent position as one of the most cultured races of the world. In all schemes of education, technical branches of study must have an honourable place to stimulate industries and thereby to solve as far as practicable the economic problems of the country. A passive awareness of the extinct beauties of "Rome and Renaissance" would no longer stir up human energies, but a vista of future possibilities must as well be held up before to fillip them up to further achievements. In short the educational policy of the future must be shaped not with the same light-heartedness that had so long characterised the university authorities in India, but with a seriousness of purpose and a broadness of vision which should comprehend the political, social, economical and, above all, the spiritual education of the people so as to save the country from any further disintegration and to restore it back to its pristine position of glory and eminence.

SPIRIT OF HINDUISM

By Swami Viswananda

It is very difficult to give a cut and dry definition of Hinduism. The people living in this country, who go by the name of Hindus differ so widely in their customs, manners and even with regard to their religious conceptions, that one may doubt the wisdom of grouping them together under the one name Hindu. The Hindu of the Punjab differs so much from the Hindu of the Madras Presidency that a European traveller was constrained to make the statement that the former differs from the latter more than an Englishman from a Frenchman. The late Mr. Montague, before he gave the Reforms and put India on the high-road to Self government, came to see this country with his own eyes and to study the condition of the people. It is known to all that he travelled over the length and breadth of this vast India-continent and at the end of his tour he put this question

to an eminent Hindu gentleman: "Well, I have seen your country with mine own eyes. Can you tell me where is the underlying unity behind this endless variety?" The Hindu gentleman was perplexed and at last he stumbled upon an answer and it was: "It is the Gayatri-mantram." Whether we go to Kashmir or Tinnevely, Bombay or Bengal, we find the Hindus repeating the same Gayatri-mantram, and there is an element of truth in this casual remark.

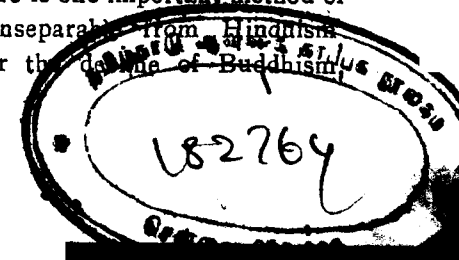
The Hindus acknowledge the authority of the Vedas and believe that the Vedas are the revealed Book of the Hindus. We are all familiar with the common saying in Sanskrit: "Whenever there is conflict between Sruti and Smriti, Sruti must prevail." We have a vast Sanskrit literature, Srutis and Smritis, Itihasas and Puranas, all going by the name of Shastras. But with regard to religious matters, these latter have not the same authority as the Vedas.

The Sruti consists of the four Vedas. The Vedas can be broadly divided into the Karma Kanda and the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda consists of the Brahmana and the Samhita. It deals with the rites and ceremonies, but as we proceed on we find an inquiring spirit, a spirit of investigation into the ultimate Reality. All the gods Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and so on, all of them melt into one God. In the Upanishads, we find that all these millions of gods are dissolved into one God. "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti;"—the ultimate Cause is one, He is called by different names. These Upanishads are the bedrock, the basis and foundation of Hinduism. There is one remarkable point of difference between Hinduism and all other religions of the world. Hinduism is not based on the teachings of any particular man like the other religions of the world. We cannot say that Sri Krishna or any other person was the founder of Hinduism. It was existing long before. The glory of Sri Krishna is that he is the best interpreter of Vedic religion.

These Upanishads contain the essence of Hinduism. They tackle the vital problems of existence, viz., what is man, where does he come from, where does he go, and what is the relation between man and his Maker. These are the problems which have agitated the minds of Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, and it is agitating the minds of the thinking section of the humanity at large. We all know that these problems have been solved once for all by the ancient Rishis, those to whom the great truths were revealed, those who have composed these Upanishads. The sayings of those wonderful Rishis of the Upanishads still ring in our ears. Addressing the whole world a seer of truth proclaims: "I have seen Him. All those who have ears, listen to me. I have realised Him

in my own heart, and by knowing Him alone, a man can cross this ocean of darkness. There is no other path for that." Here is a bold declaration, a challenge to the world: "I have seen the Truth and here is the Path for you." These Upanishads are indeed the highest point to which the Hindu genius had obtained. The world has never seen a more sublime, a greater philosophy than the Upanishads, and of these Upanishads, the Hindus will be proud for ever, because the ultimate problems, the riddles of human life, the nature of the First Cause, all have been solved there. And there we find the real Hinduism, the essence of Hinduism. Nachiketa of the Katha Upanishad puts the most pertinent question to Yama: "How to attain peace, how to have that eternal, undisturbed joy and bliss?" And the answer comes: "To them alone belongs that eternal peace and happiness, who have found out the Eternal in the midst of these vanishing shadows, the One in the midst of the many; to them belongs the eternal Shanti and to none else." The great discoverers of the laws of the spiritual world have been termed "RISHIS". A Rishi means a "Seer", one who has seen the Truth. These Upanishads contain those great laws which were discovered by our ancient Rishis. The Mundaka Upanishad says: "Pranava is the bow, the mind is the arrow, and the Brahman is the target. O man, aim at that target and be fixed once for all as the arrow is fixed on the target." This is for all men who can think of the problems beyond death, problems which every man should solve. And these Upanishads are the bedrock, the basis, and the very essence of Hinduism.

When we come down to the age of the Puranas and Smritis, we find there is a war of ideals. And we all know that fights and quarrels are going on even now in this country between the Shaivites and the Vaishnavites on account of their rank ignorance of each other's doctrines. The Vaishnavites are never going to the Shiva temples and *vice versa*, and this narrow-mindedness is the product of these puranic doctrines. But in the Upanishads, we do not find either Shiva or Vishnu. We find only one supreme Being; the causeless Cause, "the unmoved Mover of this Universe", as Plato observes. In fact, all different schools of philosophy have their origins or geneses in these Upanishads. But Hinduism as we find to-day is not the Hinduism of the Upanishads. There have been so many ramifications in Hindu Society that it is difficult to find out the true spirit of the Upanishads. There is one important method of worship which has become to-day inseparable from Hinduism, i. e., image-worship. It was only after the decline of Buddhism



that image-worship came into vogue in this country. What is the truth behind image-worship? In the Vedic age we have the Pratika Upasana. According to the philosophy of Ramanuja, that which is not Brahman is taken as a substitute for the Para Brahman. In ancient times, there was a custom, whereby when a new bride came to the bridegroom's house she was shown the Arundhati Nakshatra, a tiny star. And what the bridegroom did was to point to a bigger star and when the attention was fixed upon that, she would find just below that star, the tiny star, Arundhati. Man cannot grasp God as He is in his true nature. It is the extraordinary man, a Paramahansa, who alone knows what God is. The average man must have some sort of image. Therefore this image has been held before his mind as a substitute for God. But we must not mistake the stone or earthen image as the omnipotent God. The Hindu devotee worships God, in and through a stone image. So long as he is not enlightened he cannot know God as He is. Swami Vivekananda was very fond of saying a funny story: once a man was asked to make an image of God Shiva. This man had not seen Shiva, neither his father nor his grandfather. After years of struggle, he made the image of a monkey. So, when man with all his limitations tries to imagine God, to think of God as He is in his true nature, he makes a hideous caricature. It is only the Paramahansa and the unthinking men who do not require images. But those who are in the intermediate stages want some sort of images—an iron chest, or an angel with wings, the Goddess Kali, Shiva or Vishnu or Ganapathi. In fact we require some sort of image in order to concentrate, to focus our mind upon, but all the time we must remember that we are worshipping the Omnipotent and the Infinite in and through that image. This is the truth and philosophy about image-worship. The Hindus have stuck to it and it has come to stay in this land. How many great Saints and Mahatmas have attained to the highest plane of spiritual life by beginning their spiritual career with this sort of worship. We know of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna and so many Saints in the Maharashtra like Tukaram, Choka and others who began their life by worshipping the God Vittal of Pandarpur. There is no question that all these men have attained to the highest spiritual life.

Then there is the Socio-religious structure of the Hindu society, viz the Varnashrama Dharma. This system lays down certain principles according to which every unit, every member of the social organism, would realise the highest potentiality by following the line of least resistance. At the top of the Varnashrama

system was the Brahmana. We find in the Bhagavat Gita, the characteristics of a Brahmana: "The Brahmin is a man who has got Shama and Dama, that is, control of his external senses, and his mind, and who has got Tapas." He is also the man who has Vijñanam, the supreme Knowledge. Such a man is Brahmana i.e. a man who has set his face against name and fame and pleasures of the world, who thinks more of heaven than of earth. Such a man deserves to be honoured and respected everywhere. The Brahmin was at the top. In Hindu society the Brahmin even to-day is honoured, because he maintains the ancient culture, but unfortunately, the Brahmin has fallen from his high pedestal. As has been remarked, the very day the Brahmin entered into competition with the other castes in the arena of the world, he lost his power and prestige. But although the Brahmin has fallen from his high pedestal, still he has preserved the culture and Dharma of the Hindus.

Next comes the Kshatriya, the soldier, the man who protects society. The Kshatriya is the man who is born to rule, who has got more Rajas in him, and who defends the society from foreign aggression. And then comes the Vaishya, the man who devotes himself to trade and commerce and last of all, the Sudra, the servant. This distinction was based on the principle of the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. This is one of the fundamental principles of Hindu religion. Sattva is goodness, purity, devotion, love. Rajas is activity, strength, vitality and Tamas is inertia, laziness. The Sattvik man has got the strength and virility of the Rajasik man but, at the same time he has got the power to regulate his strength. Sometimes the Sattvik man may look like the Tamasik man, because he looks inactive and lazy, but the Tamasik man can never be active whereas the Sattvik man can be active. The differences in the Varnashrama Dharma are based on these differences of gunas. The Brahmin is the Sattvik man who is striving towards God, towards Truth. The Tamasik man is away from God. But under the existing conditions, the Varnashrama system, in all its details, cannot be worked out to-day. All the same, it is to be admitted that the spirit of Varnashrama Dharma can remain even to-day, as has been very beautifully described and discussed by Mahatma Gandhi in the pages of "Young India".

Then, the most important thing is the different conceptions of God. We see that we Hindus have got different ideals of God. Some amongst us are Dualists, some Monists, and some Vishishtadwaitins. And there is eternal conflict between the followers of these different

schools of philosophy. The greatest exponent of Advaita is the great Sankaracharya and that of Dwaita, Madhwacharya, Chaitanya and Vallabhacharya, and Ramanujacharya is the exponent of Vishishtadwaita. What is the difference due to? When a man takes to spiritual life, he is conscious of his limitations, of his frailties and weaknesses, and how can he maintain that he is one with God? At the beginning of his spiritual life, a man is bound to become a dualist or Dwaitin. As he goes on and makes progress more and more, morally and ethically, as he becomes purged of impurities and dross he feels that God is the Soul of the souls, that he is a part and He is the whole. This is Vishishtadwaita. And if he goes on higher and higher, soaring in the infinite expanse of the Akasha, then he realises that he is not distinct from the Absolute Supreme Being. This is what is called Adwaita. So the difference lies in different standpoints. The germs of these three schools of thought are to be found in the Upanishads. There are certain passages in the Upanishads which lend support to Dwaita and others which lend support to Vishishtadwaita and others to Adwaita. To quote Swami Vivekananda: "These are the stages in which the evolution of spiritual life proceeds." The man who is just stepping on spiritual life is bound to be a Dwaitin. When the same man goes higher and higher up, when he feels the light within, the line of distinction and demarcation becomes thinner and thinner. 'You are the vine and I am the branch' and last of all when he goes still further and further and becomes one with the Absolute, then he realises the meaning of the ancient saying "Tat Twam Asi". When these words were uttered, there was no necessity to write any other book on religion or philosophy, because there is no higher religion than this.

It is said in the Ramayana that once when the great Rama was seated in his Court, surrounded by the great sages, men of great spiritual attainments, he wanted to test the devotion of Hanuman. Rama said "Oh, Hanuman, what is your attitude towards me, how do you look upon me? What is your method of worship?" The great Maruthi was equal to the occasion. He looked at Rama who is worshipped by us, Hindus, as the visible and human manifestation of the Para Brahman, he saw the great sages surrounding him and said, "When I think I am the body, then I feel, O Rama, that you are the master, and I am the servant. But when I think I am the Jiva, then I think you are the purna (whole) and I am an amsa (part). When I think of the Atman, I find no distinction between you and me." This sloka silences once for all this quarrel in the name of the different dogmas and doctrines. These are the salient features of Hinduism.

The Hindus believe in the law of Karma. The great German Vedantin, Paul Deussen, came to India many years ago. One day while he was walking along the streets of Jaypore he came across a blind man. He put this question to him: "You were born blind, I believe; if so, don't you rebel against God?" He replied that he was born blind in this life owing to the Karma of his past life. This will show how the law of Karma has penetrated into every stratum of Hindu society. This law gives solace and consolation to millions of Hindus. But it has its own drawbacks. The law of Karma is nothing but the law of causation in the spiritual world. Every effect has a cause behind it, and the same cause produces the same effect. The law of Karma maintains that good Karma will give us good results and evil Karma will give us evil results; but at the same time we run after evil Karma and we cannot help reaping evil results. God himself cannot save a man unless he saves himself. Then comes in the question of free Will. The law of Karma says that our happiness or misery in this life is the outcome of our past life and our future life depends upon our present life. Today is the outcome of yesterday and to-morrow is the outcome of today. But the Hindus have forgotten the latter part of the law of Karma and stick to the former part only. The law of Karma does not say that we cannot raise ourselves. Speaking to Arjuna Bhagavan Shree Krishna says: "Raise yourself by your own self—your own self is your own enemy and your own self is your own friend." It is a pity that a nation which has got the Bhagavat Gita as its spring of inspiration lies prostrate. Why do people believe in one part of the law of Karma and not in the other part? It says "You are the creator of your own destiny." The Hindu Shastras are quite explicit on this point. It is laid down that you can make yourself a saint; even the worst sinner can become the greatest saint. Remember that you can change your destiny, that you are the creator, the architect of your own destiny. The law gives consolation to many a poor and distressed soul and it is because of this pet belief in the law of Karma that there is no revolution in India, there is no Bastille. Let us now revive the law of Karma, and believe the gospel of the Bhagavat Gita that every man is the creator of his destiny. Our forefathers were great, they have left a glorious civilization; We are the children of great ancestors and let us make the future of our country more bright and more glorious.

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M. A.

Chap. XI. Objections to Adhyasa,—and Answers (1)

As the doctrine of Adhyasa is, as it has been called, the crux of the Vedanta, its enemies have put forward numerous objections. We purpose to deal with some of these so as to facilitate the proper understanding of the true Advaitic doctrine of Experience as the pure Self free from all its limiting material adjuncts (*Upadhis*). At the very start, Sankara himself points out that, though the properties of *Vishaya* (material object) and *Vishayi* (the witnessing self) are such that it seems as if one cannot be mistaken for the other, such a transposition or transformation through superposition (*adhyasa*) has existed from creation (*naisargika*) and is universal in the experience of humanity (*loka-vyavahara*), and has its first cause in primordial ignorance (*ajnana*, *prakriti*, *maya*, all of which are synonymous terms, as already pointed out) concealing the pure (noumenal Self).

First, we shall meet what we may call a formal objection—*viz.*, How can adhyasa have an origin at all, if it is *naisargika*, inherent in matter at its creation. The *reply* is, that *ajnana*, or *prakriti*, or primordial matter is positive in its nature (*bhava-rupa*)—not a mere negation—and is the fine and subtle form of the grosser material world of creation. Though from a merely *theoretical* point of view, the Atman is the one existence without a second, and therefore both the efficient and material cause of the phenomenal universe when it comes into existence,—from a *practical* point of view, *prakriti* (primordial matter, *maya* or *ajnana*) is alone its *material* (*upadana*) cause,—*i.e.*, when adhyasa has taken place. From the same (or practical) point of view, therefore, this adhyasa may be reckoned as its *efficient* cause (*nimitta-karana*). Further, as we have (in the previous section) distinguished between *karanadhyasa* and *karyadhyasa*, we can be sure, that, when Sankara refers to our *loka-vyavahara* (our worldly experience and activity), he refers to *karyadhyasa*. Hence, there is nothing objectionable in regarding *prakriti* (primordial matter) by itself alone as the material cause (*upadana-karana*) of the universe. Furthermore, no material object by itself (or the pure Self alone) without adhyasa can be *known* as at all existing. Knowledge (or experience) implies the distinction between a *bhasaka* (seer) and a *bhashya* (the object seen). The noumenal Self, being “one only

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without a second”, can be neither of these two. It has no parts,—and so is incapable of being transformed into anything else. For the same reason, it cannot be touched (or stained) by anything outside. It is also irresponsive, and so incapable of absorbing or incorporating into itself anything from outside so as to form a part or limb through which it can establish relations of any sort with what it is not,—with the not-Self. But the Ego (or the conditioned Self) is a self-revelation, and is experienced by all. Its experience is the effect of *karyadhyasa* (or differentiation of the pure self by the objects of the Universe). This conditioning process, while it prevents the shining of the Absolute (*Atman*), is unable to prevent the glorious self-effulgence (*Svayamprakasa*) of the latter from getting imparted, in however dilated a form, to the living self-conscious Ego (*Jivatman*). Hence, it illuminates all objects presented to it,—and we can therefore easily realise how the consciousness of the Ego arises as the effect of the earlier adhyasa, *viz.*, the identification of our internal organ (or mind) with the Atman.

We now pass to a *second* objection, which is also one purely formal (if not also frivolous) against adhyasa,—an objection based on Sankara’s example of darkness and light, and meant only to illustrate how obvious it is that *Vishaya* (material object) and *Vishay* (the intelligent self) are, by their essential nature, contradictories, and therefore really ought not to be—though, in practice, they are—mistaken for each other. This objection is stated as follows:—(a) In a room where only a dim lamp is kept, we find light in its neighbourhood, but also darkness in a corner at some distance. *Reply*. What Sankara means is that darkness and light cannot exist together and mix so that one may be mistaken for the other. For, where one is found, the other cannot be. (b) Darkness is a mere negation, the mere absence of light. Hence it has no analogy to a material object (*Vishaya*). *Reply*. Darkness is not a mere negation. For, even when he is in a room well-lighted, a man who shuts his eyes sees darkness within his eye in the space between the lids and above the white (of the eye). (c) If darkness (*tamas*) is positive (and so has form, *rupa*) why is it not felt by the sense of touch? *Reply*. A thing maybe felt by the touch, and still have no form,—as we know by the case of touch. Similarly, darkness, though it cannot be touched, has a form which is visible. Further, smoke is an object which can be felt only when it comes into contact with the eye, but not elsewhere,—and so it must be declared to have form. Why, then, should we not similarly conclude that darkness has a form, though it cannot be felt at all anywhere by the sense of touch.—For these and other

reasons, we conclude that darkness is not a mere negation, but something positive, and so there is nothing to object to in Sankara's illustration of light and darkness to show that *Vishaya* and *Vishayi* are contradictories.

A third objection to Adhyasa in Vedanta is as follows:—The identification of “this mother-of-pearl” (*idam sukli*) with “this silver” (*idam rajatam*)—which is one of our stock illustrations—does not stand on all fours with the alleged identification of the Atman with material objects. In the former, there are two parts (*amsas*)—(1) “this” (*idam*) which is common to the two objects identified; (2) a part, particular or not common,—viz., mother-of-pearl in one case, and silver in the other. The mistaken experience or phenomenon (which we call adhyasa) arises from the superposition and identification of the latter—the *visesha-amsa* (the particular part) with the *samanya-amsa* (common part). But this is not possible in the case of the alleged identification of the Atman (the absolute self) with material objects which forms the crux of the Vedanta. For, the Atman has no recognisable attribute, form, etc., and, therefore, beyond the world of our sense-perceptions, and so incapable of being mistaken for any material object (*Vishaya*). *Reply*. All this is true. Still, it is, as Sankara has not failed to tell us—a fact of universal experience that such a mistaken identification exists, and has existed for all time; and hence this experience is called *naisargika* by Sankara (as already stated), and also *anadi* (beginningless). The “law of seed and sprout” (*bijankura-nyaya*)—each implying the other as cause and effect—is brought forward as a settled fact to illustrate the famous Vedantic cycle,—the eternal flow and succession of the phenomena of activity and enjoyment (*hartritva bhoktritva*), desire and aversion (*raga-dvesha*), egoity (*abhimana*), want of discrimination (*aviveka*), and the mistaken identification of the Atman with material objects (*adhyasa*), together with the same phenomena in the reverse order of succession.

Objection, No. 4, is as follows:—As both mind and body are included in the living and witnessing self, it is wrong to say that there is a false or illusory identification of the two. *Reply*. In reality, neither mind nor body can anywise get included in, incorporated into, and associated or identified with, the ever-pure Atman. As, however, we have all our experience of phenomenal limitation,—of our relatedness to the Not-self and its consequences to us as flowing from the inevitable cyclic law above referred to, we trace it to a competent efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*). The material cause is *maya* or *prakriti*, primordial matter, as it evolves into the manifested world. The efficient

cause of samsaric bondage is adhyasa, the illusory identification (or mistake, *bhrama*) of the absolute Atman with the phenomenal prakriti or material object. This adhyasa brings in for us our false knowledge that the knower, the object known, the means of knowledge, etc., are all real, though these really belong to the transient world of phenomena and vanish with the final phenomenal experience of the Self as Self (*Atmakara-vritti*, or *Akhandakara-vritti*) in which the witnessing Self—not the pure Self, *Suddha-Chaitanya*, “one only without a second” shines and is not yet dissolved (as it must be) almost at the very moment when it occurs for us.—Further, if we do not—and will not—accept the obvious fact of the illusory experience of the identification of *Vishaya* and *Vishayi*,—of the Atman with its material limiting adjunct (*upadhi*)—we shall have to invent some other cause, such a likeness between the two in some particular feature or attribute (*sadvisya*). There can, however, really be no similarity of any kind between two such complete contradictories.

In truth, however, we can easily see that, as already stated, if we, in our daily practice, regard the entire collocation from the internal organ (*ahankara*) to the outermost body (*sarira*) as the intelligent ego (*aham*),—and not as an external ‘this’ (*idam*) or ‘thou’ (*yushmad*), as we really must—it is due entirely to the power and glory of direct cognition (*aparoksha*) inherent to, and inseparable from, the one pure Atman. Self-effulgence (*Svayam prakasa*) is entirely of the essence of the Atman, and cannot in any wise belong to any of the substances included in the collocation (*sanghata*) which forms the material limitation (*upadhi*) which gets itself identified with us from the beginningless creation of this world of phenomena to the time of our final deliverance from it.

A fifth preliminary objection is stated as follows:—There is not the least foundation for acceding to Sankara's view that this identification of *Vishaya* and *Vishayi*, matter and self,—what he calls their *midhuni-karana* (or adhyasa)—precedes as the necessary cause of our world-old phenomenal experience (*naisargika-loka-vyavahara*). *Reply*. (a) Here we have to make a distinction between appearance (*pratiti*) and reality or essence (*svarupa*). The two processes—*Midhuni-karana* (adhyasa) and *loka-vyavahara*—appear separate, but they are in reality to be deemed indistinguishable, for *maya* (*prakriti*) is the material cause of both, equally. (b) Our activities in the world take two forms *aham-idam* (I am this) and *mama-idam* (mine is this). The origin of both is indicated in Sankara's use of the term, “*midhuni-kriya*”. Without such identification (*adhyasa*) there is no *me* and *mine*, or *thou* and *thine*,—there can be none of the distinctions which

constitute the world of phenomenal experience. As thus there is a distinction (of characterising quality) between these two forms of activity—viz., *mīdhuni-kṛāna* and *loki-vyavahāra*—we must not hesitate to distinguish between them.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA AS AN INCARNATION OF THE INDIAN GENIUS

(Continued from the May issue).

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.

Let me now proceed to consider the higher religious teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. These are even more important than his teachings about individual and family and social life because those deal with the soul whereas these deal with the vestments of the soul. His spiritual teachings reveal his Indianness to the core of his being even more than his secular wisdom. He gave to the world very valuable ideas about the *sādhana*s or methods of realisation of God. He taught that the best way of realising spiritual truths is by seeking a *guru* (teacher), because hearing truths from a *guru* leads to realisation while reading often merely informs the mind without purifying the heart. He said: "Hearing is better than reading. One understands the truth better by hearing it from the lips of the Guru or a real monk. One has not to pay attention to the unimportant details in the Scriptures. Seeing, again, is better than hearing. I mean actual realisation. It dispels all doubt. Well, the Śāstras teach a good many things. But unless one realises God, unless one has devotion to His lotus feet, unless one's mind is purified, everything is useless. The Bengali almanac makes a forecast of the annual rainfall, but if you squeeze the book not a drop comes out." (Life of Sri Ramakrishna page 633). In regard to the value of ceremonials he said: "Prior to realisation none can give up ceremonials altogether. The flower drops off as soon as there is the fruit. Devotion is the fruit and ceremonials are the flower. The Sandhya merges in the Gayatri, the Gayatri in Om, and Om in Samadhi—like the chime of a bell gradually fading away." (Do page 628). About image worship he said: "You were talking of images made of clay. Well, there often comes a necessity of worshipping even such images as these. God Himself has provided these various forms of worship. The Lord has done all this to suit different men in different stages of knowledge". When such image worship purifies and broadens the mind, the worshipper of the image will eventually realise the whole universe as God and will see the beauty of the whole world as his bright

decoration. Sri Ramakrishna said: "One day, in the course of Siva worship, I was putting the Bajra on the Siva-lingam, when came the revelation that the universe itself is Siva. That day ended my worship of Siva by making His images. I was plucking flowers, when suddenly it was revealed that the flower plants were so many nose-gays!...It exactly flashed before me! I did not reason it out! I saw that each plant was a nose-gay adorning the universal form of God! That was my last flower-gathering." Sri Ramakrishna knew and taught that the paths to God-realisation are many. He said: "Well, infinite are the ways leading to the ocean of immortality. You have got to plunge in this ocean anyhow. You will be immortal if you just take a few drops of it. You may of your own accord jump into the pool, or descend along the steps, and leisurely sip the nectar, or some one may push you down—the result is the same. You will be immortal if you but drink a little of the nectar. There are infinite paths. You may follow any of these—knowledge, devotion or work. If you are sincere, you will realise Him." (Life of Sri Ramakrishna page 629). He was once asked how one may fix one's mind on God. He replied: "To that end one must chant without ceasing the name of God and His great attributes. One ought always to seek the company of holy men. One must always go among the Lord's devotees or those that have given up things of this world for the sake of the Lord. It is hard, no doubt, to fix one's mind on God in the midst of the world's cares and anxieties. Hence one must go into solitude now and then in order to meditate on Him. In the first stage of one's life in the spirit, one cannot do without solitude. The Mind, the retired Corner and the Forest are the three places for meditation. One must also practise discrimination between the Real (God) and the unreal (the phenomenal world). Thus a man may be able to shake off his attachment to the things of this world, to wealth, fame, power, and pleasures of the senses.....Do all your duties with your mind always fixed on God. As for your parents and wife and children, serve them as if they were your own but know in the inmost recesses of your heart that they are not really yours—unless they too love the Lord. The Lord alone is really your aim, and those that love the Lord." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna page 40). It is only after such discipline that real renunciation will come. After the Sādhana is perfected, the universal Mother reveals Herself. Sri Ramakrishna said: "In the stages of Sādhana, one has to hear all these (scriptures). But when she has been realised, there is no lack of knowledge,—She herself provides an unfailing supply." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna II p. 125). He taught also that the essence of the Gita is *Tyāga*. He said: "Say Gita, Gita, ten times. That

is sufficient. For said ten times, it comes to be *tyagi, tyagi*. Now *tyagi* means a person giving up the world for the sake of God—riches, honours, work with attachment, sensual pleasure, etc. In one word the Gita says *give up*." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna I, page 70). Thus the practice of the *sadhana*s leads to renunciation. Sri Ramakrishna was never tired of praising the true *sannyasin* as the true teacher and as the true power-house of altruism in the community. He said: "The sight of the perfect renunciation of the Sannyasin will teach others to renounce. If he falters, they will be degraded. For the Sannyasin is the teacher of the world." (M's Life of Sri Ramakrishna II, p. 95).

Even more valuable and even more full of the most essential Indianness than his revelation of *sadhana*s is his revelation of the spiritual truths. It is so many-sided, so varied, and so valuable that I cannot describe it here with any degree of completeness and must content myself with a few indications. He realised and taught that all the religions contained spiritual truth and that each system of doctrines represented a pathway to God. He said: "Every one says this is *my* land, *my* house, and so he partitions off his property. But no one partitions off the endless sky overhead. A man in ignorance thinks *his* religion is the best. But when his mind is illumined by knowledge, sectarian quarrels disappear."

He explained the intricate doctrine of Maya by a simple and telling parable: "Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are going through the woods. It is a narrow path where only one can go at a time. Rama is leading the way, bow and arrow in hand; Sita is following him; while Lakshmana is bringing up the rear with his bow and arrow. Lakshmana is intensely devoted to Rama and longs to see him constantly. But Sita is in the middle, so he cannot have a view of Rama and is sore at heart. Sita is quick enough to discover the state of the mind, and moved with sympathy, she now and then steps aside with the remark 'Behold'. Then Lakshmana is blessed with a vision of his beloved Lord. Similarly, between the Jiva and the Lord there is the Maya—the Divine Mother. Unless she, moved with sympathy, steps aside, the Jiva can never see the Lord. As soon as she is gracious, he beholds him and is rid of all misery, otherwise, however much you may discriminate, it is all to no purpose." This parable makes the doctrine of Maya more clear than learned disquisitions and dissertations on *avarana sakti* and *vikshepa sakti* and *avidya* and *vidya* and *prakriti*. Sri Ramakrishna taught that God is one when seen in a state of Samadhi and is many when looked at through the prism of the relative consciousness. In respect of the three schools

of thought,—the Advaita and the Visishtadwaita and the Dwaita he said: "The Advaita is the last word about realisation. It is something to be felt in Samadhi, for it transcends mind and speech. The mind and intellect can comprehend and put in terms of language the range of thought up to the Visishtadwaita and no further. In its perfection, the Absolute and the Manifestation are seen to be equally real—the Lord's name, His abode and He himself are found to be composed of one spiritual substance. Everything is spiritual, varying only in form. For the ordinary man with strong attachment to the senses, the dualistic forms of religion, with some amount of material support, such as music and symbols are useful." (Life of Sri Ramakrishna pages 345, 346).

Even more essentially Indian than the social teachings and the spiritual teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is the nature of his influence. Swami Vivekananda has said well: "Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, so has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world." Sri Ramakrishna's influence was equally subtle, equally potent, equally fascinating. By simple and homely sayings, by Puranic parables, and by his illustrations taken from everyday life, he brought home the highest truths to even the humblest men. At the same time even the greatest pundits felt their learning to be a mere show by the side of the depth and profundity of his realisations and declarations of the truths of life.

Thus in every way Sri Ramakrishna was one of the most perfect incarnations of the Indian genius. His most distinctive contributions to Indian thought were his declaration of the harmony of religions, his proclamation that religion is realisation, and his emphasis on the Motherhood of God. In short Indian culture is Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramakrishna is Indian culture. P. C. Muzumdar says about him: "A living evidence of the depth and sweetness of Hindu religion is this good and holy man. He has wholly controlled his flesh. It is full of soul, full of the reality of religion, full of joy, full of blessed purity. As a Siddha Hindu ascetic he is a witness of the falsehood and emptiness of the world. His witness appeals to the profoundest heart of every Hindu."

His greatest disciple Swami Vivekananda says about him: "It (his life) is an extraordinary search-light under whose illumination one is able to understand the whole scope of the Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge we get from the Shastras. He showed by his life what the Rishis and the Avatars really wanted to teach. Books teach mere theories. He was

a realisation. In one life of fifty four years he lived the eight thousand years of national spiritual life and raised himself as an object-lesson to future generations."

Such was Sri Ramakrishna and such his work for India and for the world. Has the world need of him to-day? Does the proud and progressive West need his ministry? Does India now sweeping into the sunshine of modern life require his ministry? It seems to me that the West as well as the East need his ministry very much indeed. What is the plight of the West to-day? By science, industries, commerce and organisation the West has attained a position of enviable preeminence in the world in recent times. The great English poet-laureate of the nineteenth century was fired by the greatness of the age and sang in his enraptured youth:

"For I dipt into the future, for as human eye could see
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer and the battle flags
were furled

In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world.
There the commonsense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

He kept the dreams of his youth bright and burnished to a large extent even after sixty years, though the very source and fount of the day of his hope was dashed with wandering isles of night.

"When the schemes and all the system, kingdoms and republics
fall

Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?
All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love and Truth
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?
All diseases quench'd by science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?
Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not earth as yet so young?
Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion killed,
Every green ravine a garden, every blazing desert tilled,
Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all Her warless isles."

How were these dreams fulfilled,—the bright dreams of science-aided, democracy-dominated, progress-uplifted nineteenth century? The Great War of twentieth century was the bitter answer to such a buoyant interrogation? We can try to explain away everything in our fatuous self-delusion. But universal world-wars cannot be explained

away by self-deluding sophistries. Rabindranath Tagore once referred to "the fierce self-idolatry of nation worship". You cannot organise for war and yet outlaw war. The religion of power was dominant for many decades and drove out the religion of peace. But it is now recognised that the religion of peace was the higher faith and that a new arrival is not always nobler than the speeded guest. Further, the Western life is getting complicated and sophisticated and standardised and unacademised almost beyond the point of human endurance. Hurry, speed, individualism, excitement, strenuousness are good but they could be easily overdone. The newspapers, the cinema, and the wireless concert are here, there, and everywhere. If the incidents of life increase, the accidents of life increase as well; the heavy toll of the automobile has outdistanced the fabled toll of the car of Jagannath. Even a holiday, a week-end rest, is enjoyed in a rush. At this rate the West will end in nerve-wreckage and neurasthenia if the warnings of nature and of God are unheeded and ignored. In the industrial world there is no God but competition and the company-promoter is his only prophet. Man is become an adjunct of machinery. The eye is pained by the universal ugliness; the ear is deafened by the din and uproar of turning wheels; the nose is filled with smoke which hangs like a pall over cities shutting out equally earth and sky; the hand is limp from incessant labour; and the head is overwhelmed by the rust of things and the heart is deadened by competition. Great minds have complained in recent times about the drawbacks of this age of advertisements. The newspapers and the city walls are over-decorated and over-weighted with puffing lies. There are more patent medicines than unpatent diseases and yet the scourge of epidemics is looming over the heads of men. Society is ever on the brink of class wars and strikes and lock-outs are on an unprecedented scale. Syndicalism, Bolshevism and Anarchism are raising their heads everywhere. Woman also has entered into the gladiatorial arena of life. The hotel is threatening to displace the home. Even in the happy realms of art passivism and cubism and jazz are in the ascendant. In the realm of ethical life the passion for comfort has supplanted the ancient views of poverty. Professor James says: "We have grown literally afraid to be poor."

In short life sadly needs serenity, simplicity, spaciousness, and spirituality. But fortunately for all the creative elements in life are beginning to prevail over the possessive elements. The saving grace of humour is yet keeping life sane and sweet. The reign of philanthropy over men's hearts is more and more. The disarmament conferences and the league of nations show the in-coming of the reign of

peace. The vogue of Tagore shows that art will once more be creative, serene, radiant, and revelatory of God. A re-born West will recreate the East. Sri Ramakrishna's greatest disciple Swami Vivekananda electrified the West and ushered the new dawn there. Is it too much claim that Sri Ramakrishna's influence will improve and uplift and purify and spiritualise the West?

India's need of Sri Ramakrishna is even more. India is now "Twixt two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born". I would rather say, "Twixt two worlds, one dying, the other struggling to be born". Shall we preserve and revitalise the dying old world and shall we help at the birth of the new world or not? That is the problem before us. Where are we to-day? We have the sorrows of civilisation without its joys. Our towns and cities are crowded yet colourless, deafening yet drab and dirty, sophisticated yet lacking in splendour. Our villages are depleted, deserted, dying. We have complicated our petty round of life until we have the discomforts without the delights of modern life. The *harts* of life are more frequent and more in evidence than the harmonies of life. Every wandering globe-trotter feels an inner urge to abuse us and advise us. Miss Mayo has told us in her notorious book *Mother India* that we are occupying "a sub-grade of resistance" and has informed the world that "inertia, helplessness, lack of initiative and originality, weakness of life-vigour itself—all are traits that truly characterise the India not only of to-day but of long-past history". We were never inert, helpless, weak and lifeless and we are not so to-day. But have we not got much to do to-day to maintain and revivify our ideals of life here and hereafter? Has not our education been empty of liveliness and godliness? Are we not restless and unhappy? Has there not been a lowering of our idealism? Is not our Indian-ness of outlook getting less? Are we not becoming increasingly outlandish in speech, dress, customs, manners, and even institutions? Are our ancient ideals of holy living and holy dying (*dharma-charana and antimasmiti*) not on the wane? Is there not a gathering and anxious impatience of discipline? Are not social discords and deformations and revolts getting the upper hand? Is not cynicism on the increase? Are we not avid of pleasure and miserable at pleasure denied? Hinduism and Hindu social life are between two fires—revolts from within and assaults from without. Have not strange faiths come in or been born here which advertise themselves as an amalgam of superscience and super religion and threaten to supplant our immemorial and universal religion? Urbanisation, sophistication, standardisation, and materialisation are ever on the increase in

modern India as elsewhere in the modern world. "We have given our hearts away: a sordid boon." We have to win the boons of science, we have to modernise ourselves wisely and well in the realms of industries, commerce, and political life; and at the same time we have to preserve our ideals of individual and family life, our co-operative social life, our idealistic literature and art, and our sublime philosophy and religion. We are in the sunshine of a great renaissance; we are full of a deep passion for social service and social concord; and we are on the eve of great political reforms in the direction of Swaraj and Self-determination. India who was once the Mother of the nations became a Niobe among the nations and is now regarded as a Sphinx among the nations casting wistful and tantalised and tantalising eyes across the desert spaces of her life. Shall she not become the Mother of the Nations once again? I wish, not in a spirit of weakness or selfishness, that Sri Ramakrishna should be born again to achieve such a glorious destiny for our land. In famous parable of the three men who scaled the wall and saw the glorious garden, two of whom leapt into the garden but the third restrained his rapture and came back to the joyless world to lead them unto the Eden of the soul, he has shown to us his yearning for re-birth for achieving the greater glory of God and the greater happiness of men. May he lead us into the higher life that is to be for India—our benign and beautiful and blessed motherland!

I say again that such a claim is not an immoderate and overstated claim. Sister Nivedita once said: "His was probably the one universal mind of modern times." Swami Vivekananda has shown that "in one life of fifty-four years he lived the eight thousand years of national spiritual life". Let us place ourselves under the lead of this supreme lover of humanity and this supreme incarnation of the Indian genius.

"Ramakrishna! thou shouldst be living at this hour!
The world hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient hard-won dower
Of inward happiness; we are selfish men:
Oh raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a store and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;

So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay."

Sisters and Brothers, I have done. In the beautiful poem with which this address began is found a beautiful utterance with which I can fittingly conclude this address :

" Lo ! Thou hast shown that all paths lead to the Father ;
That the earnest seeker will attain to realization, to conscious at-one-ment with God.
' As surety sure ' hast thou shown us that the only essential is one-pointed devotion in the search for truth.

Naught else matters—nor race nor clime nor caste nor creed nor prince nor peasant nor poverty nor riches nor ignorance nor learning.

All these are but outer. Devotion is inner—of the heart.

Whatsoever the path, the soul who follows it in spirit and in truth will surely attain to God-consciousness.

We have been shown that the Pearl of Great Price which we seek is within ourselves, because we are one with Thee and Thou art one with the Father.

The veil which separates us from Thee is a veil of illusion only. By thy life among men didst thou show how to pierce this veil, and to become consciously one with God, the Father-Mother of all the myriads of manifested universes."

अचंडालाप्रतिहतरयः यस्य प्रमप्रवाहः
लोकातीतोऽयह न जहौ लोककल्याणमार्गम् ।
लैलोक्येऽयप्रतिहतमहिमा जानकीप्राणबन्धः
भक्तया ज्ञानं वृतवरवपूः सीतया यो हि रामः ॥
स्तब्धीकृत्वा प्रलयंकलितं वाहवोत्यं महान्तं
हित्वा दूरं प्रकृतिसहजामन्धतामिस्त्रमिश्रां ।
गीतं शान्तं मधूरमपि यः सिंहनादं जगज्जं
सोयं जातः प्रथितपुरुषः रामकृष्णस्त्विदानीं ॥

May I recite here my verse-translation of these two beautiful stanzas ?

" Sri Rama whose sweet stream of life did flow
In its pellucid and resistless might
To bless and save the lowest of the low
The victim of the world's most sinful slight :—
He whose compassion deep did make him wear

The world-stained garment of the human frame
To show the Godward way and gladly bear
A human life and veil His power's bright flame :—
He whose renown doth know no peer on earth
Or in bright paradise—the good life's goal—;
The radiant blossom of whose blessed birth
Was Sita's love and who was Sita's soul :—
Incarnate Wisdom dowered with heavenly might
In blessed union with Devotion sweet
That wore the forming Sita, as the light
Of Sun is in deep union with its heat ;
Sri Krishna who did quell the restless deep
Of battling arimes met in mortal war
Whose Love's Sun o'er the darkness and the sleep
Of nature shone from Partha's golden car :
The heavenly Lion whose roar did ne'er cause
The slightest fear or grief to all around
But gave in music sweet God's holy laws
By knowing which the soul with joy is crowned :—
Sri Ram and Krishna full of love supreme
To bless the world did take a single frame,
And brought from Heaven's Love's Ganga's sacred stream
And bore Sri Ramakrishna's holy name.
Glory to Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna. Guru Maharajki Jai.

(Concluded)

EMERSON'S DEBT TO THE ORIENT

By Prof. Arthur E. Christy of the New York University

I

For decades Americans have spoken of Emerson as a Boston Brahmin without much thought of peculiar nicety with which the appellation fits. Some have vague ideas of a general analogy between transcendentalism and Hinduism, but the extent to which the former was dependent upon the latter for inspiration, imagery and doctrine has rarely been studied even by scholars.

It is generally accepted that transcendentalism was compounded of English idealism, German intuitionism, and Oriental immanence. It is also accepted that the various Platonic schools of thought held a potent influence on Emerson. And much has been written in the past on all phases of Emerson's mind, save his acceptance of the doctrine

of Oriental immanence. There, is the greatest dearth of information. The story of what a strong man indubitably sincere and a genius, did with the ancient thought of Asia is one of the most fascinating narratives of the human mind and literary history.

At what age and by what means was Emerson first drawn into contact with the philosophies of Asia? What did he think of them? What did he read? How was his interest nourished? And finally what did Emerson accept of the declarations of Upanishadic seers regarding life and religion? The following is an attempt to answer these questions.

II

Emerson very probably came to associate the sacred writers of the East with those of the Platonic schools through his adoption of the critical attitude of the French philosopher Cousin, whose works he read. Cousin had written: "The roots of Greece and Rome are absolutely Oriental. Language, writing, the alphabet, processes of industry and agriculture, mechanical arts, primitive forms of Government, the primitive processes and characters of art, and the primitive forms of religion, all, all are Oriental.....When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, especially those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discern there so many truths, and truths so profound and standing in so strong a contrast with those mean results which, in these latter days, have satisfied European genius that we are tempted to bow the knee before the genius of the East, and see in that cradle of mankind, the true home of philosophy!"

It was the concept of unity that appealed to Emerson in Orientalism. Early in life he had written in his Journals, "An obscure and slender thread of truths runs through all mythologies, and this might lead to the highest regions of philosophy."

To Emerson the Vedas and the Koran were Scriptures just as sacred as the Hebrew Bible. His was not the dogmatist's pose of infallibility. And one could go on, culling out passage after passage, some of which speak of Occidental natural science in terms of Hinduism. "All science is transcendental or else passes away. Botany is now acquiring the right theory—the avatars of Brahma will presently be the text-books of natural history." Nature is the same in India as in America, the basis of universal life. God is all and in all and eternal. All that is not of the infinite source is ephemeral and will vanish. This was Emerson's faith. Let it be repeated, he was eclectic in sympathy and his philosophy was composed largely of Oriental doctrines,

Before turning from the spirit with which Emerson approached the Eastern writings, one final passage which summarizes his bias better than any other should be presented here. "Yes, the Zoroastrian, the Indian, the Persian scriptures are majestic, and more to our daily purpose than this year's almanac or this day's newspaper.....I owed—my friend and I owed—a magnificent day to the Bhagavat Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and another climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us. Let us now go back and supply minute criticism to it, but cherish the venerable oracle."

III

No very certain proof has ever been given of the time when Emerson first came under the influence of Orientalism. In a letter, Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson, wrote: "I think that I remember dimly that even while in college his letters show that he had at least read extracts from them (the East Indian Scriptures), probably in some Englishman's account of India." In the Journal of 1845 he writes, "The East is grand and makes Europe appear the land of trifles." But five years previous to this, in the summer of 1840, he had written in a letter to a friend: "In the sleep of the great heats there is nothing for me but to read the Vedas, the Bible of the tropics, which I find I come back upon every three or four years. It is sublime as heat and night and breathless ocean." When this passage was entered upon the pages of his note books, Emerson was twenty-seven years of age. It may never be possible to determine entirely just what books he read during his college years, but there is every evidence that his curiosity was alive and his knowledge of India and his faiths profound.

The first positive knowledge that we have of Emerson's reading translations of Indian works themselves comes from the Journal of 1882, when Emerson was nineteen years of age. He concluded several pages of remarks on God, which expressed a rather youthful monistic faith, not yet full-blown but clearly indicating the course of his mind, by saying, "I know nothing more fit to conclude the remarks which have been made in the last pages than certain fine pagan strains.

".....Of dew-bespangled leaves and blossoms bright,
Hence I vanish from my sight,
Delusive pictures, unsubstantial shows,
My soul absorbed, one only Being knows,

Of all perceptions, one abundant source,
Hence every object, every moment flows,
Suns hence derive their force,
Hence planets learn their course;
But suns and fading worlds I view no more,
God only I perceive, God only I adore ! "

Emerson's Brahminism was nourished by the sacred books of the East. The parallels in transcendentalism and Hinduism were not accidental.

IV

The literary use which Emerson made of this wide reading is fascinating. The two poems, *Brahma* and *Hamatreya*, are generally and rightly considered to be the crystallization of the Oriental forces in his thinking. *Brahma* appeared in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly* in November, 1857, and read as follows :

Song of the Soul (Brahma)

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain thinks he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways,
I keep, and pass and turn again.
Far or forgot to me is near ;
Shadow and sunlight are the same,
The vanished gods not less appear ;
And one to me are shame and fame.
They reckon ill who leave me out ;
When me they fly, I am the wings ;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.
The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the Sacred Seven ;
But thou, meek lover of the good !
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

We cannot here enter an extended exposition of the poem *Hamatreya* which is next in importance, in showing Emerson's indebtedness to Hindu works. Several lines in the poem *Celestial Love* afford in their symbolism, close analogy, if not proof that they were based on Vedic writings.

" In a region where the wheel
On which all beings ride
Visibly revolves ;
Where the starred eternal worm

Girds the world with bound and term ;
Where unlike things are alike ;
Where good and ill
And joy and moan,
Melt into one."

V

It is exceedingly difficult to determine whether Emerson actually believed in the doctrine of transmigration as literally as the Hindus. If he did not accept the doctrine literally and in toto, at least he always considered it worthy of mention.

It is in Emerson's doctrine of the " Over-Soul " that the closest philosophical affinity may be found with the Hindu Vedanta. Numerous men have already pointed out that the word itself is a literal translation of a synonymous Sanskrit term. Emerson regarded matter as the negative manifestation of the Universal Spirit. It has its life and development through the direct immanence of the Absolute. And in like manner, Mind is an expression of the Universal Spirit in its positive power. Man himself is nothing but the Universal Spirit present in a material organism. Man is of the Divine, lives in the Divine, and in every power he manifests he shows the Divine life within. The soul is not a separate individuality but " part and parcel of God." In reality, Emerson says, " the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all organs ; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet ; is not a faculty but a light ; is not the intellect or the will, but master of the intellect and the will ; is the background of our being in which they lie—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within and from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, that the light is all."

The Indian Vedanta repudiates the conception of the creation which implies, first, a creation out of nothing, and secondly, the separation of the Creator from His Creation, and which, finally, in this implication, leaves unexplained the organic growth and development of the Universe. The Vedantins maintain that nature is not created but begotten with the elements of life and growth inherent in it, no external impulse being necessary for its development. The whole cosmos is a living organism—one life pervading all and connecting all, from the highest to the lowest order of beings, in such defined relations to each other as to show intelligence and purpose. The Bhagavat Gita expresses it in saying that all are " threaded on the Lord, as jewels on a string."

In Emerson's essay of that title it is in the Over-Soul that "every man's particular being is contained and made one with all others—and man is the facade of this temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide." And again, "we live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meanwhile within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty to which every part and particle is equally related; the Eternal One. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beautitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one. We see the world, piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts is the soul."

Whole passages from the *Over-Soul* might be supplanted by passages from the Upanishads and their relevancy be unaffected. Take the following from the Chandogya Upanishad and note its resemblance to the concluding passage above. "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the finite. The infinite is Immortal, the finite is mortal."

The soul within man is God and cannot err. Indeed, "man stands at the point betwixt the inward spirit and outer matter. He sees that one explains and translates the other: that the world is the mirror of the soul. He is the priest and interpreter of Nature thereby."

An inquirer might well ask, then, of the source of this outward matter, and we have the answer in the poem *Woodnotes* where Emerson says,

"Ever fresh the broad creation,
A divine improvisation,
From the heart of God proceeds,
A single will, a million deeds.
Once slept the world, an egg of stone,
And pulse, and sound, and light was none;
And God said, throb, and there was motion,
And the vast mass, became vast ocean....."

Emerson's use of the Hindu metaphor in the line "Once slept the world, an egg of stone" again shows how he borrowed from the Vedas. For in the Chandogya Upanishad we read, "In the beginning this world was merely non-being. It was existent. It developed.

It turned into an egg. It lay for the period of a year. It was split asunder. One of the two eggshell parts became silver, one gold. That which was of silver is this earth. That which was of gold is the sky. What was the outer membrane is the mountains. What was the inner membrane is cloud and mist. What were the veins are the rivers. What was the fluid within is the ocean."

VI

Emerson was an evolutionist—to the extent that one of his critics has raised the question of how he could be an evolutionist and at the sametime a mystic. Briefly, Emerson's concept of evolution must be thought of in terms of emanation. This is highly suggestive of the modern theory of evolution. It implies that Brahma, through the laws of its own being, throws itself into manifestations of itself. The Hindus illustrate this idea by the similes of a spider and its web, the hair and nails growing on an animate body, the sea and its waves and foam, the sun and its rays playing on the rippling water. But in doing so the Hindu does not predicate that what is thus let out is separated from Brahma, which is designated its cause. He recognizes an identity of existence in the effect and its cause, the subject and the object. The effect is always latent in the cause; the cause is identical with effect. Now let Emerson speak. "The world seems very simple and easily dispatched..... There are but two things, or but one thing and its shadow..... Cause and Effect, and Effect is itself worthless if separated from Cause. It is Cause still that must be worshipped in Effect, so that it is only one thing. The worship of Effect is Idolatry."

In summary, what the Hindus and Emerson obviously repudiated was the conception of creation, which implied, first, a creation out of nothing, and secondly, the separation of the Creator from his creation, and which thirdly, in this implication, left unexplained the organic growth and development of the universe.

Finally, Emerson wrote, "I am primarily engaged to myself to be a public servant to all the gods, to demonstrate to all men that there is intelligence and good will at the heart of things, and higher and higher leadings." Surely, then, the sage of Concord, Massachusetts, who was the public servant to the gods of the Vedas and the Hindus was a Brahmin. And the world has seen a man in whom the East met the West in a happy synthesis.*

*Reprinted from the *Monist* in an abridged form.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The 93rd Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Sri Sharada Ashrama, Ponnampet, Coorg, on the 28th of April last with great fervour and devotion. The presence of Srimat Nirmalanandaji Maharaj, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, and a few other Swamis of the Order was a source of great inspiration to the local public.

The Day was also observed by the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samity Godhra, Gujarat, early in April last. Swami Viswananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, who was present on the occasion delivered some interesting lectures on "Nature of Hinduism", "Universal Religion", etc. Among many eminent speakers Mr. Zihauddin Ahmed, M. A., L. L. B., Superintendent of Police, Panch Mahals, highly impressed by the Swami, evinced great zeal for Vedanta and spoke that it was Vedanta alone which could give to all the eternal life and bring heaven on earth. Devotional songs and poor-feeding formed some of the other aspects of the Utshava.

The Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, for 1926, shows a good record of works. The Ashrama carried relief to about 30,000 people and extended medical aid to over 9412 new cases during the year under review. The Ashrama suffered a good deal from the devastating flood of 1924. A well equipped Dispensary, a general ward for male indoor patients and a cholera and pox ward are its immediate wants. In view of its growing usefulness as a philanthropic institution in the heart of one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage in India, the Ashrama deserves immediate financial help from the large-hearted people and we doubt not that the public would respond to the appeal.

AN APPEAL.

Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work, Bankura, Bengal.

From the Government Gazette as well as from our previous appeals published in the newspapers, the public are aware of the acute famine conditions prevailing in the Bankura Districts. We have sent there a batch of workers and a relief centre has been started already in the famine-stricken area. Extreme scarcity of drinking water has added to the gravity of the situation. The people of Bankura are proverbially poor and unstinted generosity of the public can alone save them from this dire calamity.

With the humble means at its disposal, the Ramakrishna Mission has begun work in about a dozen villages. The local authorities have been affording us facilities as far as possible. Our resources are too scanty to cope with the situation. Our appeal goes, in the name of the suffering people, to the benevolent public, to help us with donations and contributions, which however small, will be thankfully received and duly acknowledged. All contributions in cash or kind may be sent to any of the following addresses.

1. President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O., Howrah—District.
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