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XXII

No. 6-8

October - December

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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXII]

OCTOBER, 1935

[No. 6

HINDU ETHICS

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ये देभानाचरन्ति स्म येषां वृत्तिश्च संयता ।
विषयांश्च निगृह्णन्ति दुर्गाण्यतितरन्ति ते ॥
प्रत्याहुर्नोच्यमाना ये न हिंसन्ति च हिंसिताः ॥
प्रयच्छन्ति न याचन्ते दुर्गाण्यतितरन्ति ते ॥
वासयन्त्यतिथीन्नित्यं नित्यं ये चानसूयकाः ।
नित्यं स्वाध्यायशीलाश्च दुर्गाण्यतितरन्ति ते ॥
मातापितृश्च ये वृत्तिं वर्तन्ते धर्मकोविदाः ।
वर्जयन्ति दिवास्वप्नं दुर्गाण्यतितरन्ति ते ॥

Those persons who do not act out of deceitful motives, who curb passion for sensuous pleasures and whose conduct is characterised by restraint—get over hardships.

Who being reproached make no answer, who being hurt inflict no injury and who ever give away but never petition—get over hardships.

Who always accommodate guests, who are free from spite at all times and who are ever diligent in scriptural studies—get over hardships.

Who are erudite in the scriptural mandates on duty, who meet out due treatment to parents and who desist from sleep at day-time—get over hardships.

SANTI PARVA, CH. 110, VERSES 3—6.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

[The Master's utter abhorrence of public notice, and the susceptibility of his mind to particular sets of ideas alone during Samadhi are illustrated in the following paragraphs.]

The Master's physical beauty and his attitude of humility

ON one occasion arrangements had been made for the Master's going to Jairamvati and Seor. Because of his living constantly in the state of *samadhi* his body became extremely delicate like that of a child or a lady. Therefore he could not travel even a short distance on foot. Hence a palanquin had been arranged. Hriday was ready to accompany him. After meal the Master came out to get into the palanquin, chewing betel leaves wearing a red cloth on, and a gold amulet on his arm. But he was surprised to find a large number of people, males as well as females, crowding round the palanquin, and asked Hriday what the reason was.

"They have come," replied Hriday, "to see you as you are going away and they will miss you for several days."

"But do they not see me daily? What new thing will they find to-day?" "They will see how beautiful you look when dressed in this red cloth, with the lips tinged red with chewing betel leaves."

No sooner did the Master hear that the people were attracted by his physical charms than an unusual

thought occupied his mind. "Alas!" thought he, "these people are mad after this external beauty alone, which will last but for a day or two while they are totally indifferent towards the in-dwelling Spirit!"

Aversion to physical beauty which he had from the very earliest days increased thousandfold by this incident. "What!" exclaimed he, "People will crowd in this fashion just to see another of their fellow-beings! How ignoble! I won't go anywhere. For, wherever I shall go, people may gather in this manner." With this he went back into his room, undressed himself and sat quietly in utter disgust. Even, filled with humility as he was, he actually did not go to Jairamvati or Seor that day. All the importunities of Hriday and other members of the house were in vain. Let our readers conceive here how the Master treated his body with extreme indifference. And let us think again our own condition in this respect. What a mad craze for beauty! How much of cleaning and polishing! What an enormous collection of looking-glasses, combs, shaving sets, soaps, scents and so forth. In imitation of the West we have taken this dirty cage of flesh and bones as an everlasting entity. And on account of

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

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this deep-rooted illusion we are certainly hastening towards complete destruction. Bodily purity and neatness, and this inordinate desire for personal beauty,—are these one and the same thing? However let us proceed with our topic.

Jagadamba Dasi resorts to a novel way to bring the Master down from his deep ecstasy

The evening worship of the Mother was about to begin, but there was no sign of the Master's ecstasy coming to an end. Jagadamba Dasi, Mathuranath's wife, thought she would go to witness the evening service along with the other ladies of the household after bringing the Master down to his external consciousness by some means or other. But now she was at a loss to determine what she should do; as for the Master's ecstatic mood, it showed no signs of leaving him. It was not advisable also to leave him there all alone. "What am I to do?" thought she. "For, whomsoever I may engage here to look after the Father, will certainly leave the place and hurry to the worship hall as soon as the sound of the concert will announce the evening worship. And the Father cannot manage himself when under such states. Did he not once in a similar state of unconsciousness fall down upon some burning coal and get himself seriously burnt without being restored to external consciousness even by that? What if some such misfortune happens on this happy day if he be left alone? What will my husband say then?" While she was

being agitated by various thoughts of this nature, all of a sudden a plan flashed in her mind. At once she hurried to fetch her valuable ornament and began to adorn the Master with them repeating at the same time into his ears, "Let us go, Father. The Aratrika of the Divine Mother is about to begin. Will you not fan Her with a chowry?"

The process of the Master's coming down from the state of Samadhi to the normal plane is in accordance with the scriptures

However much the Master might be unaware of external objects, how-so-ever far away his mind might be from everything else except the particular divine aspect through which he had risen to the state of Samadhi, it was invariably noticed that as soon as the name of that particular aspect, or anything connected with it, was repeated into his ears a number of times, his mind would be drawn towards it and would be able to grasp its significance. That such is the nature of concentrated minds is hinted at, if not treated elaborately, by the scriptures on Yoga, as for instance, the aphorisms of Patanjali. Therefore among our readers those who are acquainted with the scriptures will readily understand this peculiarity of the Master's mind. And those who have acquired this power of concentration even in a small degree and have got its experience in their own lives, will be able to conceive it much more easily. Therefore we shall proceed with our narration without dwelling of the point any further.

The Master fans the Divine Mother in the attitude of Her lady-friend

The words of Mathuranath's wife reached the Master's ears. At once he became composed to a great extent and in a half-ecstatic mood went with her with much delight. The service commenced as soon as they reached the hall and the Master, surrounded by ladies on all sides, began to fan the holy image with a *chowry*. The ladies and the gentlemen stood on the different sides of the hall to witness the service. Casually when Mathuranath's eyes turned towards the ladies he was surprised to find an exceptionally beautiful figure, gorgeously dressed, by the side of his wife, waving a *chowry*. When he failed even after repeated observations to ascertain who she might be, he took her to be some well-to-do friend of his wife, who had come on invitation.

The service came to a close. The ladies retired to the inner apartment after paying their homage to the Divine Mother and were engaged in their respective duties. The Master too in that half-ecstatic mood went in along with Mathura-

nath's wife, and gradually coming to the fully normal state removed the ornaments, and sitting in the parlour among the gentlemen, began to delight every one there by his simple exposition of religious truths with apt illustrations.

After a while Mathuranath went to the ladies' apartment on some business and enquired of his wife as to the identity of the lady who had been standing by her side during the evening service. "O dear me!" she exclaimed with an outburst of laughter, "could you not recognize the Father who was waving the *chowry* in that way in a state of ecstasy? However, that is quite possible. For the Father does not look like a male person at all when dressed as a female." Then she described the whole incident to Mathuranath whereupon he remarked, "Indeed! Who can ascertain the identity of the Father unless he himself pleases to reveal it to others? See for instance how I failed to recognize him to-day although we are living together and seeing him all the twenty-four hours in the day."

THE MOTHER: HER WORSHIP AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

[In this month falls the great Hindu festival of Dasara, when the Supreme Being will be worshipped as the Great Mother of the universe all over the country. The thoughts embodied in the following paragraphs relate to the philosophical idea behind the conception of Divine Motherhood and to its spiritual and social significance. An attempt is also made to remove the misunderstandings that have gathered round Mother worship.]

Evolution of the Idea of God

MAN'S life on earth is a constant struggle with his environment. When he begins to be self-conscious, he finds himself in a state which he owes neither to his choice nor to any purposive effort on his part. His parentage, the colour of his skin, his nationality, his likes and dislikes, his education and a hundred other things that go to make up his personality are more or less thrust upon him by an environment over which he practically has no control. He is denied any certainty regarding the antecedents of life, the purpose for which it is here, and the fate that awaits it in the future. Bounded by the unknown before and after, he finds himself placed in an intermediate patch of self-conscious existence, where he is faced by a not-self which is not of his own construction and which makes itself felt by either furthering or thwarting the interests of his ego. It is this constant impinging of the not-self on the self, of the environment on the ego that calls forth all those reactions,—physical, vital, intellectual and spiritual—of which our life is constituted.

But when man is at the level of animal humanity, he is responsive only to the physical stimuli. Absorb-

ed in the arduous task of a purely physical adjustment to the environment, he is not at first aware of the fact that a satisfactory adjustment can be reached only by an interpretation of the physical phenomena in terms of his vital, intellectual and spiritual nature. Thus Nature for the animal or for the animal man is significant only in so far as it gives or withholds the bare means of satisfying the physical needs like hunger, sexual urge and bodily safety from enemies and other dangers. But at some point in the evolution of life sprouts up the element of imagination which renders man capable of a complicated type of interpretative reaction towards the environment. At this stage one may say that the organism is reborn from animality to humanity. Thereafter man begins to invest Nature with a trace of his unique characteristic, namely, self-consciousness and the capacity for conscious reaction. He therefrom begins to think that Nature is a movement and expression of a vital force or of conscious agencies, which can be propitiated or coerced by offerings and attitudes of mind. Thus in addition to fight and flight, he develops magic also as a means for gain-

ing what he wants and avoiding what he dislikes in Nature.

With the progress of thought and under the pressure of accumulated experience, man's attitude towards life undergoes further refinement, and correspondingly reliance on coercive magic comes to be replaced by purer forms of propitiation and finally by loving adoration. It is in that twilight of thought where magic and propitiation contend for supremacy that the earliest idea of a multiplicity of Gods, known in the history of thought as polytheism, is born. But once the idea of Gods is reached, it is easy for man to pass from the conception of the forces behind Nature as malevolent and dangerous, and capable of being controlled only through force or propitiation, to the exalted notion of them as agencies endowed with a benign disposition, who can be moved by, and who respond to, the love and devotion of the human heart. And as this ideal of devotion and whole-hearted dedication gains strength, it is natural for man to pass from the notion of a multiplicity of forces to a unity of personality in regard to the intelligent agency that is at the back of Nature. Here then man reaches that pinnacle of thought generally designated as monotheism from the eminence of which Nature is perceived as nothing more than an expression of the Divine will. In this conception of the Supreme Deity who transcends Nature and is yet immanent in it, man reaches a level of thought from which he can view

life in its true perspective and arrive at a reconciliation between the opposing claims of the self and the not-self, which have involved him in the travails of the path leading towards spiritual enlightenment.

The Father-Mother Deity

The conception of this Supreme Divinity has developed mainly along two lines—as the Father of the universe on the one hand, and as the Mother of the universe on the other. Man cannot possibly think of the Divine except in anthropomorphic terms, and it is therefore quite natural that he describes It as Father or Mother. In the Semitic religions which grow up in a social and ethical environment that was hostile to the due recognition of woman's dignity, the notion has gained ground that God is only the Father of the universe and not its Mother. To call Him Mother has been looked upon as sacrilegious. In religions of Indian origin, however, human imagination has never disdained to clothe the Supreme in the symbology of Motherhood without in any way hampering the growth of parallel theologies laying emphasis on the Fatherhood of the same Principle. In fact, even in the case of cults like Saivism and Vaishnavism which look upon the Supreme as the Father, He is conceived as including in Himself the Mother element. God in these cults may therefore be described as a Father-Mother God, although they lay greater emphasis on the Father aspect and describe the Mother

element as the creative and grace element in Him. Thus Siva is Uma-Maheswara and Vishnu is Lakshmi-Narayana, Uma and Lakshmi standing for the Mother element in both the cases. And when the symbolism is further concretised and brought to the human level, the Mother element is described as the consort of the Deity, through whom the Supreme brings forth the universe into existence and bestows his Grace on the souls that struggle for the same.

The Mother Cult

But there is however one school of thought in India which has conceived the Supreme as essentially the Mother of the universe. Even when admitting the presence of the Father element in it, this school describes that element only as the quiescent or static aspect of the Great Mother. This school of thought is known as the Saktas, and of all the Hindu sects it is pre-eminently the Mother cult proper. Embodying, as it does, a very high philosophy, a sublime outlook on life and a practical system of spiritual discipline, this sect, perhaps more than any other in India, has come to be misunderstood and calumniated both by its own followers and its unsympathetic critics. By a strange perversity of human nature, certain followers of this sect have come to divest the Mother of Her Motherhood and to look upon Her only as the Great Female. As a consequence of this changed outlook all the ethical and spiritual implications of this great ideal came to be reversed. When

the Mother idea was submerged by the idea of the pure Feminine, the sexual aspect came to be inordinately stressed in the conception of salvation, and what was worse a short-cut to salvation was devised by the theory that every woman in the world was an embodiment of that Great Female and that by congress with her to the accompaniment of certain ritualistic practices and mental disciplines, one could reach the state of supreme perfection. All the abuses of the Shakti cult, as the system of Mother worship is called, have sprung from this one disastrous step—the supplanting of the Mother idea by the notion of the Pure Feminine. The degenerate practices referred to above are the natural consequences of this change in outlook.

It was indeed an unparalleled perversion of human ingenuity that could foist such disgusting ethical implications on a doctrine so pure and philosophical as Shakti Vada. In the first place the conception of Divine Motherhood is never meant to impute any pre-dominant sexual attribute to the Supreme Divinity. If we are to view the Supreme Being who gives birth to the cosmos in the light of our human experience, there is an undeniable appropriateness in describing It as Mother instead of as Father. And then again since the guiding principle in devotional practices is the cultivation of intimate relationship with the Divinity, it is quite natural if a devotee looks upon It as the Mother, seeing that

the relationship between mother and son has an intimacy and tenderness unknown to the paternal relation. The conception of the Divine as Mother is thus meant only to imply this creativity of the Supreme and Its loving and intimate relationship with the soul, and not to stress on pure Feminineness as Its essential nature, or to sanction the immoral practices that have long been associated with the Shakti cult.

The Philosophy behind the Conception

A brief consideration of the philosophy behind the conception of God-head as the Mother will further reveal the purity and integrity of the ethical and devotional ideal for which it stands. The Supreme Being has two aspects, the static and the dynamic. These two aspects do not stand for any multiplicity in the Supreme, but merely to indicate It as the relationless Absolute on the one hand and as the Great Cause of the universe on the other. The Divine Mother is this Great Cause of the universe, and She again is the Absolute transcending all relations and the world of duality constituting the universe. As the Absolute, She is the static Siva and as the cause of the universe She is Shakti, the Dynamic Power. As the Absolute, She is subject-objectless, the object having realised its inherent identity with the subject. In creation, however, while maintaining Her character as the transcendental Absolute, She diversifies Herself as the subject and the object,

as the 'I' and its corresponding 'This.' The Divine Mother is this cosmic Ego who manifests Herself as all the finite egos or souls and as the various forms of matter, subtle and gross, that form the objects of these egos both as their encasements and as the external objects surrounding them. Thus the Divine Mother is not simply the Intelligent Cause and Substratum at the back of this world-play; for insentient matter and limited intelligences are also Her transformations. But such is Her mysterious power that unlike in the case of the finite objects of this world, these transformations as diverse kinds of phenomena do not affect or detract Her perfection as the Supreme Spirit.

The Practical Aspect of the Doctrine

The ethical and spiritual implications of such a philosophy are quite apparent, and the speciality of the Mother cult in all its unsullied forms of development lies in having developed a system of practical spiritual disciplines based on those implications. Now one of the main problems of spiritual life consists in overcoming the dragging pull that the senses and their objects exercise on us. It is however the experience of every spiritual aspirant that no amount of conscious resistance and fight against the impellings of his lower nature take him even a step forward in the conquest of the primordial passions that struggle for expression in his bosom. On the other hand, all such violent efforts complicate the matter by inducing

a constant remembrance of sensuous objects. The cult of Mother worship recognises this, and therefore points out that the way to success lies not in a magnified consciousness of evil as *evil*, but in transforming our outlook on it and learning to see the Divinity at the back of it. There is nothing in the universe which is not the Mother. It is because we forget this fact that we are subjected to attachment, infatuation and fear in the presence of objects that generally excite such feelings. But the Mother, says this cult with a boldness that may shock many a conventional theology, is as much in what is evil and fearful as She is in the good and peaceful experiences of life. The seductive and the alluring on the one hand, and the revolting, the destructive and the terrible on the other are in no way different from the pure, the lovely, the mild, and the life-giving in as far as they are all alike the manifestations of the Divine Mother in Her cosmic play. She is thus Avidya that takes man away from spiritual perfection and entangles him in worldliness, and She is also Vidya that confers on him spiritual illumination. Man is asked to recognise this great fact and in consequence to learn how to see the face of the Mother even in all the degrading influences of life and a manifestation of her glory even in the terrible and destructive aspects of Nature. When this attitude of mind is conscientiously and sedulously cultivated, it helps the spiritual aspirant not only to overcome

the adverse influences of his elemental nature, but to direct the energy of those very downward-pulling tendencies to take him to the goal of spiritual perfection.

Ethical Implication of the Doctrine

The cult of Mother worship has therefore devised certain systems of spiritual discipline according to which duly qualified aspirants are placed in the midst of environment that may be shocking, terrifying, revolting or seducing, and are trained by various methods of meditation and sublimation to recognise the Mother even in these so-called unspiritual situations and to direct the instinctive energies through higher channels for spiritual realisation. It is in connection with these disciplines that the Tantric works dealing with Mother worship prescribe Sadhanas or spiritual practices in the dreadful surroundings of the cremation ground, or to the accompaniment of what have gained a notoriety as the Panchamakaras of the Tantrics. Our consideration of the essential tenets of the doctrine has shown that the purpose of these disciplines is never to cater to the animal needs of man but to train the mind to recognise the presence of the Divine even in what is considered fearful or seductive in life.

For example let us take the presence of Shakti (or woman) in the worship, which is responsible for most of the abuses in this cult and the criticisms levelled against it. We have shown before that accord-

ing to the fundamental postulate of this system the Supreme Being must be looked upon more as the Mother than as the Father of the universe. From this has sprung the ethical doctrine, so ennobling and purifying in effect, that every woman is in a special sense a symbol and a manifestation of the Divine Mother. A true follower of this cult cannot therefore entertain any other attitude except that of pure and unsoiled affection of a child towards its mother in regard to all individuals of the fair sex. It is therefore a doctrine that can form the bed-rock of an ethics which not only enforces kindness, equity and fairplay towards woman, but also kills the seeds of carnality in man's relationship with her and educates him in a feeling of pure reverence, bordering on worship, towards all women irrespective even of their character. But even the devil can quote scriptures and find higher sanctions for his base ends. The attempt of the corrupt Shaktas to find in Mother worship a sanction for their objectionable practices is perhaps the most glaring illustration of this perverse tendency in men. To call woman the symbol of the Great Mother and simultaneously to look upon Her with a sexually contaminated eye is a feat which only the most heinous form of human perversity is capable of.

Sri Ramakrishna and True Shakti Worship

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we find a resuscitation of the pure ideal of Mother worship from the state of

corruption into which it had fallen through the debasing influence of animal humanity. As a worshipper of the Mother, Sri Ramakrishna had no rival. He had passed through the various disciplines mentioned in the sixty-four principal Shakta Tantras, but never did he deviate from the attitude of a son to a mother in his relation with women. Qualified as he was for the advanced disciplines of this cult, his mind could see only the face of the Divine Mother even in the most seductive of surroundings. In women of every description he truly perceived the earthly symbol of the Divine Mother and thus revived the genuine ethical ideal for which the cult of Mother worship stands.

It has been remarked that the ethical and cultural integrity of any epoch in a nation's history can be measured by the position accorded to women in society and by the respect that man pays to womanhood in general—in other words by the extent to which the true worship of Shakti is practised by the society at large. Swami Vivekananda has very pertinently pointed out that the greatness of the modern West is largely attributable to its practice of the social worship of Shakti, to the genuine consideration it shows for the welfare of women and the high position it gives to them in society. But the Western mind is outward-going, and its respect for womanhood has been largely physical and intellectual. The seeds of corruption are however latent in an outlook that adores the physical aspect

of Shakti, and the supplanting of the old European ideal of chivalry by the grossly sensual standard of sexual ethics in contemporary West, is a natural consequence of this physical adoration of Shakti. Such a degeneration is a serious outrage of Divine Motherhood and consequently the surest way to national degeneration. Great social thinkers like Spengler have already remarked that the new sex-ethics of Europe is one of the surest symptoms of its approaching decline.

In India where the worship of Shakti in a religious sense has been in existence for ages past, its true spiritual significance, as we have already pointed out, has long been forgotten. Under such circumstances it is no wonder that nobody even suspects that it has any social significance at all. When the sublime conception of Mother worship was dragged down to the level of debauchery, the degradation of Indian culture was the natural consequence. From the social point of view, it is an irony of fate that the genius of the same nation that has given expression to the most exalted sentiments regarding womanhood has also devised theories libelling the essential nature of woman and advocating the denial of all freedom and opportunities of self-development to her. A reversal of this view of woman and the revival of the true Shakta ideal in this respect form the necessary condition of a cultural Renaissance in India.

Under these circumstances it is a significant fact that Ramakrishna,

the herald of modern Indian Renaissance, was a great worshipper of Shakti, both in the spiritual and social sense. He stood for the true recognition of the Motherhood of God and its application to the life of man in every-day life. Woman, he has told us again and again, is a veritable manifestation of the Divine Mother on earth. If men want a society, rich both in spiritual and material wealth, they must learn to see the Mother in woman, and regulate their social life accordingly. Only by being a true Shakta man can gain the grace of Mahamaya. Hence has the poet-seer of the Chandi sung:

"O Mother! Thou art the great Primal Energy, the source of infinite strength. Thou art the seed of the world, and illusion Divine. Thou hast enchanted the whole universe, O Goddess Supreme, by Thy deluding charms. And yet being propitious, Thou bestowest salvation into men."

"All sciences come from Thee, and all women in all the world are parts of Thee. By Thee alone, O Mother, is the universe filled. How can we praise Thee? Art Thou not beyond the reach of the highest praise?"

"Thou art good fortune itself in the dwellings of the virtuous, and ill-fortune in those of the sinful. Thou art intelligence in the intelligent, faith in the heart of the devotee, and modesty in the high-born. We bow to Thee. Do Thou, O Mother, protect this universe."

IN THE COMPANY OF A MAHATMA

[In the June and July issues of the Vedanta Kesari had appeared two instalments of these reminiscences of Swami Turiyananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Since then some more of them have been published in the Bengali monthly "Udbodhan," and the following is a translation of the same. The reader will get herein an intimate glimpse of the personality of the great Swami Vivekananda, as reflected in the thoughts of a brother-disciple of his.]

SWAMI Turiyananda said— "Swamiji (Vivekananda) had just then returned from America. I could not meet him in two or three places on account of big crowds. He did not allow G. C.* to make obeisance to him by touching his feet, on the plea that it would not be propitious to him (Swamiji). He pulled slightly the beard of M."

Many a time Swamiji had said— "Such ideas as I have given to India will be enough for her for about two centuries. Only the interpreting and the amplifying of them will do." Sometimes he used to say—"After serious toil the field is now ready but the Mother Divine is calling me saying, 'Come away, my child, come.' I could not do sufficient work."

Mr. so and so and others had all gone to the Chicago Parliament of religions. But Swamiji said (putting the finger on his chest) that Providence did not favour them so much. The divine dispensation was such that whatever happened was very favourable to him.

Swamiji had begged Sri Ramakrishna to pray to Mother Kali to provide his mother and dependent younger brothers with bare maintenance.

Sri Ramakrishna said—"I cannot ask Mother for these earthly things." On being *pressed hard* he

however said—"Go to the temple and pray to Her. She will give you whatever you want." When Swamiji had gone in, the Master waited outside. He was quite anxious to know what Narendra would pray for. His extreme anxiety made him almost restless. Swamiji came out shedding tears. He was asked—"Why do you weep? Did you pray to the Mother? If so, tell me what you prayed for." He said with voice choked with feeling that he could not ask for anything worldly to Mother. He continued that he had prayed to the Mother thus—"Oh, Mother, vouchsafe wisdom to me; give me discrimination and devotion." At this, Sri Ramakrishna was overjoyed and embraced him dearly. Afterwards the Master told us one day that Swamiji was endowed with spiritual competency of a very high order and that was why he could not crave for material welfare. He was, at heart, absolutely free from any earthly taint. How could any thing worldly stain his outward life?

Swami Turiyanandaji went on: "See, how high-souled was Swamiji? Very much vexed once by the dealings of a gentleman, the Master forbade all his disciples from taking any meals in his house. On hearing this from another, Swamiji, in company with two of his brother-disciples, went to the said person's house and dined with him, and on return related every thing to the Master. Sri

Ramakrishna got very much annoyed with him—which brought tears to the eyes of Swamiji.

"After sometime he took the person to Sri Ramakrishna and pleaded for his spiritual unfoldment. The Swami implored him to awaken his spiritual consciousness. The Master replied that he would not be blessed with illumination in that life. Again the Swami begged him earnestly with these words, "If you do not mercifully quicken his spiritual life where will he go?" Whereupon the Master contended that it was not in any way practicable for him to attain liberation in that life and that he was unwilling and unable to do anything for him. Thus importuned several times by his dearest disciple the Master could not but comply with his pressing solicitation and at last graciously *blessed* that the person concerned would realise the Supreme at the time of death.

"Not having got the results of meditation and concentration according to his expectations Swamiji grumbled to the Master about his very slow progress. In answer to this he said, "What is this? I thought you are otherwise. A professional peasant is not daunted by excess or want of rain. It is, as it were, his second nature to cultivate lands and try to grow crops therein. Whether it rains sufficiently or not, whether there is any hope of good crops or not he does not lose heart and relinquish his own profession. Even so you should never be disheartened by the futility of your spiritual efforts. They are sooner or later bound to produce adequate fruits. No spiritual endeavour is ever wasted."

"Swamiji was a smoker and not a total vegetarian. So one of us once pointed out to him the necessity of changing his habits because otherwise he and the other fol-

lowers of Swamiji were often required to do the awkward duty of giving defensive explanations to other people. He thought that Swamiji would be delighted at this and would express his gratification, but on the contrary he said—"You do your own work. Do not worry yourself about defending me at all before anybody." Swamiji was an upright soul with a high spirit of independence, and stood on his own ground. He was not so constituted as to lean on anybody or depend upon anyone's recommendation for anything whatsoever.

"On a certain occasion in a Railway train the Station Master tried to remove the Swami from the second class compartment in order to make room for a few Europeans. The Swamiji told him straightway—"What, don't you feel ashamed to ask me to get down? Ask the Europeans to leave this compartment." The poor Station Master was taken aback by such straight talk, and left the place stealthily.

"Once a plague epidemic of a virulent type broke out. Swamiji was about to sell away the site and the building of the Belur monastery and spend the money thus received for the relief work, and accordingly advertisements were circulated. He said—"We have been accustomed to live under the trees, we will again become wandering mendicants."

"Once in Brindaban during his itineracy Swamiji entered a small hut for shelter, being caught in a rain. Unable to proceed further he had to wait there. He was then very much disheartened. Some Sadhu was possibly staying in the cottage. Swamiji found written on the wall with charcoal a Hindi couplet the meaning of which is as follows: 'O Desire, you are as dirty and foul as the sweepers and the

*Giris Chandra Ghosh, father of the Bengali stage and famous dramatist and playwright.

cobblers. You are meaner than the meanest. Had you not dwelt in and defiled me I must have realised my Brahmanhood.' The verse encouraged and inspired Swamiji immensely."

While pointing out one day those things which impede our rapid spiritual progress Swami Turiyananda remarked: "When a taste is created in ultimate verities there is no reason to be worried about progress. Till then spiritual exercises are a drudgery. The taste is created only in course of time, as one goes on with his practices regularly and sincerely. Whether it be wrestling, nursing or meditation—if one has no taste for it, it is no better than drudgery." In this connection he quoted a verse the meaning of which is as follows:

"Sugar tastes bitter to the tongue affected by billiousness. If however, one takes it regularly it cures the disease and tastes sweet. So the name of Krishna and his divine Lila (sports) are not liked by the mind overwhelmed with worldliness but patient repetition of God's name and hearing of His Lila destroy ignorance when one gets a taste for them." He said in continuation, "We must keep some relation with God in some form or other. Then alone may we expect to gain union with Him in near or remote future. Even if we call on Him for fulfilment of some desires, desirelessness will eventually result. This we should learn from the example of Dhruva. One monk

used to tell us in Almora that he had been perhaps a sweeper or so of the Lord in one of his pre-existences and so he got the privilege of serving us. We must make a habit of doing daily something for the Lord. I know some one who was in the habit of nursing the patients. He said once—'While cleansing the limbs of the sick besmeared with stool and urine a stream of blissfulness used to flow in me.' That state of mind is indescribable. This proves that he got a taste (Rasa) in the nursing of patients.

"Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the pleader, the doctor and the broker cannot truly be religious. Taking necessary funds from the Maharaja of Khetri M—(Swamiji's second brother) had gone to England to study law and become a Barrister. Swamiji was then in London. He never allowed him to become a student of law and by writing strongly against him to the Maharaja stopped his stipends. But M. was a stubborn and strong-minded youth. Having been unable to do anything according to his cherished hopes, he returned home after visiting many countries in the continent and western Asia. Before this, when M. used to go to the monastery at Baranagore to speak to Swamiji about their destitute condition Swamiji would rebuke him harshly and send him away. Swamiji said to us—'In order to follow the footsteps of my Master I am ready even to see my nearest and dearest ones (*i. e.*, mother and brothers), die of starvation'."

THE UNIVERSITY OF NALANDA

By Swami Iswarananda

[Swami Iswarananda's article on Nalanda University is a review of a recently published volume of great cultural importance—"The University of Nalanda" By H. D. Sankalia; published by B. G. Paul & Co., 12, Francis Joseph Street, Madras; pages 259. It is the first exhaustive study of an ancient educational institution of India, which played an important part in the cultural history of Asia as a whole. Swami Iswarananda will write about some other aspects of this University in another issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*.]

OF the saddest events which have darkened the pages of India's long history are the acts of widespread vandalism and destruction of ancient seats of learning and worship together with looting and wholesale butchering of peaceful populations at the hands of uncultured Muslim warriors wherever and whenever they invaded any part of the country. No one can contemplate the brutal end, at their hands, of the University of Nalanda,—if it does not turn him a pessimist,—without having to control his tears at the vanished greatness of this ancient seat of culture after a brilliant career of eight hundred years, rising to great international fame—now, a mass of ruins and a subject of curious research and study for archaeologists and students of history. If history is to be of any use it has to inspire its readers with hopes for the future, based on a sense of optimistic pride in the achievements of the past. That is the sole consideration with which modern India can review this lost chapter of her history—a brilliant chapter of which any Indian may be proud.

Unlike the modern universities, the University of Nalanda was not ushered into existence overnight by an act of the Legislature or by the charter of any regal authority. Starting from low

beginnings it took centuries for it to grow up into a full-fledged university—the bare outlines of which alone could be reconstructed by the painstaking students of history and archaeology. According to their accounts, the university grew up against a fairly long and rich background. The origin of the name is lost in obscurity, but there is sufficient evidence as to the importance Nalanda had attained long before the rise of the University. Tradition has it that the great Mahavira met Gosala here. Buddhist accounts reveal the place to have been a rich and prosperous village. Lepa, one of the citizens of Nalanda, was well known for his wealth and charity. He was a disciple of Buddha and offered his lavish hospitality to the Great Teacher and his Bhikku Sangha. The people of Nalanda had many a time the privilege of listening to the Tathagatha's inspiring discourses on the Dhamma. Taranath's History of Buddhism written in the fifteenth century has it that Nalanda was the birth-place of the venerable monk Sariputta, who with eighty thousand Arhats are said to have attained Nirvana at this place. King Asoka gave offerings at the *Chaitya* of Sariputta and erected a temple which has formed the foundation of the Nalanata Vihara. Taranath also

mentions a tradition according to which Nagarjuna and Aryadeva (100 A.D.) were the fore-runners of those who took interest in the educational institutions of the place. Suvishnu, a contemporary of Nagarjuna, is said to have built 108 temples at Nalanda for the maintenance of the Abhidhamma. Thus the place had already acquired great religious importance. Its antiquity, glamour and sacredness, together with its facility of access due to its proximity to Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha, gave Nalanda the proper setting for the rise of the University.

The Nalanda Sangharama, like other Buddhist universities and Mediaeval European universities, started its career as a centre of religious culture and retained this feature all through its life. We have mentioned the erection of a Vihara by Asoka. Viharas served two purposes. The Bhikkus may meditate there in peace and solitude, and secondly learned men may lodge in the Viharas. The ever-swelling stream of Buddhist sacred literature and the call felt by the Sangha for the widespread diffusion of the great Master's teachings, together with the need of refuting the rival systems of theologies and philosophies compelled the larger Viharas to give prominence to the second object. As the Viharas developed into seats of learning they began to attract students eager for the acquisition of knowledge, from all parts of the country. The constitution of the Buddhist Sangha also underwent a parallel change during this period. The monasteries had more or less a republican form of Government. In every official act undertaken by a monastery the consent of the Bhikku Sangha of the monastery was necessary. Moreover for the ceremonies such as

Parisuddhi, recital of the Patimokha, performance of the Uposatha, and for putting questions about Vinaya, an assembly of at least four Bhikkus had to be convened. The assembly was presided over by a competent monk who was elected for the occasion only. There were no permanent abbots. With the growth of the monasteries as centres of learning the responsibility of controlling the lay students necessitated the appointment of permanent abbots who became the heads of colleges. In this way Nalanda and other Sangharamas which became big centres of Buddhist learning were transformed into universities.

A great university like that of Nalanda could not have grown up to its magnificence without the munificence of rich patrons. The ruling dynasties of the Guptas, the Vardhanas, the Moukharis, the Palas and the Senas played a large part in the development, maintenance and the preservation of the University. From Hiuen Tsiang, we learn that Sakraditya was the founder of the first Sangharama (about 425 A. D.), significant of the fact of the growth of the Vihara built by Asoka into a centre of learning. His son Tathagatha Gupta Raja and grandson Baladitya each built a Sangharama. Baladitya also erected a Vihara, 300 ft. in height. "With respect to its magnificence," writes Hiuen Tsiang, "its dimensions and the stature of Buddha placed on it, it resembles the great Vihara built under the Bodhi tree." Baladitya's son Vajra contributed another Sangharama. "A long succession of kings," concludes Hiuen Tsiang's account of the buildings, "continued the work of building, using all the skill of the sculptor, till the whole is truly marvellous to behold."

King Harsha of Kanauj built a Sangharama and a Vihara and a high wall round the edifices with a tall gate. Further he made endowments for the maintenance of students and professors, and made provisions for the daily feeding of forty monks. Harsha was also a redoubtable champion of the religious and philosophical doctrines preached at Nalanda. Matada, a minister of King Yasovarmadeva, is said to have made various offerings to Nalanda monks and provided for the food of ten monks and donated money equal to the cost of Nalanda institutions. Yasovarma also seems to have built a Sangharama or a Vihara at Nalanda. King Devapala of Bengal seems to have completely identified himself with the cause of the University. From an inscription we have it that Nalanda attracted the patronage of the distant king Balaputradeva of Swornadwipa (Sumatra) and Yavadvipa (Java), who erected a monastery and made a grant of five villages for its maintenance and preservation through the kind offices of King Baladevapala who seems to have been connected with the administration of the University.

Archaeologists have unearthed eleven monasteries on the site of the University with a corresponding range of Stupas. The University premises must have extended far beyond the site acquired for excavation. Many of the monasteries were rebuilt, some not less than eight or nine times. Some buildings had three or four storeys. Each building had about thirty or forty rooms, in size averaging some ten feet square, provided with two bed-recesses each. The Sangharamas all conform to a common type—rectangular buildings, bounded by an outer range of cells, with an open Veranda running round

their inner face, enclosing a quadrangular court. An inscription says that the tops of the Viharas touched the sky and Nalanda was full of the heaps of rays of the Chaityas shining and bright like white clouds. According to another inscription, "Nalanda had temples which were brilliant on account of the network of rays of jewels set in them and was the pleasant abode of the learned and virtuous Sangha and resembled Sumeru, the charming residence of the Vidyadharas." Nalanda also had a big library called Dharmaganja (Piety Mart) consisting of three grand buildings. In the words of H. D. Sankhaliya, "Nalanda, in short, with its 'scholars well-known for their (knowledge of) sacred texts and arts' and with its 'learned and virtuous Sangha' and its 'brilliant Chaityas and Viharas,' was, as an inscription says, 'a city which mocked, as it were, at all the cities of kings.'"

"The curriculum of the University" to quote again H. D. Sankhaliya, "was very exhaustive and embraced many of the subjects of the pre-Nalanda period." Nalanda had provided for both university as well as secondary education. The university standard seems to have been maintained at a very high level, for we have it on the authority of Hiuen Tsiang that 'a student must have studied deeply both old and new books before getting admission at Nalanda.' These generally comprised the four Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishads, the six Vedangas consisting of phonetics, rituals, grammar, exegetics, metrics and astronomy, Itihasa-purana, mathematics, medicine including sarpavidya, dancing and singing, the art of disputation, the science of Mantras, Devatas and Pitris, the science of worship, the science of war and weapons. The Srouta Sutras, Dharma

Sutras and Grihya Sutras also formed part of the old curriculum. As could be expected of a primarily religious institution, theology and philosophy remained the main subjects of study. These included the old six systems of Indian philosophy: the Purva mimamsa, Uttara mimamsa, Sankhya, Yoga, Vaisesika and Nyaya. But most important of all was the study of Buddhist scriptures, theologies and philosophies; while option to specialise was allowed in other subjects, the study of Buddhist literature was compulsory for all. Nalanda championed the cause of Mahayana Buddhism and specialised in its doctrines, Sunyavada and Vijnanavada. The one doctrine which became more popular than others at Nalanda was the "sky-flower doctrine" according to which all objective phenomena are like skyflowers, unreal and vanishing. The University in response to the request of King Harshavardhana sent four of its eminent Pandits including Hiuen Tsang to defend the "sky-flower doctrine" against the heretical seat of Hinayanists. Next to Theology and Philosophy Hetuvidya or logic rose to be a very important subject of study. Need for debates and discussions and refutation of rival school of theologies and philosophies made a thorough acquaintance with all schools of logic essential, such as Jain, Sankhya, etc., besides that of Buddhism. Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Santarakshita and Kamalasila made great contributions to logic.

As the University developed, the syllabus also swelled up chiefly by the contributions of its eminent Pandits who wrote a vast number of books on philosophy and theology. The University also published encyclopaedic works on these subjects. Santarakshita's Tatvasangraha deals with twenty-seven

systems of philosophy then current, refutes them all and upholds Vijnanavada. Kamalasila, his disciple, in his commentary to Tatvasangraha has given a complete history of the philosophers and logicians referred to in his masters' work. Astronomy formed part of the curriculum at Nalanda. I-Tsiang, Hiuen Tsiang's biographer, has referred to it. Hien Li says, "The observatories seem to be lost in the vapours and its upper rooms tower above the clouds." The water clock at Nalanda gave correct time for all Magadha.

Tibetan works refer to Nalanda as a centre of Tantric studies. Many Chinese works on Tantra are ascribed to the Pandits at Nalanda. It would appear therefore that Tantra was a very popular subject with the students and professors of Nalanda who made large contributions towards the formulation of the philosophy of Buddhist Tantricism and the development of that cult. Art and iconography also were developed as a by-product of Tantric studies. Innumerable images have been found at Nalanda which were constructed according to the descriptions in the Tantras. Nalanda developed a distinct art of its own known as the Pala Art.

Such vast scope for study could not but attract large numbers from far and near. Though primarily a Buddhist institution Nalanda welcomed students of other faiths as well and provided for various branches of study. The university population numbering between four and five thousands consisted of both Bhikkus (Manavas) and laymen (Brahmacharis). Of these the Bhikkus seem to have had their secondary education at Nalanda itself before they proceeded to the university course, while lay students were admitted to the university course, after a

preliminary examination by the professors referred to as 'gate keepers' by Hiuen Tsiang, in all subjects 'old and new.' These latter must therefore have had their secondary course completed elsewhere. The knowledge of a university student at Nalanda at the time of admission may be favourably compared to that of modern university graduates. "For this reason," says H.D. Sankharia, "we would consider Nalanda as a university of universities and the student not merely a school boy but a university student wishing to be enrolled in a higher university."

The University seems to have conferred its degrees not only on its own alumni, but on eminent scholars who sought it from outside, and these were not a few. Says Hiuen Tsiang, "Learned men from different cities who desire to acquire a renown in discussion come here in multitudes to settle their doubts and the streams of their wisdom spread far and wide." "Distinguished savants travelled all the way to Nalanda" to quote Sankharia, "to get that stamp of culture and refinement which universities like Oxford and Cambridge give to the modern student."

We learn from Hiuen Tsiang who has left many details about the life and studies at Nalanda that the method of teaching was essentially tutorial, students learning individually helped by the professors. Lectures were arranged only on religious subjects which formed a daily routine. Hwai Li writes, "Within the temple they arrange every day about a hundred pulpits for preaching and the students attend these discourses without fail even for a minute." Besides regular studies the

students also attended discussions and debates carried on from morning till evening. Copying of manuscripts, the most important of which was Prajnaparamita, was one of the important activities of the students. Hiuen Tsiang and I-Tsing carried away hundreds of manuscripts. Nalanda students seem to have had little or no sports, except perhaps the Kshatriyas who were taught the use of weapons, besides wrestling, etc. Their sole indulgence seems to have been in the vice of gambling to which they were much addicted.

Generally the students led a comparatively austere life, with modest raiments and food, and their conduct was closely supervised by the professors under whose charge they lived in Gurukula fashion. Service of the teacher was an essential duty. Sweeping his room, washing his clothes, cleaning his vessels, bringing water and food and nursing him in illness were the sole reward paid by the students for pains taken by the teacher to teach him, while the teacher served the students in turn in his illness.

The graduates of the University generally sought royal patronage and government service. Distinguished scholars were given posts in the university staff. The Bhikkus usually after completing their studies were either put in charge of the different departments of the University or became heads of monasteries. But the outlook of the University remained idealistic rather than practical. The Buddhist ideal of character building and the attainment of Nibbana held out by the Tathagatha were the inspiration which sustained the activities of the University.

ULTIMATE VALUES

By Prof. S. R. Sarma, M. A.

[Mr. S. R. Sarma is a professor of history in a college in the Bombay Presidency. He is also a well-known journalist and the author of three valuable volumes on the history of the Moghul Empire in India. In the present article he traces the mental distress characteristic of modern life to our false views on progress, and points to viewing life as a whole as the remedy for the same.]

ONE of the symptoms of desperate diseases is that the patient craves for just the things he ought to avoid studiously. On the other hand an indescribable feeling of happiness might be taken as an unmistakable indication of health. Judged by these criteria what is usually called Modern Civilization falls into the former rather than the latter category. A little examination will prove that this is not an exaggerated view.

Those who are enthusiastic over the achievements of our modern world have a firm belief that we are progressing. But are we really? Few have the patience to pause and think. The whirling of modern life allows us no time to consider the real Reality behind its so-called realities. No sooner than we have come into one experience we are whipped into another; then the third and the fourth and so on endlessly. Novelty is the one thing to be sought after, for sameness is boring. And yet is man never satisfied, nor woman either. They crave for happiness but do not find it. Chasing shadows at every step they cry out "Not this. Not this." But they cannot stop. To do so is death. It is to be stagnant. It is not progress.

Progress is an indefinable modern catchword. No one would like to be called unprogressive. Every one willy-nilly must enter the race and

try to run faster than all others. Whither? Why? it is not relevant to ask. Or even if one—'for action too refined'—should ask, those that are bent on the competition will not care to answer. A feverish and increasing restlessness is the most striking characteristic of this modern life. But where has it landed us? At least the serious-minded few might pause to examine even at the risk of being condemned as unprogressive.

No. Mankind is not happy now; neither the individual nor groups of men. The individual is stricken with restlessness. The groups are engaged in class conflicts and international warfare or preparation for war. Man is busy everywhere preparing for unhappiness and craves for happiness. This surely cannot happen; you cannot prepare for war and expect peace—neither in society nor in the individual.

The machine is the most typical product of our age. It is its very embodiment and supreme symbol. In past ages they used to talk of God coming in a machine. In the modern, God has disappeared leaving only the machine in our midst. But what a wonderful thing it is! All modern progress has issued out of it. All our comforts are due to it. But alas, also all our ills. This discovery of this marvellous instrument has been the veritable opening

of a Pandora's Box. We have been caught up in it and find no escape even if we would.

There is a beautiful story in Belgian folklore explaining how the sea came to be salt. There were two brothers; one very rich and the other extremely poor. At X'mas time the indigent brother missed very much the customary Law. He went to move his fortunate kinsman expecting help. But the latter in his pride of self drove him out of his house. The poor fellow, ashamed to return home empty handed, wandered about and soon strayed into a forest. There he met a dwarf who took pity on him. Getting to know the cause of the poor man's grief, the dwarf presented him with a magical instrument which could produce all he wanted and more. The secret of its manipulation was also imparted to him.

In course of time this man with the help of this machine grew extraordinarily rich. His fame and the secret of his sudden wealth spread far and wide. A greedy salt merchant hearing of this became covetous of the machine and managed to steal it away. No sooner than he took it to his boat he wished it to produce salt (what else could a salt merchant desire!) The machine responded immediately and the merchant's heart was filled with delight. His boat was soon filled to overflowing with precious salt. Ah, what a boon! he exclaimed with joy. But the joy soon turned to sorrow and utter ruin. He did not know

how to stop the machine. The boat was sinking with the weight of this magical salt and yet the machine would not stop. All sank, but the machine is still under the sea producing salt! How typical of our modern machine-begotten civilization! We are sinking under its weight. But we have been so caught up in its wheels that we cannot escape despite our desperate desire and struggles.

Like the drowning man we have more faith in our own kicking and striving than in the thin rope thrown to us by the static man on the shore. But those who would be saved must catch at it or be lost. The seemingly static land is more productive of stable good than the restless and turbulent waters whose depths we cannot plumb except at the peril of our lives. Of course water is essential even on land; but we are not to drown ourselves in that element because it is good.

This is therefore the one thing we moderns lack: moderation, a balanced and sober view of life which can come to us only through viewing life as a whole, and not being engrossed in any of its partial manifestations. For this we want Vedanta and the wholesome attitude it develops in us. A sense of ultimate values is necessary for those who would catch hold of stabilizing Reality as against the maddening rush of the disturbing so-called realities of our modern distracted life.

THE MOTHER WE ADORE

By Swami Asheshananda

[Swami Asheshananda was associated for a very long time with Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. From his writing the reader will gain an idea of the tenderness and wealth of devotion that actuate a true worshipper of the Mother.]

THE Tantras are generally condemned by Western scholars as obscene literature devoid of all spiritual value, and the system of worship which they inculcate is stigmatised as filthy and abominable. Some Indian scholars following their western Gurus also share the same opinion, and vilify the whole body of that literature. But a sympathetic and unbiassed study of these scriptures will prove, beyond doubt, that excepting a few Vama-chara Tantras the whole of this extensive literature preaches a religion which is highly elevating and spiritually inspiring. Even those books which speak of five 'Makaras' have been interpreted by certain Tantric teachers as merely allegorical. They are only symbolical representations of certain spiritual ideas. According to them wine indicates intoxicating divine knowledge, killing of animals signifies destruction of animal propensities and lower passions in man. Instead of wine, meat and other objectionable things these scholars of the Shakti school have advocated the use of substitutes such as Ganges water for wine and 'Kalyana Phalam' or ash-gourd for meat.

Whatever this might be, if we leave aside these Vamachara treatises, we find that the great majority of these books are full of lofty spiritual ideas and are pregnant with high devotional feelings towards the Supreme Deity, the first

Cause, the great Mother of the Universe. They inculcate disciplinary methods which are so ennobling and morally advanced that they cannot but receive our admiration if we study them carefully with an unprejudiced mind. Now let us take note of what Kularnava Tantra says: "If religion consists in mere enjoyment of exciting food and drink, then the drunkards and meat-eaters should first be counted as spiritual giants and realised souls." On the contrary severe penalties have been enforced on those that would deviate from strictly moral path and grovel in frivolity and licentiousness. As a matter of fact, Tantras emphasise absolute purification of mind as a fundamental requisite for entering into the temple of God. They preach abstinence from lust and greed as the essential condition for receiving the grace of the All-blissful Mother. Gratification of the senses has nowhere found a place in the religion of the Shaktas. It is not a pseudo-religion, a concealed Kamasutra or frivolous literature, as some Christian Missionaries would have it.

Shakta Tantras generally preach pure monism as their philosophy and realisation of Brahman as the highest goal in life. In one of the hymns the sage speaks—"Oh Mother, you are not a girl, nor young, nor old, neither male nor female art thou. Thou art known

as the Parabrahman without a second." Being sexless she cannot have any gender. Why then should she be called a female principle? It is due to convention. The term Shakti in Sanskrit is feminine. The all-powerful energy of the universe, though strictly speaking without any gender, is still spoken of as feminine by usage alone. The highest form of meditation is to think of the Deity as formless, pure, birthless and eternal. In Chandi in reply to the question, "Who is Mahamaya?" the answer given by Rishi 'Medhasa' is worthy of note—"When She appears in any form, incarnates Herself to fulfil a divine plan, She is supposed to have taken birth. But in reality She has neither origin nor end. She is ever-existing and eternal." Thus we see that there is no difference between Shakti of the Tantrics and Brahman of the Vedantins. They are one and the same. The distinction is purely imaginary. As fire cannot exist without heat and light so Brahman cannot exist without the energy of Shakti or Mulaprakriti. In his Anandalahari Stotram Shankara beautifully speaks of this union of Shiva and Shakti. Without Shakti or power Shiva becomes a 'Shava,' a dead mass of matter. Bereft of Shakti He cannot move. An insignificant lifeless corpse He becomes without Her aid. The whole burden of the song is to glorify the power of the Mother over all and declare Her supremacy in manipulating the functioning of the universe. But like the Sankhya philosopher, the Tantric teachers do not uphold the view of two eternal principles or independent realities. Two infinities are a contradiction in terms. They must limit each other. Reality is one without a second, call it Shakti, Brahman or whatever you like. It matters very

little. Freedom lies in getting beyond all relative existences, beyond name and form. Man must be awakened. As long as there is this dream, duality will persist. The moment knowledge dawns on one, it will vanish like darkness before the approach of the rising sun. Ekamevadwitiyam—that Truth is one and not many. No difference exists between the philosophy of Vedantin and the Shaktas. Both of them aspire after the state of Nirvana. Both seek for emancipation by self-knowledge. They are unanimous in holding that ignorance is the cause of all misery and desire the root of all bondage. Remove ignorance. Overcome all desires by holding fast to Truth. Be detached from the glittering temptations that the world conjures up. Everything within this world is fraught with danger and pain. But let the sun of knowledge shine forth, and let the flood of light come in. No more there will be misery. No more there will be death.

But for ordinary mortals, bound as they are by thousand and one desires, Brahma-Jnana is not so easily attained. Realisation of this unitary consciousness is possible only in the superconscious state of Samadhi. A few advanced souls alone can climb to this olympian height. But to reach this state a long and strenuous course of disciplinary methods and devotional exercises is to be undergone. Gigantic will power and tremendous exertion are needed to rent the veil asunder and see the face of the Divine.

One formless Brahman has assumed multifarious forms. Of them five have been considered supreme. They are Sun, Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Worship of these principal deities have been stressed by Acharya Shankara too—the great exponent of Advaita

Vedanta. To afford facilities for devout meditation the leaders of the Tantric School hold that prayer will be easily heard and mind automatically concentrated if the Absolute Brahman is worshipped as the great Mother of the Universe. As long as we are in the relative plane we cannot deny the existence of Shakti. No work, no movement is possible if Shakti or energy is lost or suffers extinction. Vedantins may reply how a man can attain knowledge by the worship of Maya or Avidya. It will precipitate him to greater and greater darkness. But the Shaktas clarify their position by arguing that their Shakti or Maya is neither illusion nor ignorance but the same Brahman looked at from the world of matter. In methods the two schools may differ, but in highest realisation they share the same opinion.

Three kinds of meditation have been set forth in Tantra for different grades of Sadhaka. "Devo bhutva devam yajet". Worship of the Divine by being divine, is meant for the highest class. The advanced aspirants will meditate on her formless aspect which is infinite and eternal. Internal meditation of some particular form is prescribed for those who are in the intermediary stage. But for the neophyte—the beginner, gross sensual forms like images, Yantras, or Chakras have been allowed for regular worship with different Upacharas. This is called Bahya-puja or external worship. But slowly and steadily mind must be raised to the subtler form of the Divinity by contemplating Her on the lotus of the heart or in the Sahasrara Chakra in the brain. Finally the highest culmination will be reached when the worshipper will merge his separate individuality in the Parabrahman by supreme devotion and undifferentiated know-

ledge. Like the salt-doll merging into the sea the aspirant would lose all distinctive characteristics and be one in the all-comprehensive blissful consciousness of the Divine Mother.

The conception of God as Mother is only to evoke supreme confidence and perfect resignation in the all-merciful protecting care of the Supreme Deity. As soon as knowledge comes, those crystallised forms will automatically melt away. All anthropomorphic ideas as looking upon God as Father or Mother will then vanish. All entanglements will be cut into pieces and Jiva will be Shiva—individual soul leaving aside his separateness will enter into the being of the Supreme Soul or Paramatman.

It is explicit that Shakta Philosophy is not at all contradictory to Vedanta Darshana. Their goal is the same. Their ambition is to reach the highest where no discord of duality and differentiation exists. But in methods of Sadhana their opinions differ. Vedantins want to go beyond Maya or Prakriti by defying her—negating her existence altogether. The Shaktas on the other hand take the reverse course. They too want to go beyond Prakriti and reach the self-same state not by hating but by propitiating and worshipping Her as Mother. They therefore argue:—"O Man, if you want to be free from the thralldom of Nature, the method of defying Mahamaya will not help you to extricate yourself from Her firm grip. Propitiate Her with all devotion and sincerity. She will snap all the meshes that bind you. She will show you the way that leads to salvation". Shakti has got two aspects—Vidya and Avidya external and internal. Outwardly She seems to be the great enchantress. Man is easily tempted

by Her physical beauty, by Her external manifestations. But Her real nature is hidden within. A sincere aspirant who looks upon Her as Divine Mother will be favoured with Her Vidya-aspect, beyond enchanting fascination and bewildering temptations of Avidya. Mother is ever propitious to Her sons. Innumerable sins they may commit. All will be pardoned. If they once cry 'Mother, Mother', their iniqui-

ties will be forgiven. She shrinks not from hugging Her child even though it may be covered with dust and dirt. No Mother can be silent to the piteous wails of her children. To conclude let us pray: "From unreality lead us to Reality, from darkness lead us to Light. From death lead us to Immortality. Reach us through and through. O Mother Divine, protect us ever more with Thy kind compassionate Face."

A FANTASTIC BEYOND

By Edmund Holmes

(Continued from last issue)

[The article of Mr. Edmund Holmes on 'A Fantastic Beyond' is concluded in this issue. He condemns severely the conception of an after-life that enslaves humanity through the threat of Hell. It is interesting to note that he finds in Spiritualism a direct and experiential way of knowing the conditions of life after death.]

HOW may the Christian scheme of rewards and punishment be expected to affect human conduct? Let us begin with the "Prime Mover"—the Creator, the Law-giver, the Judge, the Prize-giver, the Executioner. The conception of God as supernatural, in the ultimate sense of the word leads straight to a legalistic conception of morality. Whatever the supernatural God is reported to have done must be accepted as righteous and just. Whatever He is reported to have said must be accepted as true. And whatever He is reported to have commanded must be accepted as obligatory. Obedience to His formulated commandments is righteousness, and makes for the salvation of those who obey. Disobedience is wickedness, and makes for the damnation of those who disobey. As

the commandments are imposed upon us from without they must be duly formulated and interpreted by those persons, or institutions, or scriptures, to whom or to which God has disclosed His will and delegated His authority. The need for such intermediaries is of course inherent in the idea of a Supernatural God. It follows that man's intuitive judgment of right and wrong, being subordinated to authority, as embodied in the direct teaching of the Church and its delegates, or in the letter of the Bible, recedes into the background and becomes gradually atrophied by disuse.

It is through the reaction of conduct on character that the intuitive judgment, which is a vital aspect of character, is exercised and trained; and in the orthodox eschatology, that reaction

is, on principle, wholly ignored. What will be asked of a man, according to the theologians, at the end of his life? Has he grown in grace through all the years? Has he transformed himself by his manner of living into what he had it in him to become? Has he found his real self through a life of self-transcendence? No; none of these things. He was born bad; born, owing to the sin of Adam, under sentence of eternal death. No amount of self-transformation can make him good or avert his inherited doom. If he is to be saved, he must, in the moment of death, be found clothed with supernatural grace. The Sacrament of Penance can do this for him if he is a Catholic. Acceptance, in full faith, of "the finished work of the Redeemer," as the means of his salvation, can do it for him if he is a Protestant. If he is found clothed with the garment of grace he goes to Heaven—with or without a previous sojourn in Purgatory—and remains there for ever. If he is not clothed with it he will spend eternity in Hell.

That this scheme is both unreasonable and unjust, I need not take pains to prove. That a single act of disobedience can, if the sinner dies unshriven, be punished by an eternity of torment in Hell, is as incredible as that, at the end of an ill-spent life, the intervention of a priest can avert the punishment which that life has earned, and secure for the evil-doer an eternity of bliss in Heaven. In each of these cases the requital of human conduct is, *as measured by normal human standards*, utterly unreasonable and monstrously unjust. But I doubt if the strict supernaturalist would claim in either case that the requital was reasonable or just, as the normal human mind judges of reason and justice. He would be more likely to remind us that God's ways are

not our ways, and God's standards are not our standards.

But morality is in a different category. Even if we were to admit, for argument's sake, that reason and justice are matters to be settled by quasi-logical word-play, we might well go on to contend that the orthodox scheme was as *demoralizing* as it was (in our judgment) unreasonable and unjust; and in order to make good that contention we might claim the right to appeal to normal human standards of moral worth, the more so because there is a ceaseless interplay between morality and social life.

We have seen that, under the orthodox scheme of rewards and punishments, a legalistic outlook on morality makes the exercise of the moral intuition in large measure unnecessary, and so starves and weakens it, and unfits it for its appointed work of distinguishing right from wrong. We can now see that under the same scheme the inward and spiritual effort, which alone can lead, through right conduct, to newness of life, is systematically discouraged; its place being taken by the action from without of the wonder-working influence called supernatural grace; while, instead of finding, in his own transformed self, the reward of his inward and spiritual effort, each of us is to look outside himself for a reward which, being infinite and eternal, will bear no relation whatever to his moral record or his moral worth. And so entirely mechanical is the action of supernatural grace that it not only wipes out the guilt of sin—whether of a single transgression or of a life of evil-doing—and so averts from the sinner the penalty of the sin on the inner life of the sinner, and either makes him holy in himself, according

to Roman Catholic doctrine,* or holy in the estimation of God, according to the less logical but also less violently paradoxical teaching of the Protestant Reformers.

When sin is thought of, not as causing functional derangement of the inner life—derangement which is to be cured only by a better manner of living—but as staining the surface of the soul with a dye which can easily be removed,* there will be but little inducement to the consistent practice of virtue. The man who accepts that view of sin and lives up to it—or down to it,—if his inclinations are evil, will stain his soul with sin again and again, in the full assurance that the stain will again and again be washed away† by a licensed cleaner of the soul. To say that, when death comes to him, such a man will be as far advanced in the way of salvation as one who has led a virtuous life is to outrage alike one's reason, one's sense of justice and one's moral sense. Yet, as long as one's choice lies, or seems to lie, between an eternity of bliss in Heaven and an eternity of misery in Hell, the doctrine of salvation through supernatural grace, irrational, inequitable and demoralizing though it be, will not lightly be abandoned; for to deny even to the worst of sinners the possibility of escaping the awful doom of everlasting punishment is a step

* "It is the doctrine of the Catholic Church that when God receives a sinner to His Friendship, all sin is altogether forgiven and becomes as if it had never been." [The italics are mine] "Those who make the salvation wrought by Christ their own are holy, and are not merely reputed holy, because of the holiness of Another." "Outlines of Dogmatic Theology," by Fr. S. J. Hunter, S. J.

† Or *covered up*, if supernatural grace is to be regarded as a "garment" instead of as a detergent.

from which "the general heart of man" instinctively shrinks.

The dualism of Heaven and Hell, itself the outcome of the dualism of God and the World, meets us as a demoralizing influence at every turn. It leads us to think of salvation as a final escape instead of as an eternal achievement; and it therefore makes fear rather than hope—the hope which allies itself with aspiration and desire—the master motive of man's life. It is easy to see how this comes about. If the bliss of Heaven could be realized in imagination, the desire for it would no doubt prove a motive force of irresistible strength. But that feat of imagination, is beyond our power. When we think of ourselves in Heaven, enjoying the Beatific Vision for ever and ever, we can see nothing in the prospect but eternal monotony. We can no more present to ourselves the Vision and the ecstasy which it is supposed to generate than one who was blind from birth could present to himself a beautiful landscape and the aesthetic delight which it might be supposed to awake. But we *can* realize in imagination—all too vividly—the horrors of a quasi-material Hell; and the prospect of remaining in it and enduring its torment for all eternity is so appalling that no one who faced it in all seriousness even for a moment, could fail to welcome any way of escape from so awful a doom, escape for his own individual self. What might happen to others would be no concern of his. "Each for himself and the Devil take the hindmost" is the outlook on life—fundamentally selfish and anti-social—which the fear of the conventional Hell, if it were fully operative, would tend to produce.

And so, in one's desire to escape from the Hell of judicially inflicted

punishment, one falls into the Hell, more real and more awful, of imprisonment in self. For the true way of salvation, the true road to Heaven, is the way of escape from the lower and narrower self, of escape through self-transcendence into the higher Heaven of the real self; and that way the fear of Hell, a fundamentally selfish fear, is ever tending to close.

It was through the threat of Hell and the offer of means of escape from it, that the Church for many centuries, ruled the hearts of Christendom. It was through the gracious personality of Christ and the story of his life and death and the record of his teaching that the Church first won the hearts of Christendom, and ever afterwards retained some hold on their love as well as their fear. But "perfect love casteth out fear," and it was fear, not love, which the Church, forgetful of those words, exploited—ruthlessly and systematically—in order to keep her hold on the allegiance of her subjects. And, in order to strike fear into their hearts and keep fear in their hearts, she gave them a teaching about life and death, about salvation and perdition, about Judgment, Heaven and Hell, which was not in keeping with what Christ taught, but which she presented to the faithful as "The Faith," and which it was heresy, the deadliest of sins, to deny or even doubt.

That teaching is losing its hold on the minds and hearts of men. We are no longer content to believe that the story of Adam and Eve and the Temptation and the Fall is "true history;" that the sin of Adam upset the plans of the omnipotent Creator of the world; that because of the sin of Adam each of us enters life as an "enemy of God" and therefore under sentence of eternal damnation; that this life on

earth, be it short or long, is one's only period of probation—one's only *life*, in the proper sense of the word; that at death the soul, be it newly born or 100 years old, closes its account with God and has its destiny fixed for all eternity; that it then enters into a state of being in which it will remain for ever*; that, though men lead lives on earth of every degree of goodness or badness, there are only two rewards (in the widest sense of the word) for them, as responsible moral agents, to look forward to—an eternity of bliss in Heaven or an eternity of torment in Hell; that one's destiny for all eternity will depend, not on one's inward and spiritual state at death, as the outcome of the conduct of a lifetime, but on whether, at the moment of death, one is or is not "clothed" with supernatural grace; that supernatural grace acts so mechanically that the accidental withholding of it, through the unavoidable absence from a death-bed of a priest who had been sent for, would imperil the salvation of a dying man; that it is compatible with the justice of God for one who had lived a virtuous life but, having committed a mortal sin, had died unshriven, to suffer the torture of the damned for all eternity—or for one who had led an evil life but having been duly shriven, was in a state of grace when he died, to enjoy the bliss of Heaven through all eternity.

Above all, we are no longer content to believe that "Faith," in the sense of acceptance on the authority of "The Church," or of any religious body, of teaching which seems to be either meaningless or incredible, counts for more in the sight of God than the goodness of heart and soul which bears

* Except so far as it may have to sojourn for a while in Purgatory, the reputed anteroom to Heaven.

witness to itself in a life of virtue and in the consequent growth of the soul in grace.

We are no longer content to believe these things. When the world was young, when science was in its infancy, when there was a confusion, in the minds of those who were just beginning to "speculate largely," between words and things—it was easy to believe them. To-day it is difficult. For many of us it is impossible. Who, for example, realizes what happens to the physical body after its death, can bring himself by any effort of will to believe in its resurrection and reunion—for ever—with the soul which left it when it died? The credentials of the orthodox teaching will not bear investigation. Doctrine which is the outcome of deductive reasoning, according to the rules of a word-bound and dualistic logic, from doubtful premises needs something more than the authority of a Church, or the decision of a Church Council, or the correctness of a reasoning process, to commend it to our hearts and minds. It needs the corroboration which verification by experience alone could give it; and this, in the case of the current eschatology, has never been asked for or thought of as possible. Indeed, one reason why the Church has dogmatized so freely about "the Four Last Things" is that it has taken for granted that its teaching could neither be proved, by an appeal to experience, nor disproved. The bare idea of appealing to experience in such matters is one from which the Church shrank with horror; and any attempt that might be made to explore the Beyond was condemned as impious and punished with the utmost rigour. Even accidental intercourse with it was fatal to anyone who experienced it. For many centuries those whom we now call "mediums" and

who were then called "witches" or "wizards," came under the ban of authority, both Catholic and Protestant, both ecclesiastical and secular, and were sent in thousands to the stake.

To-day that ban is being lifted, and in any case it cannot be enforced. This has made possible the Spiritualistic movement, which has opened up experiential intercourse with the next world, and which, though it has met with widespread disapproval and derision, has held its ground and is gradually winning its way. And Spiritualism has done one thing for which we owe it a debt of gratitude. It has dispelled—potentially at least—the horror and the terror with which the teaching of the Churches had invested death. As a statement of principle, as an exposition of cosmic law, and Divine justice, as a moralising influence in man's life, the orthodox teaching is open, as I have tried to show, to serious criticism from many—to my mind from *all*—points of view. That is a matter on which opinions must differ. But, as a statement of *fact*, it may now be said without hesitation that *there is not a word of truth in it*. The judgment, provisional yet final and irreversible, which immediately succeed death; the division of the passing souls into the two classes of the Saved and the Damned; the immediate ascent of the Saved into the bliss of Heaven; the detention of some of the Saved in the cleansing fires of Purgatory; the immediate descent of the Damned into the flames of Hell; the Day of Judgment; the Resurrection of the bodies of the dead; the final reunion of body and soul, whether in Heaven or in Hell;—none of these things happens or may be expected to happen. They are all idle dreams. What happens to the passing soul at and after death is something entirely different from this.

(Concluded)

THE SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagisananda

सर्वाजीवे सर्वसंस्थे बृहन्ते अस्मिन्हसो भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रे ।

पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा जुष्टस्तत्तेनामृतत्वमेति ॥

सर्वाजीवे=in which everything lives सर्वसंस्थे=in which everything rests बृहन्ते=in the infinite अस्मिन्=in this ब्रह्मचक्रे=in the wheel of Brahman हसः=the pilgrim soul भ्राम्यते=roams about पृथगात्मानं=the individual soul च=itself प्रेरितारं=the moving force or God मत्वा=realising ततः=then तेन=by Him जुष्टः=blessed or favoured अमृतत्वं=immortality एति=attains

In this infinite wheel of Brahman¹ in which everything lives and rests, the pilgrim soul² roams about³. Realising the individual soul⁴ itself as the Moving Force, and blessed⁵ by Him⁶, it attains immortality.

Notes : 1. *The wheel of Brahman* :—The reference here is to the wheel described in verse IV. The wheel is the universe.

2. *The Pilgrim Soul* (हसः):—In classical Sanskrit the word means a swan. Here it is used to denote the individual soul and is explained as हन्ति गच्छत्यध्वानमिति हसः i.e., a traveller or pilgrim. The individual soul is considered to be on a pilgrimage to perfection. From very humble beginnings it has to pass through various stages of evolution—through the mineral, the vegetable, the human and the divine worlds,—or in other words from Tamas through Rajas to Satwa, and finally become perfect. There seems also to be a subtle reference to the similarity of the soul to a swan kept in a revolving cage, fluttering about so as to escape from its confinement. Its inherent Satwic quality, its capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and its ability to float on the surface of the ocean of Samsara without in the least being affected by it are all suggested by the comparison. Just as a swan gets into trouble if it attaches itself to the revolving wheel, the individual soul also gets into trouble if it becomes attached to the world, and has to undergo many rounds of births and deaths. Again just as a swan kept in a cage always flutters about so as to regain its natural freedom, so the individual soul has recourse to many activities in this world. These are mere attempts to regain its natural freedom, and they never cease until the day of liberation or realisation.

3. *Roams about* (भ्राम्यते):—The reference is to the theory of reincarnation. There seems to be also a reference to Sankara's theory of Bhrama or Superimposition as expanded by him in his Sutra Bhashya. Sankarananda says that the individual is being whirled about by his own Dharma or Adharma with the Kama-vasana (desire) as the rod, just as a potter turns round the clay on his wheel with a stick, for making a pot. According to this the individual alone is responsible for his Samsara (bondage) which is due to subjection to desire.

4. *The individual soul* (पृथगात्मानं) &c:—This line is variously interpreted by commentators of various schools of thought, each trying to find in it a sup-

port for his own favourite system of Vedanta. It is referred to many times in the Sutra Bhashya. Sankara takes the line to be connected with the previous part of the verse and interprets it to mean 'thinking that the individual soul is different from God'. According to him this conception of the difference between Jeevatma and Paramatma is the real cause of bondage and reincarnation. According to his interpretation the line would mean आत्मानं जीवं प्रेरितारं च ईश्वरं पृथगेव मत्वा भ्राम्यते । Ramanuja takes this line as related to the last line of the verse. According to him it means that the realisation of the Atman as separate from its Lord and Master gives immortality. He therefore construes it thus आत्मानं प्रेरितारं च पृथग् मत्वा अमृतत्वमेति । Even taking this line as referring to the last line of the verse, others interpret the line to mean, 'Knowing the individual self to be the same as God' and treat it as referring to the cause of liberation. To the unprejudiced mind the position may be summarised thus:—The ignorant man is usually concerned only with himself and the world. To him God, the third entity, does not exist. The intelligent man soon finds out, however, that there is some unknown power behind the universe, which is guiding his destinies. The first part of Sadhana, therefore, is to realise the existence of this power on whom both he and the world depend. At first this realisation is only intellectual. In the history of humanity as well as in the life of the individual, we find the idea of God comes early into the picture. With the maturing of intellectual powers comes the real search as to the fundamental character of this power. Sadhana first begins with a separation of God from the universe, as a Being with qualities entirely different from the individual and the world. Subsequently with the analysis of the individual and the world psychologically and scientifically, the various systems of philosophy dealing with the relations between God, individual and the world come into being. Each system represents a stage in the progress of thought and Sadhana. In the final stage of realisation in the depths of Samadhi the world and the individual soul as we know them vanish entirely and God alone remains. The individual soul gradually acquires all the fundamental characteristics of God and gives up all the characteristics of the world. This process of transformation of the individual soul is referred to in this line. This transformation involves both the processes, namely, first finding out the difference between God on the one hand and the individual soul as we now know it, and secondly the identification of God with the individual soul as it really is. The two being part of the same process, there is no real conflict between them.

C. f. य एवं वेदाहं ब्रह्मास्मि इति स इदं सर्वं भवतीति तस्य ह न देवाश्च नाभुत्या ईशते आत्माहोषां स भवति । अयं योऽन्यां देवतामुपास्ते अन्योऽसावन्योऽहमस्मीति न स वेद यया पशुरेवं स देवानाम् ॥ of Brihadaranyaka, and यदेवेह तदन्यत्र यदन्यत्र तदन्विह । मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥ of Katha.

Cf. also पश्यत्यात्मानमन्यं तु यावद्वै परमात्मनः ।

तावत् संभ्राम्यते जन्तुर्भोहितो निजकर्मणा ॥

संक्षीणाशेषकर्मा तु परब्रह्म प्रपश्यति ।

अभेदेनात्मनः शुद्धं शुद्धत्वादक्षयो भवेत् ॥

of Vishnudharma, etc., in support of the doctrine of identity.

5. *Blessed* (बुद्धः):—The blessing of Iswara according to Sankara is the realisation of the oneness of Jeeva and Brahman. The theists construe it as referring to the doctrine of grace. This doctrine is referred to also in Katha and Mundaka. Cf. यमवैष्वानरे तेन लभ्यः तस्यैव आत्मा विवृणुते तं स्वाम् ।

There is no real conflict between the two views, as the Lord's grace is necessary for the realisation of identity. A greater difficulty is as to how to reconcile the doctrine of grace with the doctrine of Karma or self-effort. Here also there is no real difficulty: for the Lord's grace is one which can be enjoyed only as a result of self-effort. This need not be taken as going against the view that Bhagavan is always gracious and that His grace does not depend upon the acts of individuals. For what our self-effort achieves is only the removal of obstacles in our enjoyment of this grace, just as we have to open our eyes for enjoying the moonlight which exists independently of us, or, just as we have to unfurl the sails of our boat before it can catch the blowing wind.

6. *By Him* (तेन):—This may refer to God Himself or to his blessings or to the very change in the angle of vision in accordance with the different interpretations.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Recent Sensational Conversion

South India was caught up recently in a wave of communal ill-feeling, arising from the mass conversion of a village of Harijans near Mettupaliam into Catholic Christianity. The Christian Mission responsible for this work is also reported to have distributed Rs. 3,500 among the converts, according to Hindu critics as bribes to the people, and according to the Christian missionaries concerned as compensation to the Harijans during their period of instruction in Christian doctrines when they are not expected to go out for work. Whatever this may be, such mass conversions are going on in different parts of the country without receiving any attention from the religiously insensitive Hindu community. This incident too would have gone unnoticed but for two later developments. The Christian missionaries in this case were not

satisfied with the conversion of the Harijans but also converted the Hindu temple of the village into a church by removing the image and substituting a cross in its place. The methods employed by the Christians and their desecration of the temple received some attention from the well-known Tamil weekly, the Ananda Vikatan, which contrasted the questionable methods of the missionaries with the ways of Jesus, whom the paper out of profound respect termed "the mad man," referring to the high aims he had in view. The Bishops, priests and missionaries however took objection to the word, lashed themselves into a fury, organised meetings, and called upon the Government to take action against the Tamil paper for the alleged insult of Jesus Christ and the outrage on the religious feelings of Christians. But the Madras Government, whose present Home

Member Rao Bahadur Pannirselvam is fortunately a Roman Catholic, found no reason to take any action against the paper, but wrote to the Editor of the paper to be more careful in the future.

Does it mean that the Hindus cannot criticise the methods and activities of the Christian missionaries in this country, because some Christians find it convenient to feel wounded by such criticisms? We may ask these disciples of Christ how in justice they can complain against the Hindu, when Christian missionaries are utilising every form of false calumny against Hindus and Hinduism for raising funds abroad, and are criticising Hinduism in all sorts of subtle ways in order to prejudice the minds of the Hindus against their own religion. And as for vilification of other faiths, no agency in the world has been more responsible for it than the Christian missionaries, and if all the literature of this kind that they have produced in the past is collected, one can easily fill a library of considerable size.

Catholics do not purchase Souls

We hear a further echo of this Mettupaliam episode in a recent speech of Hon'ble Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam, the Home Member, at a school prize-giving in Trichinopoly. He said: "Gentlemen, recently you may have seen in the papers controversies of converts being purchased by some Catholic missionaries of Southern India. Refutations on this matter have also appeared in the press. You have read reports of both versions and it is for you to judge, but I, as a Catholic, can only say that no Catholic would believe that any Catholic missionary has believed in purchasing souls, as it is put. You may take it from me that no

Catholic Bishop would have lent himself to doling out money to so-called converts, merely for the purpose of converting them and baptising them and including them in the Catholic fold, because I believe a Catholic Bishop knows that a man who enters the Catholic faith, not because of the faith he has in religion, but because of a few rupees, could not be a Catholic and could not in real spirit be a Catholic."

Can a Number-minded Church avoid this Pitfall?

We suppose the mere denial of the Home Member, however high-placed he may be in the official ladder, cannot falsify the verdict of history. It is better that a man is a bad Catholic than he is a bad heathen—has always been the motto of the Catholic Church. In fact no proselytising religion claiming to have universal application can escape this pitfall. Quality and quantity cannot simultaneously be attended to in spiritual matters. A church which is out to capture the whole of mankind in the net of its organisation and which depends for its collections from the laity for missionary purposes on the number it is annually able to bring into the fold cannot but be hungry for numbers. And when this kind of hunger overtakes a church, there is no wonder in its stooping to any method, provided it can produce a successful report from the point of view of numbers.

We shall give our readers a sample of the Catholic mentality in this respect by the following quotation from the September issue of the Rays of Light, the Organ of the Catholic Truth Society of India. After pointing out that in 1911 the number of Santal Animists was 16,322,000, Santal Hindus 436,600, and Santal Christians 9,165, and

that in 1931 the numbers were 1,464,700 Santal Animists, 1,020,000 Santal Hindus and 24,033 Santal Christians, the paper proceeds to comment on the situation revealed by these facts: "These figures show a loss of 168,000 for Animists but a gain of 533,000 for Hinduism. At this rate we can foresee what will happen in our generation. The Catholic Missions of Calcutta, Patna and Ranchi are at work among these promising people; but they are in sore need of more men and more means. All over India, the primitive tribes are in point of religion at the cross-roads. Animism cannot hold its own; it is yielding to Islam, to Christianity and chiefly to Hinduism. The story of the Santals is repeated by Bhils, Oraons, Gonds and Mundas, as we showed last August. In ten years (1921-31) Animism has lost one and a half million adherents which now would be Catholic, if they had found Catechists to receive them. If God sends conversions, the least we can do is to contribute our prayers and alms to the missionary cause which depends on them to a great extent."

We leave it to our readers to judge whether a church so number-minded as the passage quoted above reveals, can withstand the temptation of bribery, if its finances can afford that luxury.

Hindus are at Fault

Coming back now to the Mettupaliyam conversion incident, there is no use in the Hindus smarting at the conversion activities of the Christian missionaries in this country. They are only doing a work which the Hindus are neglecting. It is an object lesson to the Hindus that their activities are not in the least able to affect the Muslims. This is a fact that Hindus have to

ponder over. These mass conversions take place only because of the incohesive nature of Hindu Society, the absolute want of knowledge of the fundamentals of Hinduism, especially among the Harijans and lower castes, and above all the dissatisfaction caused among these Harijans by caste Hindu oppression. In place of merely criticising the activities of the Christian missionaries, it is high time that the Hindus organise Missions of their own to work especially among the lower strata of Hindus and the animists, and meet the Christian missionary on his own platform.

But above all the most important defensive measure that the Hindu society has to adopt is to put an end to the oppression of the Harijans. Even the Mettupaliyam converts are Harijans who have migrated from another village due to caste Hindu oppression.

Caste Hindus outdo the Christians

In fact in several parts of India disaffection among the Harijans owing to caste Hindu oppression is growing. This fact has been brought to light in a glaring form by certain incidents that are reported to have taken place recently in Gujarat.

The Harijan work in several parts of Western India seems to have received a set-back due to the caste Hindu opposition. Newspapers report about several clashes between caste Hindus and Harijans and about the social boycott of the latter by the former for taking advantage of the Government's order to admit Harijan boys in village schools.

About the happening in the village of Kothure, the "Hindu" reports: "The spread of cholera among caste Hindus of Kothure

village was suspected to be the work of 'black-magic' of Harijans, which resulted in Hindus attacking Harijans at the latter's temple in the village. It is alleged that after driving out the worshippers, caste Hindus dug out the idols and dumped them into the river nearby and committed other acts of sacrilege." There are also other reports of caste Hindus forcibly stopping Harijan religious processions and of attacking the Harijans in their living quarters.

We have commented before on the action of the Christians in removing the image from a Hindu temple and converting it into a church. But we suppose one's indignation against this action of Christian missionaries will be neutralised very much when one learns from the above report that one section of Hindus can without any compunction desecrate the temple of another section of Hindus. This only shows that the attention of all well-wishers of Hindu culture should be directed more against the forces of barbarism and superstition within than against the attacks from without.

Caste Hindu attitude and the Abyssinian Question

In another village at Kavitha in Ahmedabad the caste Hindus have opposed the admission of Harijan boys into the village schools and in spite of the persuasion of the District Board President have insisted upon their exclusion. They have also instituted a social boycott against these Harijans, many of whom are therefore forced to leave the village. The Secretary of the

Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangha has therefore expressed the opinion that the methods of persuasion have for the time being failed, and that the Government should by force enable the Harijans to exercise their civil rights and protect them from the intimidations of mischief mongers.

Commenting on this situation Acharya Kripalani said at a meeting organised for celebrating the 'Abyssinia Day' that Indians could not only do no help to Abyssinia, but their protest in such matters carried no weight when they could allow the Harijans to be tortured in this way by the caste Hindus. Referring to the plight of Harijans at Ahmedabad he said that Italians if they conquered Abyssinia would not be so tyrannical towards Abyssinians as they (Indians) were towards the so-called untouchables of India.

Some of the Indian papers have expressed very pessimistic views on the situation. We do not however think there is sufficient reason for assuming such an attitude. Opposition of this kind has been experienced in other places also, and has been easily overcome too when the Government showed that they were not going to tolerate it. Some years back a similar situation arose in a certain State in India over the very same question of admitting Harijan students in village schools. The State however brought the caste Hindus to their senses, and the opposition thereupon cooled down. Persuasion, no doubt, is the better way, but if it fails, the constituted authority will have to come to the help of the weak.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BOOK OF RAM (BIBLE OF INDIA): By Mahatma Tulsidas. Rendered into English by Hari Prasad Sastri. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, London, W. C. 1. Price 3sh. 6 d. Pp. 144.

As the title itself indicates, the story of Ramayana according to the version of Tulsidas has been rendered into English in this book. The greatness of Ramayana is known everywhere, since it is translated into many languages both eastern and western. In this book only portions which contain the ethical and philosophical teachings of Sri Ramachandra have been translated, without of course breaking the connected chain of the story. Written in simple idiomatic English and printed and got up in an attractive form, the book undoubtedly adds to the natural charm and beauty of the Ramayana story. To show that the author has caught the real spirit of the Ramayana and conveys the same to his readers in excellent English, we quote the following sentence from his Foreword: "As man, ruler, husband, brother, companion, friend, leader of men, devotee and spiritual teacher, Ramachandra sets the highest standard of conduct ever known in the East. To this very hour, his manifested example remains the ideal of bearing and behaviour throughout India."

V. ANANTHACHARIAR, M.A.

THE DIVINE PYMANDER OF HERMES TRISMEGISTUS. Published by the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom, Aaklu, 6, Hermon Hill, London. Price 3sh. net (54 pp.)

This is the second edition of an excellent work, an attempt to systematise and unfold something of the significance of the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. Whether there was such a man at all, whether he wrote even a small fraction of the 20,000 or 30,000 works attributed to him have been questioned. Very few of these works are extant, and even these are full of apparent contradiction. Despite all these, they were referred to from at

least 200 A.D. with the greatest reverence (like that accorded by the Hindus to the Vedas). The volume now before us seeks to disentangle the main gems from the best authenticated works of Hermes and to present them for the reverent study or deep meditation of all alike. In spite of the mixture in it of truths and forms connected with Egyptian worship and wisdom, with those of the Greeks, the early Christians, the Gnostics, the Neo-Platonists, &c., the truths set out are so fundamental and vital, that Hindus, Moslems, Christians and all others can still meditate on many passages with great profit. After perusing the book, one understands why Milton in his *Il Penseroso* declared:

"Or let my lamp at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,

With Thrice-Great Hermes..."

The printing and get-up of the book are good.

B. V. N.

THE SCIENCE OF DREAMS: By W. B. Crow, D. SC., Ph. D. (42 pp.). Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Price Re. 1-8-0.

This is a small essay under a bold title on a very vast subject. A scientific treatment of dream phenomena, their causation and interpretation which Freud began and Jung and Adler continued is always attractive. Dr. Crow takes up some of the facts and theories from these authors and declares (at p. 30) that "on the whole, the psycho-analytical theory agrees fairly well with the Theosophical." After a very brief statement of a few more facts and theories, freely interspersed with Theosophical phrases and ideas, he closes his essay with an observation showing what is perhaps the object of the essay: "Thus the study of sleep and dreams involves many factors, and although many theories of dreams have been put forward, I know of no system of philosophy which explains them

adequately, other than the synthetic and all embracing teachings which are known to the world to-day under the name of Theosophy and which have been expressed in the great works of its Founders and leaders." The printing and get-up are nice.

B. V. N.

APASTAMBA DHARMA SUTRA MAN-JARI (Sanskrit): By R. N. Suryanarayana, M. A. Published by Adhyatma Prakasa Press, Bangalore City. Price As. 12.

The general plan of this book is quite original. The whole work of the great sage Apastamba has been analysed and arranged in systematic order. Sutras scattered in different places have been collected and regrouped under proper headings. A glossary has been appended at the end of the book to make clear certain technical terms. The remarkable feature of the book is its faithful adherence to the original and its interesting presentation. This will be not only a valuable book of reference to University students but also to the general Sanskrit knowing public who are interested in the knowledge of the ancient laws that regulated Hindu life and society in the past.

S. A.

MEDICINE AND MYSTICISM: By R. O. Moon, M. D., F. R. C. P. Published by Longmans Green & Co., London. 57 pp. Price 2sh. 6d. net.

Mysticism is sub-divided by Dr. Moon into a nobler or higher sort and a lower one, into the western and eastern sorts. Of the first he says, "Mysticism in its highest sense would seem to imply some special faculty of the soul, which has the power of apprehending truths that are hidden from the discursive reason; but such truths are not of a material character and therefore have no direct bearing on the body; consequently they may be thought, though erroneously, to have no influence upon medicine. Such forms of mysticism might be spoken of as 'Transcendental Metaphysics' and would be represented by Plato, Plotinus, etc. On the other hand, there is an inferior form of mysticism

which in the popular mind is associated with magic, spirit-rapping, rather crude communications with the dead, etc., which might be spoken of as Transcendental Physics." Again Dr. Moon thinks that it is only the mystics of the West that "attempt to give intellectual expression to their higher forms of thought and feelings; so that it is only from the mysticism of the West that we should expect to find any favourable influence upon medicine." Whether the author has any acquaintance with either the mystics or the great doctors of the East is not clear. He deals only with Western Mysticism. Even there his attempts to show the influence of mysticism whether in ancient, mediæval or modern times, appear to be unsuccessful. With reference to recent times when the scientific spirit is seen to dominate all fields including medicine, he quotes two instances of mystic influence, viz., Homœopathy and Christian Science. The former, he says, has some affinities with a mysticism of no exalted type; and evidently the defects of Hahneman's medical methods are attributed to his religious views and the author evidently treats all religion as mysticism. The latter, Christian Science, he says, cannot be described as 'mystical' except in a somewhat loose and popular manner. On the whole the reader is left with the impression that mysticism (at any rate in the higher sense) has practically left no influence on Medicine.

The book is neatly printed and got up.

B. V. NARASIMHASWAMI.

MANAMEYODAYA: A Primer on Mimamsa (Sanskrit): By Narayana Bhatta. Edited with an English translation by Messrs. C. Kunham Raja and S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri. (T. P. H. Oriental Series) pp. 345.

The *Manameyodaya* is a philosophical manual of the Mimamsa system according to the school of Kumarila Bhatta. As its name signifies, it is a lucid exposition (udaya) of the means of valid knowledge (mana) and the objects of valid knowledge (meya) in accordance with the view of the Bhattas. It con-

sists of two parts; the first (manaparicheda) deals with the Pramanas, and the second (meyaparicheda) sets forth the Prameyas. The first part is the work of Narayana Bhatta of Malabar who is declared to have flourished in the latter half of the sixteenth century. He meant, no doubt, to complete the work; but, for what reason we do not know, he stopped with writing the section on the means of valid knowledge. The second part which deals with the objects of valid knowledge is the work of a later philosopher whose name was also Narayana.

The editors of this book have done splendidly well both in their choice and in their manner of execution. *Manameyodaya* occupies, as the editors point out in the Preface, the same position in the Mimamsa school which the *Siddhanta-muktavali* occupies in the Nyaya-Vaisesika system or the *Vedanta-*

paribhasa in the Advaita system. For a clear understanding of the elementary principles of the Mimamsa system of Indian Philosophy no other treatise will serve as well as this. In translating this work, the editors have not only been faithful to the text, they have also made the translation readable and lucid—a task which is not often achieved in rendering a Sanskrit text into English. The detailed table of contents and the comparative list of doctrinal differences which the editors have included in this book go a great way in making the study of the text easy and fruitful. No student of Indian Thought can afford to neglect this work. To those who want to specialise in the Advaita this philosophical treatise will be a valuable aid, since in that system the path of the Bhattachas is followed in matters empirical.

T. M. P. MAHADEV, M.A.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore

The Mysore Ashrama is situated in one of the best extensions of the city. Started in the year 1925 it has already made its healthy influence felt all around. For five years after its inception the Ashrama was accommodated in rented buildings. In Feb. 1931, it was shifted to the present buildings, forming the outhouse of the main structure. During the year under review, religious classes were regularly held in the Ashrama, in the Students' Home and in various educational institutions and hostels. Birthdays of incarnations and prophets were duly observed and on these occasions readings and appropriate discourses were also arranged. Special lectures were delivered by eminent Swamis from other centres to the great satisfaction of the public. The Students' Home which was started in 1932 under the auspices of the Ashrama with 14 inmates has now a strength of 19. The boys are trained to live a useful and disciplined life under the direct supervision of a monk of the Mission. Their physical development and progress in studies are also well attended

to. The study circle for higher comparative studies consisted last year of three Swamis under the direction of eminent professors of the Mysore University. The Library was well utilised and 180 new books were added to it. The Ashrama published some new translations in Kannada from Swami Vivekananda's speeches and writings and distributed some leaflets free of charge. Reconstruction work in two villages, Padavarhalli and Vontikoppal, was efficiently carried on with the co-operation of the boys of the Students' Home and local public. Instruction was given in Three R's, General Knowledge, Hygiene and Health. The Ashrama took the initiative in making collections for the Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund. A sum of Rs. 4,000 was collected and was sent to relieve the distress of the afflicted people. The pressing need of the Ashrama at present is the construction of a Temple and a Hall and some living rooms for the Sadhus. The building work in connection with these has already been started, and it is hoped that with the sympathy and

help of the public of Mysore the construction will very soon be completed.

Vedanta Work in South America (Argentina Republic)

Our readers may remember that 3 years back through the enthusiasm of some students of Vedanta, Swami Vijayananda sailed on invitation to S. America, and since then he is working with a group of students at Buenos Aires and the interest in Vedantic teachings and the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is steadily on the increase in spite of the opposition the Swami has to meet with in certain quarters. In a recent letter received here the Swami writes:

"I shall give you some idea of the work here. Five mornings in the week from 7-30 to 8-30, we have 35 students who come regularly, some of them come by rail from a distance of 30 miles. We meditate the first half-an-hour, then read from Panchadasi. Of course I explain in Spanish. Then three evenings in a week from 7-15 to 8 we have the general class where we are reading now Bhagavatam (Uddhavagita). In this class there are about 60 students. In the mornings and evenings I have to give interviews to many. I am expecting to start my radio lectures in June."

Vedanta Work in London

We draw the attention of our readers to an article in the July issue of the Vedanta Kesari by Miss M. B. Clark who has given therein a detailed account of the work of Swami Avyaktananda in England. Since then we have been intimated that a society called the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Society has been organised at 51, Lancaster Gate, London, W. 2 with Swami Avyaktananda as Minister.

The objects of the Society are as follows:—

1. To preach the Vedanta philosophy and its four methods (the four Yogas, the paths of Discrimination, Love, Service and Psychic Control) in a way suited to the needs of Western people.

2. To preach the harmony of all religions in the light of the lives of

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and to study the common background of Eastern and Western mysticism.

3. To preach the Vedantic ideal of human solidarity and to show the bearing of the Vedantic Oneness upon all phases of modern life: to preach the spiritual basis of social service.

4. To establish a spiritual understanding between the East and the West.

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The above five centres cover altogether 62 villages. The total distribution from the 16th August to the 16th of September was 950 mds. 36 srs. 8 ch. of rice, several mds. of other foodstuffs, 199 new cloths and 990 pieces of old clothes, besides some other articles.

The condition of the people in all these areas is still very miserable. Regular supply of foodstuffs and provision of clothes are urgently needed. Above all, construction of huts has to be immediately taken up, for the plight of thousands of homeless and destitute men, women and children is indescribable. The funds at our disposal are too insignificant to meet the heavy and pressing demands. We earnestly appeal to all our generous countrymen to contribute liberally to our funds

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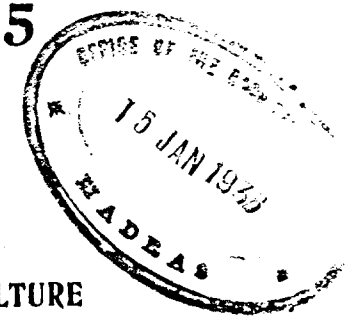
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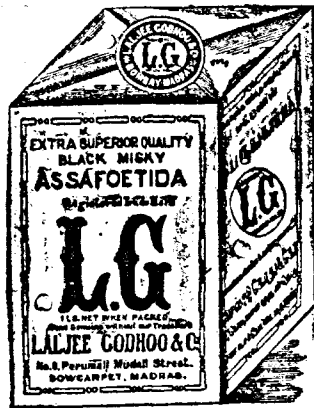
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting
strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman."

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXII]

NOVEMBER, 1935

[No. 7

HINDU ETHICS

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अद्रोहः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा ।

अनुग्रहश्च दानं च शीलमेतत् प्रशस्यते ॥

यदन्येषां हितं न स्यादात्मनः कर्म पौरुषम् ।

अपत्रपेत वा येन न तत् कुर्यात् कथंचन ॥

तत्तु कर्म तथा कुर्याद् येन श्लाघ्येत संसदि ।

शीलं समासेनैतत्ते कथितं कुरुसत्तम ॥

यद्यप्यशीला वृपते प्राप्नुवन्ति श्रियं क्वचित् ।

न भुञ्जते चिरं तात समूलाश्च पतन्ति ते ॥

Absence of malice towards any being in act, thought and
word, loving-kindness and liberality constitute noble conduct.

That human effort which does not conduce to the good of
others or that act of which one has to be ashamed should not be
done on any score.

On the other hand that act for which one may be lauded in
society should be done. O, Noble King ! I have told you briefly
what conduct is.

If wicked persons, O King, ever come by wealth they do not
enjoy it long. O, Son, a total fall awaits them.

SANTI PARVA, CH. 124, VERSES 65—68.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

[In this instalment of Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master, we get an idea of the intimacy that a devotee feels towards the Deity and of the extraordinary power that the Master exercised on the thoughts of men.]

The last day of the festival

THE three days of the festival, viz., the seventh, the eighth and the ninth day of the bright fortnight, had been spent in great rejoicing. Now it was the morning of the tenth day. The priest was hurrying through the regular worship in a summary way, as the worship had to be concluded within an appointed time. Finally, the immersion of the image would take place in the evening. A shadow of grief had darkened the minds of the entire household of Mathuranath. Everyone felt a sort of want, indistinct and indistinguishable, something like the premonition of an imminent and unavoidable separation from some dearest object. Even the purest joys of this world are thus followed invariably by a gloomy shade like this. It is perhaps in accordance with this rule that even the greatest lovers of God occasionally come across intolerable pangs of separation from God. Even hard-hearted persons like us cannot help shedding tears of grief during the immersion of the sacred image on the last day of worship. It is needless to mention that from the earliest hours of the day Mathuranath's wife was again and again wiping off tears from her eyes

while closely engaged in her round of duties.

Due to intense joy Mathuranath remains unaware of the end of the festival

But Mathuranath had not yet been able to conceive that the last day of the festivity had arrived. He was still beside himself with joy as before, because of the holy presence of the Divine Mother in his house and also because of the inconceivable grace and extraordinarily pure association of the Father. Engrossed as he was in his own delights, there was hardly any need of attending to what was happening in the outside world. He thought his days would glide on blissfully for ever in the company of the Father and in the presence of the Divine Mother. But meanwhile came the message from the priest that the immersion of the mirror (signifying the conclusion of the ceremony and the termination of the divine presence in the holy image) was to take place now. Therefore Mathuranath was requested to come to the worship hall to pay his last homage to the Deity in the image.

Mathuranath is determined not to allow the immersion of the image

At first Mathuranath could not at all understand what was said to

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him. Only when the same thing was repeated for a second time did he come to know that it was the final day, and simultaneously with it he felt a severe wound in his heart. With extreme mortification he began to shed copious tears while thoughts of this nature agitated his mind: "Must the Mother, (i.e., the image) be immersed to-day? But why? Through Her grace I am not in need of anything whatever. As for the little want of mental peace, that too has been completely removed by the Mother's presence in my house. Why should I then be made miserable again by the immersion of the Mother? Never! For heaven's sake I cannot allow the breaking up of this joyous fair. The immersion of the Mother! Even the very thought makes life intolerable."

Meanwhile the auspicious moment was about to pass by. The priest was sending messengers one after another with his request for the Master's presence for a while in the worship hall during the immersion ceremony whereupon Mathuranath sent him the reply with great annoyance, "I won't allow the immersion of the Mother to take place. The worship shall be continued as before. If the immersion takes place against my will, it will mean a terrible disaster,—even loss of lives may be the ultimate result." With this he remained motionless in a gloomy mood. Seeing the grim attitude of the master, the servant moved aside with fear, and returning to the worship hall he reported everything to the priest.

Everyone was overwhelmed with surprise.

Mathuranath's reply to the persuasions of the household

Then after much deliberation the members of the household sent such persons as were held in respect by Mathuranath to persuade him to agree to the usual procedure on such occasions. They too went and tried to change his mind, but absolutely to no effect. Without paying any heed to these persuasions he said, "Why? I shall worship the Mother every day. Why should I immerse Her when I have got enough means for Her daily worship through Her grace?" What else could the elders now do but return with a sad countenance, concluding that he had gone crazy? But what if so? Every member of the house knew only too well how wreckless Mathuranath could be and how completely he would lose all power of discrimination in a fit of anger. Therefore none dared to fall into his disfavour by giving orders for the immersion. The news reached the mistress of the house in a sufficiently exaggerated form. Being terror-stricken, she requested the Master to try to bring him round. For, who else was there to save them from danger?

The Master convinces Mathuranath

As soon as the Master stepped into Mathuranath's room he found the latter pacing about there, wholly indifferent towards his surroundings, with his countenance sombre

and flushed red, and the eyes turned deep red. The moment he saw the Master, he came near him and said, "Well, Father, let people say whatever they like. I cannot allow the immersion of the Mother as long as I live. I have told them that I shall continue the worship daily. Or else, how am I to live separated from the Mother?"

"Is this your only fear?" replied the Master, gently passing his hand over Mathuranath's chest. "But who told you that you were to live separated from the Mother? Moreover, where will She go even though the immersion takes place? Can the Mother live away from her child? She has accepted your offerings for these three days, being present outside, in the worship hall. From to-day She will be still closer to you, residing constantly within your heart and accepting your offerings therefrom."

Marvellous power of the Master's words and his touch

The Master's words and touch possessed the power of creating extraordinary transformations in the minds of men. It was noticed, time and again, that when people would not accept his views on any particular subject but opposed him obstinately with contrary arguments, the Master used to touch them on some pretext or other. Simultaneously with this, the course of thought in the persons thus touched would undergo a complete reversal, and they used to wind up the topic wholly agreeing with

the Master's position. About this matter the Master himself also told some of us, "Do you know why I touch the opponents in that way in the course of a debate? It weakens the power which creates that sort of doggedness in them, and thereby they are enabled to grasp the real truth."

We had heard of, and personally witnessed also, many an instance in the Master's life when he would absorb into himself, wholly or partly, such powers from other people as stood in the way of their realising the actual truth. It had been noticed that certain words, when they came from an ordinary man, fell flat on the audience, while those very words, when coming from the Master's lips, would penetrate to the very core of the hearers' hearts, so as to bring about a thorough transformation in their later lives. We shall attempt elsewhere to present our readers with these in their elaborate detail. At present let us proceed with the story of Mathuranath.

How Mathuranath came round again

Gradually Mathuranath came round as a consequence of the Master's words and his touch. Whether this change was due to some spiritual vision, attained through the Master's will and touch, we do not know. But that alone seems quite probable. Perhaps he perceived the vivid presence of the Divine Mother within his heart brightening it up with heavenly light, which increased his delight hundred-fold and thereby

weakened his craving for preserving the external image. A true Guru thus draws the attention of the disciple to the brilliant lustre of a higher ideal, and in consequence the ecstasies and experiences of a lower order automatically disappear from his mind.

THE MODERN MYSTICS

[In the following paragraphs we place before our readers some of the important generalisations arrived at by Sir Francis Younghusband in his recently published book "The Modern Mystics." Sir Francis was an officer under the Government of India for a long time, and is a great admirer of Indian thought and spiritual ideals. He is also the author of several interesting books.]

The Religious Outlook To-day

THE modern age is generally represented as an era noted for the decline of popular interest in religion. It is however an undeniable fact that in spite of this general waning of religious zeal, the last two or three decades have witnessed the publication of a much larger number of thoughtful books on religion than many an era noted for its religious enthusiasm. It would seem from this that what the modern mind rejects is that type of dogmatic religion which seeks to enforce its teachings by the bribe of heaven or the threat of hell, which pretends to be cock-sure about all facts, secular and spiritual, and which threatens to plunge its priestly talons into the body of society with a view to prevent men from freely exercising their mental and intellectual powers. In fact religion as a means for enriching life, as a factor that can give more of peace, bliss and illumination to the mind is occupying the attention of many talented men to-day. This interest in religion as life, as distin-

guished from religion as dogma, is at the back of much of the modern craze for applied philosophy, auto-suggestion, spiritual healing and similar methods of mental training. For the same reason spiritual aspirants of to-day seek inspiration more from mystical writings and the lives and experiences of saints than from dogmatic theology and hairsplitting philosophical discussions.

We surmise that this tendency of modern religious thought is the impelling force behind a recent publication entitled "Modern Mystics" by Sir Francis Younghusband, one of the most cultured and liberal-minded Englishmen of to-day. There are many excellent books by European writers on mysticism; but the unfortunate obsession of the western mind that human culture is co-extensive with western culture has made most of these writers oblivious of the great mystical traditions of Asiatic religions, and thus confine their attention to the mysticism of the West alone. Sir Francis on the other hand presents to his readers

a study of modern mystics selected from all countries and all religions—from India and Persia; from France, England and Wales; from among Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The mystics treated in the book are Keshub Chander Sen, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as representatives of Hindu Mysticism; the Bab and his followers from among Muslim mystics; Ste Therese de Lisieux, better known as the Little Flower, as exemplifying Roman Catholic mysticism; the unknown authoress of *The Golden Fountain*, as a typical Protestant mystic; and Evan Roberts, a Welsh mystic, as an example of mass mysticism. This comparative outlook of Sir Francis, born of his freedom from any commitment to the exclusive creeds of any church, entitles his generalisations on mysticism to a careful study on the part of all who are interested in the development of that inner vision which alone can give a true insight into the heart of Reality. We shall therefore attempt to place before our readers some of his important conclusions embodied in this book, and add our own reflections on them wherever necessary.

Points of Agreement and Difference

The first point that deserves our attention in a comparative study of this kind is the points of resemblance and difference that Sir Francis deduces from a close consideration of the lives and experiences of these saints. In earnestness of purpose, in yearning after perfection, in

suffering, in subsequent joy, in serenity of soul, in certitude of goodness, in the longing to communicate their joy to others and in the feeling of fellowship with all—the author finds complete agreement among the mystics of his study. But the ways they followed differed. Some had visions, some heard voices, some saw lights, and some were borne on billows as in an ocean. Some saw Christ, some saw the Virgin Mary, some saw Goddess Kali, and some the Prophet Mahommed. But through all these divergent experiences had come to them the joy and the serenity of communion with the Spirit of the universe. Some of them had undergone deliberate training on mystic lines; to others experiences came without any such training. In their methods of communication too they differed. Keshab Sen went on a propaganda tour all over the world; Ramakrishna prepared one individual to receive his power; the Bab selected eighteen to proclaim his message; and St. Therese remained secluded in a convent depending solely on the power of prayer. In their ideas of celibacy also they differed. Some thought it absolutely necessary, and even others like Evan Roberts who did not take the vow remained unmarried. On the other hand persons like Keshab Sen and the Bab were married and had children. The authoress of the *Golden Fountain* was not only married but stated explicitly that there was nothing in the married state or any of its functions to harm the highest life.

It must be noted here that in spite of the minor differences in disciplines and modes of thought, the validity of mysticism is established when it is seen that the lives of all mystics prove the possibility of experiencing the Divine and the beneficent effect of such experience on life in the form of certitude, peace, joy and universal love. To those who criticise the mystic state as a degeneration akin to drunkenness and hallucination, the lesson that Sir Francis draws from the study of these mystics is quite a fitting reply: "A drunkard certainly delights while he is drunk, but the next morning is the worse, not the better for it. So also is a person with a hallucination. The mystic on the other hand finds his whole being saturated with the joy he has felt. It has become a lasting possession to him. And it alters his whole attitude to life." The other important point raised by the author is the place of celibacy in the culture of the mystic faculty. We shall consider it in another part of this essay.

The Philosophic Basis of Mystic Experience

If the experience of the mystic is not akin to drunkenness and hallucination on account of its beneficent effects on life, what rational explanation can we give of its reality and how can we fit it in with the rest of our knowledge? To these questions Sir Francis has got interesting replies. All experiences of life are, according to him, a mixture of the subjective and the

objective factors, and mystical experience is no exception to this rule. Nothing in this universe, including even a particle of dust, is isolated or forms an independent entity by itself. All are bound up as the integral parts of a whole, and all are therefore affected by that whole. That whole consists not of this earth or even of the solar system alone, but of the entire universe. The mystic, like any other being, is therefore influenced by the whole, and the state peculiar to him must also be the result, not merely of the internal workings of the mind, but also of the impact of influences from outside. To characterise his experience as purely subjective is therefore incorrect.

Now this inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of all things in one coherent whole is the common conclusion of science and philosophy. The common man at the sensuous or the intellectual level does not feel this unity of things, or recognise that he is a part of a coherent system. The mystic however comes to feel this unity intensely. "In this view," says Sir Francis, "we might interpret the mystical experience as a vivid impression of the universe as a whole. In his experience the mystic has become aware of the underlying unity of the Spirit which binds together and animates the universe. The part has become aware of the whole—of the inward essence of the whole." Coherence with the rest of knowledge is one of the tests applied for measuring the validity

of an experience. The mystic's realisation of all existence as a coherent spiritual unity is in wonderful agreement with the quest of science and philosophy, and Sir Francis finds in this a conclusive test of the validity of mystic experience.

At this point Sir Francis raises a question: If the part is always influenced by the whole, and if the recognition of this inter-relatedness of the whole is the essence of mystic experience, why is it that it does not come to all? It comes, he says, only to those who have most earnestly striven after the ideal, and not even in the case of all such. There is an element of grace in it. Just as in the human personality, the spirit or the vital energy works now more through the legs, next more through the arms, at another time more through the brain and so on, so also the Supreme Spirit does not work always with uniform pressure and intensity through all its parts. The condition which determines which part should be the channel for the special manifestation of the Supreme Spirit seems to be the intensity of striving in the part for understanding the whole. Supposing an aspiring cell in the brain of a person is struggling to understand him. On a rare occasion when the cell is striving hardest to know him, he happens to express himself through that cell in an effort to write down some of his ideas. Just then the effort of the cell or the part, and the effort of the person or the whole will coin-

cide, and there will be a tremendous rush of the spirit of the living personality on the cell. The mystic experience corresponds to this coincidence of the efforts of the part and of the whole, and the consequent comprehension of the whole by the part.

This is also the reason, Sir Francis contends, why the great mystic should be regarded as the highest type of man. "He has developed something more than the ordinary consciousness. He has become most vividly aware of, and most intimately in touch with, the Central Spirit of the universe—aligned himself with the Central Time—and been lifted to a higher plane of being. Moreover, while science and philosophy coldly assure us of the coherence and inter-dependance and inter-connectedness of things in one whole, the mystic actually feels that underlying unity and feels it to an intense degree. No one like he has such a deep sense of fellowship with the whole universe, with every living thing, with every human being." Again he says, "The mystic has had experience—direct and immediate experience—of the inmost working of the universe. His soul has been in actual correspondence with the soul of the universe. Having entered deeply into the Spirit of the universe and having been even more deeply penetrated by it, he has known something of what the essential nature of the universe really is."

The above is a brief summary of the theory of mystical experience

propounded by Sir Francis in his book. Its special merit consists in the elimination of antiquated and sectarian conceptions and the substitution of universal and scientific terminology in expounding the significance of intuitive faculty which is the gateway of spiritual experience. It is no doubt highly speculative from the point of a critical scientist, and it is very doubtful whether any psychologist of religion will agree to it. But it has to be remembered that the day is past when any scientist can contend that the intellectual and the sensuous approaches are the only ways of comprehending objective facts. In the light of many experiments performed in telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, thought-reading, etc., under strict laboratory conditions, super-normal ways of knowing can not but be admitted even from the scientific point of view. Under such circumstances a hypothesis of this kind that Sir Francis puts forward as a result of a comparative and critical study of the highest form of experience has its own scientific value too. For the lay man interested in mysticism, this restatement in modern terminology of what is meant by spiritual intuition will be highly illuminating.

The Cosmic Significance of the Mystical Type

Among the other interesting points dealt with in the book is the cosmic significance that the writer finds in the appearance of mystics in this world. The mystics are, according to him, the feelers or

tentacles sent out by the human species towards the higher plane of life. "They reveal to us the conditions of that mode of life into which the human race is evolving. Their experience is the peak experience of the race and a pointer of the direction in which it is developing." In the well-known scientific notion that life came out of water on to the land and that by being subjected to various new influences there it entered into a wider, fuller and intenser state of being, Sir Francis finds a scientific analogy for his contention that the few examples of mystics we came across in the world mark the new state into which humanity is to develop in the future. We have our own doubts regarding the validity of applying this analogy drawn from physical evolution to the higher development of personality. It is doubtful whether mankind as a whole is ever going to become a race of mystics. The history of man, so far as we know it, gives very little evidence in support of this. On the other hand as the struggle of life becomes keener and man's attention becomes increasingly focussed on the details of material existence he seems to be losing that peculiar outlook on life and that delicate sensitivity of being which the development of the mystical faculty pre-supposes. This is the cause of what is so often described as the materialism of to-day, and unless it is remedied there is very little chance of increasing the output of true mystics in human society.

The Cultivation of the Mystical Attitude

Sir Francis has some constructive suggestions in regard to the cultivation of the attitude favourable for the development of the mystical faculty. If mysticism is so valuable to life, the universities should try to train men in mystical life, as they are training them in sciences, literature, technology, etc. He points out that the modern methods of communication like the steamship, the rail roads and the radio may be used by men to gain the advantage of the best company, that is, of those joyous children of the Spirit whose company gladdens all who are privileged to share it. More than that he believes that the time has come when a psychologist who can bring his mind without prejudices to this crucially important subject is distressingly needed to steer the groping humanity through the uncharted realm of the Spirit. We for our part doubt very much whether a psychologist can ever fulfil this function that saints have hitherto fulfilled, unless of course the psychologist of to-morrow changes into something quite different from what he is to-day and tries to approximate himself to the ideal of saintliness.

The Mystics of the Future

The conception of Sir Francis as to what the mystic of the future will be is as interesting as the rest of his reflections on mysticism. The mystic of the future will not only cultivate the sense of community with the whole by introspective

methods but will also enrich his experiences by an appreciation of the world now revealed by science—of the astronomical immensities of the world, of marvellous variety of life and of the worlds within worlds in which his own life is cast. Realising the deep significance of the everyday things of life, he will take common objects as the subjects of his meditation—the grandeur of the thunderstorm, the magnificence of monsoon clouds, the beauty in form and colour of some tree or flower, the sweetness of a robin's song, the dignity of a stag, the keenness of a hawk, the intuition and spontaneity of a child, the light in a lover's eyes, the art of Shakespeare, the greatness of Napoleon, the compassion of Catherine Booth, the gay saintliness of St. Francis or any of the high qualities typified in living examples of the day. He will not seclude himself from life but live in its very midst. Not in jungles and monasteries but in the very midst of society he will live, recognising the Divinity in men and women and being stimulated by that Divinity to higher spiritual achievements. Though in earlier years his attention will be concentrated more on perfecting himself, in more mature years he will set more on helping his fellows, his country and mankind. He will combine reason with feeling, and will therefore take a different view of passions from the mystics of the past. "They (the passions) need not degrade: purified and refined they will only elevate.

So not suppression but control of the passions will be his aim. Not mortification but sublimation, not celibacy but marriage—marriage with one who is capable of eliciting from him the divinest potentialities in his passions and of making them heroic."

Mysticism and Sex Life

Here we must pause to consider an important issue raised in the last sentence. Much of this characterisation of the future mystics may be true, although we, for our part, believe that mystics at all times will tend more to adopt Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna—the highest manifestations of the Divinity on earth—as their objects of meditation than lesser manifestations of nature's glories like the thunderstorm, the spring, the dignified stag or the keen hawk. But whether celibacy is essential for the highest mystical development or not is a more important question and we must bestow some thought on it here. According to Sir Francis "married love is the most natural way, and may prove the best way of reaching perfection. By the long-continued loving of one another in the spirit of the universe, the man may evoke from the woman, and the woman from the man, the highest capacities of each." He further agrees with Douglas White in maintaining that "the corporeal intimacy should be the sensible manifestation of the spiritual relation, body, mind and spirit fitting into each other with a glow of satisfaction," and that "the

spiritual irradiates the physiological function, and that the physiological intensifies the spiritual." In support of his contention he quotes the examples of several saints treated by him in the book, who were married men and women.

We differ from this position entirely. Not that we look upon married love or sex life as something evil, but we maintain that the highest reaches of mystical life can be attained only through perfect continence. Sex energy, as modern psycho-analysis has shown, is the basic energy of life and it is only by the perfect refinement and diversion of it into the higher centres of our being that we can develop the highest powers of personality. Besides, just as married love fails to reach its highest possibilities if its direction is diverted from a single object to others beside it, so also the love of the Supreme if it should reach its highest perfection, must culminate in an entire resignation of the body, mind and soul unto Him, without the reservation of any part of it by way of allegiance and loyalty to a second love beside Him. In the case of the perfected mystic it is no doubt possible to recognise the love of the Divine even in the smaller loves of the world, but until the highest state is reached, the aspirant will only delude himself if he experiments at a higher law for which he is not competent. We do not therefore deny the existence of the mystics of the highest order even outside the ranks of lifelong celibates, but

what we do say is that they are exceptions to the general rule. We for our part are disposed to classify the generality of mystics leading the ordinary sex life as mystics of a lower order for the reasons we have given above. The classification of mystics into higher and lower orders is sanctioned by Sir Francis himself when he says in another context: "And the Creative Spirit is evidently manifested in a higher degree in some of its creatures than in others—in men than in snails, in the mystic than in the murderer, in some mystics more than in others, and in the highest mystic more at some times than at others."

Monasticism is a frank recognition of this fundamental law of spiritual life that the highest perfection demands a whole-hearted

and entire self-surrender. In all its genuine manifestations, it is far from being a condemnation of married love; for true monasticism flourishes only in a social soil that has the highest ideal of married love. We do not therefore see any antagonism between these two ideals, as some are disposed to see. The monastic ideal only stands for the accommodation of those daring individuals who do not want that any other form of love should interfere with the love of the Highest. Hence we feel that as long as the spiritual ideal burns bright in the heart of humanity, monasticism will be a living institution in this world in spite of all its pitfalls, and in the rank of its votaries—the monks—will be found the most spiritually ambitious even among the mystics of the future.

IN THE COMPANY OF A MAHATMA

[As in the previous instalments of this series of the reminiscences, the reader will find herein also many useful instructions and inspiring exhortations.]

TURIYANANDAJI'S way of encouraging the enquirer was often different from that of others. He told some one thus: "By remaining a bachelor you are really very fortunate. You are, as it were, sitting on an elevated height and stretching your hands high up into the sky." Another was hesitating whether he should marry or not. The Swami told him, "To whom are you going to sell and enslave yourself? Why should you become a slave or servant of anybody else save and except God?"

Swami Turiyanandaji enjoyed sound health in boyhood and youth.

One could infer and understand it by seeing him even in old age. But he felt quite unwell in the last part of his life. On being asked why it happened so, he said firmly, erecting the forefinger of his right hand: "During my stay in America I had to live like this—very austere. So the body broke down."

Once at Benares he was requested to say something about Sri Ramakrishna on the occasion of the Master's anniversary in 1920. Swami Turiyananda thereupon said: "I also asked Swamiji once to do so. He said: 'What shall I tell of Him. He was

Love personified.' Sri Ramakrishna used to speak of himself jokingly that he was the destroyer of Karmas and that he was like a French possession. By that He meant that by eliminating the evil impressions of the aspirants and at the same time awakening the good ones that were dormant, he could put them on the way to liberation. If a British subject after commission of any crime takes refuge in a French possession, the British Police cannot arrest him. He is safe and secure there. So the sins and sorrows of those who surrender themselves at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna will be soon removed and redressed."

Speaking about how an unmarried man can lead the life of a good house-holder, he said — "See, — Babu is leading a very good life even though he is not married. With a number of students he has started a family, and sharing their joys and sorrows he is spending his life happily."

Ill-health almost upsets a spiritual aspirant. About this point his advice deserves special attention. He wrote to different persons as follows:

(1) Unwelcome news of your indifferent health pains me very much. Go on with your meditation with assiduity. Through the grace of the Divine Mother all impediments may be got over. But you must stick to your meditations unremittingly. Whether body is ill or well, never postpone your spiritual practices. After some time you will find to your surprise that even all insurmountable obstacles have disappeared. Do meditation for a certain period tenaciously—then both body and mind will be all right. When the mind is purified, body also becomes immune from diseases. It is meditation alone that can purge the

mind as well as the body of all impurities. Devotion devoid of desires is the best form of worship; you will have to pour your heart's love, affection and devotion on Him; then alone mind can be withdrawn from all outer things. In that state of mind thoughts of body will not be able to move you. Mind will be imbued with the thoughts of the Divine Mother. That is the real way to blessedness.

(2) He wrote to another: I had often heard Sri Ramakrishna saying this—'Let the body be occupied with its sufferings, but, O mind, you remain in bliss.' This dictum was literally illustrated in his life. Peace of mind should on no account be disturbed by bodily ailments. The body must pay the penalties of actions. The mind should be as calm and firm as an adamant so that it cannot be dragged down to lower level by the body. Let the body reap the fruits of its actions, for they cannot be escaped under any circumstances; but the mind should not forget God in the midst of these troubles.

(3) My physician friends are advising me to eat opium by which I may be a bit benefited or relieved. But my whole soul revolts at the idea of being a slave to opium. The body will not last for ever—why should I then yield to a bad habit?

(4) Sound health is obtained by great virtue. This is what the scriptures say:

रोगशोकपरीतापवन्धनव्यसनानि च ।

आत्मापराधवृक्षाणां फलान्येतानि देहिनाम् ॥

'Illness, grief, lamentation, bondage and sorrows are the fruits of the tree of misdeeds committed by ourself.' But one may get rid of them to a great extent if one can neglect the cares of the body by surrendering whole-heartedly at the feet of the Lord and following the

maxim: 'Let the body take care of itself but the mind should be absorbed in Him.'

There is no gain in discontented grumblings and murmurings. By that none can evade the inevitable sufferings but on the other hand it does a lot of positive harm by way of making us oblivious of the ultimate ideal of our life. It is the existence of desire for sense gratifications that makes us unhappy during illness and ill-health. For spiritual practices, health of mind is more needed than that of the body, as it is the mind that works more in meditations than the body. Performance of holy actions keeps the mind well and active. We should therefore pay special attention to the fact that we do only those holy actions that may free us from the earth instead of fettering us to it. Slowly but surely the body is marching towards the grave. Nobody can stop it. But the mind exists for all time. That is, many bodies will come and go but our mind will continue for ever till full wisdom is attained. For, until perfection one must undergo repeated incarnations. So the most essential duty we have to attend to is purifying the mind.

Swami Turiyananda was one day explaining to us why the Rishis were called 'Tapodhana'. In this world some regard learning as wealth; some, prestige and pedigree; some, possessions; and some, beauty as the most important thing in life. So to a Sadhu, Tapasya or spiritual practices and penances constitute real wealth or 'Dhana'.

The menials ordinarily shirk or neglect their work. In this connection the Swami spoke of Balaram Bose, the devoted lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He said, "Once we put up for many days in the house of this said devotee.

When I expressed to him my dissatisfaction with the conduct of his menials who were not at all attending to their duties but were stealing things from the house, Balaram Babu said—'Where shall I get saintly servants?'

Swami Turiyananda used to lay stress much on the word 'Dhira' mentioned frequently in the Upanishads. He used to say, "It is said by Narada in his aphorisms on devotion that wisdom is attained also by the grace of God or even by that of the liberated souls. The highest ideal of our civilisation and culture is the vision of the Eternal One in all." The Swami then quoted from the Gita the thirty-second Sloka of the sixth chapter:

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

'He who judges of pleasure and pain everywhere, by the same standard as he applies to himself, that Yogi, O Arjuna, is regarded as the highest.'

The Swami often used to narrate instructive stories. One of these runs thus: "One Sadhu was doing his evening meditation on the Ganges. He saw a scorpion being carried away by the current. The Sadhu saved its life by pulling it ashore, but the ungrateful creature stung him when it reached the shore. When the scorpion was again being carried away by the current, the Sadhu did as before but the scorpion stung him then also. The same occurrence happened a third time also. Calmly enduring the pain, the monk went on with his meditation. Witnessing all that, I asked him why he was saving the scorpion and thereby putting himself to suffering. In reply the monk said: 'It is doing its own Dharma (duty born of one's nature)

and I am doing mine. We are only following our respective natures that are irresistible. Its nature is to do injury even to benefactors but mine is to do good even to my enemies.'"

During his sojourn in Lucknow the Swami went out one early morning to answer the calls of nature. He said, "I sat on a piece of stone when all on a sudden I saw to my astonishment a big tiger sitting on a higher level and looking around. Its look and gestures were so heroic that it appeared as if it cared the least for the whole world." On being interrupted by the question of the hearer whether he was terrified or not the Swami added, "No, I was not afraid of it but was charmed by its majestic might and spirited posture. My attention was rivetted on these features. As soon as its eyes fell on mine, it left the place without delay."

Swami Turiyananda told us that he had met many Sadhus during his performance of spiritual austerities in the Himalayas. Out of them he

made special mention of only three. These were Ramasram, Kevalasram, and Vijnanananda. The last mentioned one was a master of the six systems of Hindu Philosophy and used to wander alone like a rhinoceros with a piece of loin-cloth as his only possession. He knew by heart Sankara's famous commentaries on the Gita, the Brahmasutras and the Upanishads. They were so fresh in his memory that he never consulted the scriptures for any reference. He could speak in Sanskrit very fluently hours together. During the travels itinerant monks used to assemble round him and discuss many metaphysical problems with him in right earnest. His answers would throw a flood of light on many a knotty question in philosophy. He was the preceptor of the Raja of Tehri but never started any Ashrama in spite of the persistent requests of his royal disciple. It is doubtful if any scholar like him lived then in India.

IS OUR LIFE A DREAM?

By C. Mahadeviah

[Mr. C. Mahadeviah pursues in these paragraphs a line of enquiry which is peculiar to Vedanta. The world is a dream—is a statement that is often made by students of Vedanta, but it is seldom that people have any clear idea as to the exact significance of this statement. Mr. Mahadeviah's exposition will be much helpful in forming some clear ideas on this point.]

POETS and philosophers, mystics and metaphysicians have, with one voice, declared that this life is a mere dream; and people who pride themselves in their sound common-sense have always treated the statement with contemptuous indifference. Even some poets like Longfellow have said:

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream."

So, it seems worthwhile to go a bit deeply into this question and find out exactly how much of truth it contains or whether it is at all true in any sense.

The first step is to note the similarities as well as the differences between waking and dream. It is not possible to say that there is absolutely no difference between the two, for, in that case, they would become identical and the two words 'waking' and 'dream' would become unnecessary to denote them. But the similarities between the two are so numerous that it is better to exhaust them before going into the difference between them. In dream we have a complete universe as we have in waking. We have our sun and moon, stars and planets, land and sea, mountains and rivers, forests and meadows, beasts and birds, towns and villages, trains and cars. We have human denizens inhabiting our world. We have our wives and children, our kith and kin, our friends and foes, our joys and sorrows. We weep and laugh. *We sleep and dream*, just as we do in waking. We have memory of a long past and expectation of a distant future. If it is said that some things in dream are incongruous like a man seeing his own back and so forth, the reply is that they are not incongruities so far as the dream universe is concerned, that they appear to be so when contrasted with the standards of waking and that those of waking would appear as much incongruous when contrasted with the standards of dream.

Though there are so many similarities between waking and dream, the difference between them is not far to seek. Generally it is said that dream is stultified whereas waking is not. Though there is some truth in this statement, it is not correctly expressed. The first point to remember is that what we now call dream was as real as waking, was, in fact, waking while it lasted. Now that it is past and

has become stultified, we call it a dream. Even as the state before us is waking, dream was also waking while it was before us. Hence, it is more correct to define waking as a present state and dream as a past state. It may be said that yesterday's waking is a past state, but it is not a dream. But what is called yesterday's waking is no state at all but only a memory which persists in the present waking. It belongs to what is called to-day's waking as memory of past events. Moreover, I know that I am living in the same universe as I did yesterday whereas the dream universe is distinct from the waking universe, since it cannot be located anywhere in the latter. Besides, we have to remember that dream has also its yesterday and yesterday's waking state. So, instead of saying that we pass from dream to waking it would be more correct to say that we pass from one waking to another and declare the previous waking to be dream. Beyond this difference of present and past, waking and dream cannot be shown to differ on any point.

Now, it is clear that it is meaningless to say that waking is a state which is not stultified. Waking is always a present state and it is not possible for a state to be both present and be stultified at the same time. The moment it is stultified it is past and so long as it is present it cannot be stultified. So, the argument that the present state is waking because it is not stultified, cannot hold good. If it does, it applies with equal force to dream, for we could assert, while dream lasted, that it was waking because it was not stultified.

What is it that is meant when life is called a mere dream? Evidently, it is meant that our life is unreal like dream. Longfellow, quoted above, further says "Life is

real, life is earnest." Now why do we say that dream is unreal? It is because the world observed in a dream vanishes into nothing. It cannot be imagined to exist anywhere. It cannot be located anywhere in the waking world. It has simply dwindled into nothing. In other words, we call dream unreal because it is stultified. If so, then it is clear that waking cannot be unreal in the same sense. For we have already shown that waking being always a present state, it is not possible to speak of its stultification.

Let us go a little deeper into the question. Sleep overcomes us. Soon we feel we are awake. We have a world before us. We are subjected to great suffering. Perhaps, we lose our dear ones. We weep bitterly. We beat our breast. We tear our hair. But soon we awake. We come to know it was all a dream. Then our tears give place to irrepressible laughter. We laugh at the whole show, in fact, we enjoy it. We relate it to our friends and enjoy it still more. Now, who is it that wept in dream and laughs when awake? The two cannot be identical, for if I wept because I lost, then I must laugh because I gain. But here I have not gained anything. I have simply come to know that it was all a dream and I laugh; what is more, I enjoy my previous weeping. Surely the one that laughs now cannot be the same that wept a moment ago. But can I say that it was not I who dreamt but someone else? Certainly not. How then is this dilemma to be solved?

Let us think of an actor on the stage. Suppose he is acting the part of a king. In the story he loses his wife and he weeps bitterly. Suppose at the moment he forgets that he is so-and-so and imagines that he is that king in the story.

Then he really weeps and is unhappy. But the moment he goes to the green-room he remembers who he really is and begins to enjoy his weeping on the stage. He feels elated that he acted so well. Our waking from a dream is like going to the green-room from the stage. We remember that our real nature is that of the witness of the dream state. For though the dream has vanished along with the ego who suffered and wept, we survive. We now realise that we, the witness, forgot our real nature while we dreamt and wrongly identified ourselves with the dream ego. Hence our enjoyment of the whole show.

Now think of an actor who, even while on the stage, does not forget that he is really so-and-so, and that he is only acting the part of a king. He still weeps—as he has to do it—but he enjoys it even while he weeps. It is not necessary for him that the scene should end if he has to enjoy his acting. Even so the wise man does not forget his real nature as witness even while he is awake, that is when the state is present; whereas the ordinary man, like the other actor, is ignorant of his real nature as witness while the state is present but comes to know of it only when the state is past. But the wise man knows that even while he is awake, he is really witnessing the ego which suffers and enjoys, weeps and laughs, as he did when he was awake in dream.*

Now, let us place ourselves in the position of the witness which we really are, and view the dream and waking states. The dream state has vanished into nothing. But the witness is still there. It is now wit-

* स्वप्नान्तं जागरितान्तश्चोभौ येनानुपश्यति ।

महान्तं विभुमात्मानं सत्त्वाधीनेन शोचति ॥

कट० 2, 1, 4.

nessing the waking state even as it was witnessing the dream state while the dream lasted. If we consider the matter well, we shall find that it is not possible to say that the witness did not exist at any time, for to note its non-existence at the time another witness would be required and soon *ad-infinitum*. If we call that real whose non-existence cannot even be imagined, then the witness is supremely real. And compared with the witness the dream state as well as the waking state cannot be real. For we know that the dream world cannot be located

anywhere in the waking world and even so the waking world cannot be located anywhere in the dream world. They are mutually exclusive. One does not and cannot exist while the other is present. So we can speak, nay, we know, of a time when either of them did not exist. So they cannot be so real as the witness whose non-existence cannot even be imagined. Anything less than real must be unreal. We cannot speak of a thing as half real or three-fourths real. In this sense, *compared with the witness*, waking is as unreal as dream.

THE HIMALAYAS AND THE HINDU CULTURE

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

[The Ganges and the Himalayas have, of all the physical features of India, gone deepest into the cultural and spiritual consciousness of the Indian nation. Swami Jagadiswarananda's article gives us a very valuable review of the extent and value of the influence of the latter in various fields of life—in poetry, architecture and religion.]

THE mystery and majesty of the Himalayas have made the deepest impression upon the Hindu mind. The Hindus even in the farthest south of India regard the Himalayas with veneration as the Mohammedan thinks of Mecca and the Christian of Jerusalem. A cursory survey of Indian literature will make it clear that Hindu poetry and mythology point to the Himalayas as the centre of the world and as the throne of the Great God. The following paragraphs attempt to show how the Himalayas have influenced and inspired Hindu art, architecture, religion and sculpture, that is, Hindu culture as a whole.

The Vedas, the sacred Scriptures of the Hindus, have been rightly called by Prof. D. S. Sharma as the Himalayan treatises, for the Himalayas are the

birth-place of these most ancient literature of the human race. Swami Vivekananda was of opinion that Uttarakhand is the place where the Vedic Rishis and Upanishadic seers lived and moved. Once the Swami was asked in the West how the Hindus made such abstruse metaphysical speculations in the tropical climate of India. The Swami promptly replied that they were produced on the Himalayan heights of about 15,000 feet above sea level. Havel observes that the early Aryans—the authors and compilers of Vedic hymns, had their home in the Himalayan regions and that looking at the heavenly scenery around their Himalayan home, they, with their ideals of simple living and high thinking, had no special need of temples and images other than those which the

Divine Craftsman, Visvakarman, who built earth and heaven, had placed before their eyes.

When the ancient Hindus spread further and further away from the Himalayas, they always carried with them the deep impression which their early environment had made upon their minds and perpetuated them in their literature as well as in the images and symbols used in their religious rituals and art. It is the life's dream of the virtuous Hindu to go on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas, wending his way from shrine to shrine amidst the perpetual snow ranges. The ultimate goal of Hindu monks is not only to climb the perilous steepes and the rugged precipices to Kedarnath and Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri, Amarnath and Pashupatinath, Kailas and Manasarovar, but also to lay down their lives in penances in one of these sanctuaries in the heart of the Himalayas.

The closing scene of the Mahabharata gives the earliest literary record of the great Himalayan pilgrimage. The epic tells how the Pandava brothers, tired of life's struggles, retired from the world and set out to climb to the divine city of the immortal gods. The virtue of that holy mountain, Kailas, declares the Epic "was said to be so great that Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, flew in his magic car to Kailas and began to burrow a hole beneath the rock in order that he might transport it bodily to his strong-hold and use the divine power against his adversary. Parvati felt the mountain quake and clutched Siva's arm to rouse him from meditation. But the Great God who was not to be coerced by the magic of the ten-armed demon pressed down his foot and imprisoned Ravana in his self-made dungeon where

he remained a thousand years until by penitence he gained release."

The wonderful Manasarovar, Lake of Mind, lies at the altitude of about 16,000 feet near the centre of the Himalayan Heaven. Its deep blue waters, they say, mirror the Creator's mind. It is, also, according to Indian ideas, the fountain-head of the whole river-system of Aryavarta, for the Indus, the Brahmaputra and the Ganges have their sources not far from its shores. This fact sufficiently accounts in a sense for the veneration with which it is regarded by the Hindus. The Vishnu Purana says that the creator Brahma has his throne like the "seed vessel of a lotus" near Mount Kailas. The Vayu Purana uses in describing the Himalayas the floral symbol of the long white trumpet-shaped *Datura alba* sacred to Shiva. The Hindu traditions run that this pyramidal snow peak is the sanctum sanctorum of the Divine Yogi, Siva, and his consort Parvati, Himalaya's fair daughter. Even the atheistic minds, not to speak of the idealistic ones, are impressed with the idea of a spiritual presence in the solitude of the eternal snows. When the snow-clad peaks are flooded with the rays of the rising or setting sun, they bring home to mind the feelings that they are none but Mahadeva wrapt in eternal meditation. When the moonlight floods the icy peaks at night they look like silver hills. The same idea is expressed in the Dhyana of Siva thus: ध्यायेन्नित्यं महेशं रजतगिरिनिभं चारुचन्द्रावतं रत्नाकरोज्ज्वलाङ्गम । etc. Immensity and vastness, grandeur and wonder, of the titanic Himalayan masses inspire awe and eliminates egoism at least for a time being. Nature has built there a heavenly cathedral in which are enshrined the Devas' thrones; hence man cannot but be reminded at

is also undeniable. The motif of this floral symbol is reflected in the lofty temple spires known as Sikhara which suggests the massive and majestic peaks of the Himalayas. One western authority on Indian art observes that the famous relic casket of Kanishka, the Buddhist Emperor, is associated with this lotus symbolism. The same idea is embodied in Nepalese, Tibetan and other schools of Buddhist art. Universal pillars represented by the colossal statues of Buddha, Vishnu, Siva and Brahma also express the same symbolism. According to Havel the dancing images of Nataraja, Krishna and Kali convey to some extent at least the impression of Siva's mystic Himalayan shrine. The Ganges is so sacred to the Hindus because it has flown from the Kailas. That is why the devout Hindus not only in South India but also in distant Ceylon, Burma and other Hindu colonies have named the holy rivers of their respective provinces

after the Ganges, perhaps to be often reminded of the Himalayan peak where the Great God dwells. The holy places in the countries mentioned above bear appellations of the Himalayan Thirthas for the same purpose.

Thus we see the Himalayas have been the primal source of life and inspiration to all the higher aspects of Hindu culture such as art and literature, religion and philosophy. And it is for this reason that Indians, particularly Hindus and Buddhists, from a remote antiquity down to the present day, have held the Himalayas in high esteem. The magnetic Himalayan influence has indelibly stamped itself on every branch of Hindu culture. So it is neither exaggeration to say nor superstition to believe that Vedic thought was born and brought up in the lap of the Himalayas. Those who have seen with their own eyes the perpetual snow ranges will readily realise the truth of these statements.

SONGS FROM RAIDASA

(Translated from Original Hindi)

By R. C. Tandan, M.A., LL.B.

[Raidasa was a man of humble birth. He belonged to the so-called untouchable caste, but his wisdom and devotion enabled him to overcome the obstacles of a hostile social environment. These songs of his amply testify to his greatness.]

I

Tremulous is my understanding, O Narahari: how shall I offer devotion to Thee?

Mutual love is possible, when Thou seest me and I see Thee. Thou seest me, yet I see Thee not: this way I lose all perception.

Thou dwellest in all hearts eternally: I have not learnt to see Thee. Thine is all virtue, all vice mine: I have not owned the favours bestowed upon me.

I and Thou, Thine and mine—these result from want of understanding: how shall I find redemption?

Raidasa says: O compassionate Lord, hail to Thee, O Supporter of the world?

II

Such is Devotion, listen, O brother. When Devotion is attained, one is purged of all pride.

What avails the dancing and the singing? What avails the performance of penances?

What avails the washing of the feet—if the Essence is not recognised?

What avails the shaving of the head, what the performance of pilgrimage and fasting?

Master and slave, devotee and servant—these relationships avail not, if the Great Essence is not recognised.

Says Raidasa: Devotion to Thee is a distant object—he who finds it is greatly fortunate.

Abandon thy pride, and efface the self, for thou art like an ant, and eateth the pickings.

THE FIVE BHUTAS—WHAT ARE THEY?

By Kshitish C. Chaudhuri, M. A., F. C. S.

[The first part of Mr. Chaudhuri's article was published in the August issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The article is a translation of a writing of Acharya Ramendra Sundar Trivadi, a talented Bengali writer and scientist. The conclusion arrived at in the article is that the notion of Bhutas entertained by ancient Hindu philosophers is the result of a qualitative analysis and is therefore to be taken as a purely conceptional and ideal creation. The elements of the scientist are actual objects known through perception. The elements of the scientists and Bhutas of Hindu philosophers cannot be mutually identified because they have no points of similarity and are the results of different methods of enquiry.]

NOW let us turn to the real topic, namely—the five 'Bhutas.' I shall take the Samkhya philosophy first. In the language of Samkhya the Bhutas (or Mahabhutas according to some) are five,—namely, Kshiti, Jala, Tejas, Vayu and Akasha. Now, what is 'Akasha'? It is certainly not the 'ether' of physical science; because modern science does not recognise any correlation between ether and sound. Some console themselves with the thought that even though the scientists may not recognise the correlation to-day, still there will come a time

when they must do so,—and then the scientists will perceive the truth of the utterances made by the Rishis. I cannot console myself that way. I say that the Rishis are right, but that Akasha does not mean 'ether.' 'Akasha' is that of which the 'Tanmatra' (तन्मात्र) of 'sound' is the characteristic. If we must hypothesise a physical object, let us conceive of one which merely produces sound but which has no form, taste, smell or touch. Let us call it Akasha. It is doubtful whether such a material object exists or will ever be discovered. But whatever that may

be, according to Samkhya the definition of Akasha is this: "That which possesses the characteristic of sound but possesses no other qualities is Akasha." It is merely a technical term—a concept born of the perception of sound.

Next, let us take 'Marut' or 'Vayu.' According to Samkhya, Vayu is that imaginary substance which has the qualities of sound and touch but no other quality. According to science Vayu or air is something else. It is the atmosphere which envelopes the earth, and wherein we breathe. It has the power of transmitting sound, it is perceptible to touch but it has also smell. This last attribute precludes it from being regarded as the 'Vayu' of Samkhya. If you say that the smell in air is not its own, but is borrowed from other objects, the scientist will at once retort by saying that on analysis air is found to contain not only oxygen, nitrogen, etc., whose smell is not so perceptible but also a slight trace of ammonia with very strong smell. Smell is thus inherent in air which cannot consequently be identified with the 'Vayu' of Samkhya. The confusion becomes worse if 'Vayu' be taken to denote any gaseous substance. I say that the Vayu of Samkhya is a mere 'concept'—it is that imaginary substance which has the power of transmitting sound and of producing the sensation of touch. The philosopher has absolute freedom to form his concepts and to coin his own words to express them.

Now we come to the third Mahabhuta 'Tejas.' According to Samkhya it has three qualities, namely, sound, touch and form. 'Tejas' is simply the combination of these three qualities. It is neither fire, nor any other heat-radiating substance;—it is neither electron, nor electricity, nor magnetism. It is

a mere concept,—an imaginary substance.

Similarly, the fourth Mahabhuta according to Samkhya is that imaginary substance which has the attributes of sound, touch, form, and taste. The technical name for the combination of these four Tanmatras is Ap or Jala, which is neither our drinking water nor every kind of liquid.

The fifth Mahabhuta Kshiti is the combination of all the five Tanmatras. It is neither earth nor every kind of solid.

Now we have seen that the five Bhutas are not material objects. They are mere concepts not percepts. They are the products of the imagination, and have no objective reality. Both the scientists and the philosophers have to deal with such concepts; because without their help it is possible neither to describe nor to explain the material world. One may think that the Physicist, who studies only the objective world, has nothing to do with these mental concepts. But it is not so; he cannot move a step without these 'concepts.' He is always talking of the 'perfect solid,' 'perfect fluid,' 'frictionless surface,' 'perfectly rigid,' 'in-extensible string,' etc.—i.e., of things which are conspicuous by their absence in the material world. Engineering is based on the Science of Statics,—and there is no more practical subject than Engineering. A slight mistake in planning a railway bridge will lead the train into the river with the passengers. One may, therefore, be led to believe that the engineer must deal only with facts and with no concepts or hypotheses. But all the terms I have quoted just now are taken from Statics. In a text-book on Statics I saw an example like this: "Suppose that a weightless elephant is sliding down a perfectly

smooth hill surface, etc." The 'weightless elephant', and 'perfectly smooth hill surface' are not to be seen in God's creation;—they exist only in the mental creation of a Viswamitra of a scientist.

Similarly, the five Bhutas of Samkhya philosophy are not to be found in God's creation—they first came into being in the mental world of Kapila or some other sage. The sage said, 'Let there be —', and they at once came into being. The sage looked at them, and found them good. They were 'good', because he succeeded in constructing the objective world with their aid. The material world is simply the combination of form, taste, smell, touch, and sound. There is nothing else in it than these five Tanmatras. Even if there be something else, that 'something' cannot be the object of our knowledge. What cannot be the object of knowledge is as good as non-existent. The imaginary substances called Bhutas are simply the combinations of the Tanmatras, in different numbers. Thus we can construct all material objects with the help of the five Bhutas in different numbers and proportions. There can be no dispute about it.

Take for instance earth, on which grass grows. It has form, taste, smell, touch, and sound;—it certainly contains Kshiti as well as the other Bhutas. Take another example—say, a piece of diamond or ruby. It has got a bright appearance (form), and it is hard to touch; but one cannot find any taste or smell in it. Therefore, according to Samkhya it may be said to be made mainly of 'Tejas.' If you discover any taste or smell in it, you can assume that Kshiti is also one of its constituents. Take yet another example, say, chlorine gas. It certainly contains Vayu, but from its strong smell and yellowish

colour we must admit that it contains 'Kshiti' and 'Tejas' as well;—we must, of course, remember that 'Kshiti' here does not mean earth or any other solid substance, and 'Tejas' does not mean fire.

Now it must be sufficiently clear how one can take all the objects of the physical world to be made of the five 'Bhutas.' This view is the outcome of philosophical analysis, not of scientific. The defect of this analysis is that it is merely qualitative and not at all quantitative. * * *

In Vedanta, 'Bhuta' has a slightly different meaning. The Vedantist tries to be a little more subtle. The starting point is the same in both the systems. Both the schools agree that the material world is derived from the five Tanmatras; but they differ with regard to the nature of the Bhutas. Vedanta speaks of two kinds of Bhutas, namely gross and pure. Both these kinds are imaginary. According to Vedanta pure 'Akasha' is that imaginary thing which possesses only the quality of sound and no other qualities. 'Marut' is that imaginary thing which possesses the quality of touch and no other qualities. And so on. It is needless to say that there is no real object in this world which possesses only one quality. All the pure Bhutas are mere abstractions. They only correspond to the five 'Tanmatras'. If we combine the five pure Bhutas in different proportions, the result obtained is a gross (द्रव्य) 'Bhuta'. In the technical language of Vedanta, each gross Bhuta is made up of four parts of that Bhuta (pure) and one part each of the other four Bhutas (pure). * * * Pure 'Kshiti' has only the quality of smell. In gross 'Kshiti' the quality of smell will be predominant but the other qualities also will be present in a small measure. Gross 'Jala' will have

the quality of taste as the predominant characteristic—with other qualities in a subdued state. And so on. In other words, we obtain the five gross Bhutas by combining the five pure Bhutas in different proportions. This process is technically known as 'Panchikarana'.

It should not be lost sight of that even the five gross Bhutas are mere concepts; because in the physical world we do not meet with any object in which the five qualities can be found in the exact proportions of 4:1:1:1:1. Since it is impossible to make any quantitative analysis of the five Tanmatras, who can assert that a quart of milk contains so much of form, so much of taste, so much of smell, so much of touch, and so much of sound? But roughly one can say with regard to each material object that though it contains all the five qualities, some one quality predominates over others. The position, therefore, is this that all material objects are made of the five gross Bhutas mixed in different proportions. Each gross Bhuta in its turn is made of five pure Bhutas.

The methods followed by Samkhya and Vedanta in analysing the world are essentially the same. One must remember that this method is fundamentally different from the method followed by science. It is neither desirable nor possible to reconcile the two methods.

The 'element' of the scientist and the 'Bhuta' of the philosopher have no point of similarity. Therefore one need not feel sorry, grieved or surprised that whereas the modern savants have discovered as many as 80 elements and are discovering more, the ancient philosophers could not conceive of more than five Bhutas only.

One may ask—'What is the use after all of the philosopher's abstractions?' The truths discovered by the scientist are easily intelligible and of practical utility. The wonderful mansion of chemistry built up by Lavoisier and his successors fills one with awe and respect. Its solid foundation inspires a sense of security. How many useful things man is making with the help of chemistry! He is making sweets for the glutton, wine for the drunkard;—and what wonderful colours he is extracting out of black coal tar! He is easily finding out the elements in the sun and the distant stars. But what is the utility of the philosopher's abstractions? What will he do by ploughing the sands? Whom will he invite to dwell in the castles built by him in the air?

I would not attempt to answer these questions now. If I have been able to elucidate the meaning of the word 'Bhuta,' that will be enough satisfaction for me.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN HINDUISM

By Swami Siddheswarananda

[The following is a review of an important publication—"Eastern Lights" by Prof. Mahendra Nath Sircar, M. A., PH. D.; published by Arya Publishing House, 63, College Street, Calcutta; pages 365; price Rs. 4 or 8 shillings only. Prof. Sircar's reputation as a leading thinker and interpreter of Indian thought has been well established by his several books on Indian Philosophy and Mysticism. His present book is however of special importance due to its international significance. We hope Swami Siddheswarananda's able summary of it will make our readers interested in this excellent book.]

I

THOUGHTS of thinkers and lives of saints sustain the civilisation of Aryavartta from a historic past. In shaping the face of humanity her continuity in history is an artistic necessity. The shock of conquest and shame of subjection unsettled the even tenor of her life. A catholic understanding required the adjustment of the new forces of culture. The full stature of human greatness stood, once more in India, revealed. The world learnt what really to seek in India, and appraise her true value in the economy of international life. In Shankara and Ramanuja and other Oriental philosopher-saints, critical Europe sought new light to guide its thought and influence its conclusions. Within the last century centres of Oriental learning formed part of European Universities and the place of Indian scholars was properly appraised and honoured. Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta lectured in European Universities. The present volume under review comes within the same group of interest created in modern Indian thought...We have great pleasure in finding Dr. Sircar ably continuing the tradition of his colleagues. The book comprises lectures delivered by the learned professor in Italy and other European Universities

on Indian Philosophy and Modern Hinduism. The great scholar and thinker Geovani Gentile invited Dr. Sircar to deliver the course of lectures. French and German Universities followed suit and as the result we have in these fine studies "planned to exhibit the fundamental ideal in Indian life and culture." We have reviewed Dr. Sircar's other books in these pages as classical products of an academic mind. In this new book entitled "Eastern Lights" Dr. Sircar plays a new role. He adopts a more popular vehicle of expression and interprets the soul of India to Modern Europe. As an ambassador of Indian culture, Dr. Sircar has meritoriously performed his mission. As one reads through the book one gets the impression of a masterly mind grappling with recondite problems, exegetical analyses and synthetic solutions. He often leaves the hinterland of Siddhantic disputations and breathes in the high grounds of experience. This gives his writings a particular setting with an appeal to the academic mind as well to the religious aspirant. Dr. Sircar deals with problems of philosophy from a living centre of interest—*life*. He efficiently criticises some of the conclusions of western philosophers and shows how the same topics have been solved with

deeper understanding by Indian thinkers. Henri Bergson comes in for a large share of criticism. The French savant "interprets the dynamic expression of Indian life as due to her contact with western civilisation. He believes that in India "mysticism in action" is liberated through the influence of Christianity, and Dr. Sircar replies, "Indian spirituality shows infinite phases of life in its richness and fullness, and in them all the chords of life have their full satisfaction. The over-emphasis has produced the erroneous idea that human mind is not alive to dynamic verities."

The book has three main divisions. The first section deals with the spiritual ideas of the Upanishads, Gita, Puranas and Tantras. The second section gives the philosophic ideas in the chapters on Reality, the Beautiful, and Values. The remaining lectures deal with an estimate of the cosmic Man, and the contribution to modern Hinduism by four towering personalities of the XIXth century — Rammohan, Dayananda, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The book is concluded with a fine thesis on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of life.

II

(a) The Upanishads search after Truth more through life than intellect. Self is Truth—self-conscious and self-luminous. Life has infinite urges reflecting Truth, may not be in completeness but conceived in Truth. Psychic forces remove the plasticity of matter. Mind is matter in subtle form. Truth has no dimensions. Psychic powers do never give redemption which only knowledge can. Self is Sat-Chit-Ananda, the ultimate concept in the Upanishads. Vaishnavas do not see beyond life's dynamism. Upanishads present both dynamic expression as well as static silence. Bergson fails to see the dignity

of silence. Expression is the principle of self-limitation of Iswara. Upanishads give both the religious and metaphysical approach to Reality—the "paths of indirect and direct attainment of Truth." Freedom implies complete self-transcendence beyond the "bounds of space and stream of time." "The bondage comes because of our tendency to seek a cause"—due to the urges of the "unenlightened intellect."

They read the life's rationale in creation and a creator. Such a God does not represent the Truth of the Upanishads. It is "a concession to human ignorance." Truth recognises no gradation of Reality. Maya synthesises the Supra-cosmic and the cosmic. "Cosmic is the concentration of transcendence." It is more seeming than real. Truth is creative from the cosmological, redemptive from theological, and is finally Supra-cosmic from epistemological standpoint.

The chapter on Upanishads is concluded by a reference to the Avasthas, the four states of consciousness—waking, dream, deep-sleep and Turiya. "A man returning from deep sleep does not return with the illusoriness of time, the man returning from the state (Turiya) does so return" (p. 21). All philosophers may not agree with Dr. Sircar in grouping Turiya as an Avastha. It is called an Avastha only by courtesy. The negation of the time-sense consciousness is a religious experience of the transcendental state of Samadhi. Philosophy is a critic of every experience, mystic or otherwise. As experience the absence of timeless state can be grouped as an Avastha by religion. But the report of the illusoriness of time which that state claims to bring must prove its credentials by explaining the world with which alone philosophy is concerned. Mystic

perience is a fact in the universe of experience. Philosophy claims to investigate the truth behind all experience. Truth is *Vastu Tantra*. Any single reference cannot issue a copy-right of truth.

(b) The Gita is the philosophy of the synthesis of thought. Its discipline is harmony. It is a book of philosophy and inspiration. It avoids extreme theories and blends them in harmony. In Gita we find three main conflicts properly approached and perfectly resolved: (1) The conflict between nature and man. All nature is spirit thrown out. "Matter is spirit with its radiance dimmed and elasticity restrained" (p. 24). (2) The second conflict is between nature and finite spirit. Nature is made the handmaid of spirit. "Man becomes superman if he can control, regulate and put to his use the natural forces that are working within him." (3) The third conflict is between the finite soul and the Divine. The problem is answered by "characterising the soul as belonging to the Para, the superior nature of the Divine" (p. 27). Finite souls are conscious, nature has no consciousness. The Gita affiliates the finite soul to the Divine.

The Gita conceives the Divine descent in two ways: original descent in creation and the timely descent for divine interference in cosmic adjustment (p. 31). Sense of agency binds man to the effects of Karma. Gita seeks to free souls from the mazes of desires. It explains the superman, the behaviour-pattern of the Jivan-Mukta. The Gita exhibits God as Power, Love and Consciousness. Dr. Sircar emphasises the power aspect of the Gita over the love aspect. The Bhagavata Purana reverses the scale and love reigns supreme as the mightiest expression of power. Dharma

deals with ethical values. Gita synthesises the doctrines of Karma, Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti. Through all the processes of Yoga "spirit offers to throw off the individualistic sense and in free offering there is spontaneous reception (p. 43). The discipline of Swadharma helps spiritual unfoldment. In that process there is dedication to and dynamic identification with the Divine.

(c) The Bhagavata Purana represents a fuller synthesis of knowledge, Yoga, devotion and action. Its place is next to the Upanishads and the Gita. It emphasises the concrete Divine (p. 54), the spiritual dynamism over spiritual calm (p. 56). The expression of power is far below spirit's expression as love (p. 58). The Bhagavata does not give a high place to aspirants who are anxious to "transcend history completely and pass into silence" (p. 61). Grace redeems and impresses the finest harmony by pouring in the sweetness of the Divine (p. 63). "The Bhagavata considers such spirituality as the highest divine expression and possibility" (p. 63).

(d) Tantras emphasise the fundamental tendency that Truth is more "to be realised in life." They accept the Upanishadic doctrine of correspondence between the psychic and cosmic forces (p. 69). The Tantras deal with the spiritual science "which finds out the path of realisation" (p. 69). Hence they are very practical. Their methods are essentially psychological and not logical or metaphysical. The Tantras are disciplines. Evolution begins when Shakti manifests. Will is the dynamism of the Sakala Siva or Jiva Shiva. Iswara of the Vedanta is different from Sakala Siva which is erroneously identified as the individual will. "Before one can realise Niskala Siva or Parama Siva one has to pass through the finer stages of revelation that take place

when the cosmic dynamism becomes active in us (p. 74). Shakti has three channels of manifestation as creative, preservative and withdrawal forces. They are called Brahmi, Lakshmi and Sivani aspects of the Mother Force. Evolution is a descent, a downward movement. There is no qualitative difference in the evolutes (p. 79). Matter is energy checked in its creative flow. The Pasu Bhava Sadhakas take Vedic, Vaishnava and Shaiva Bhavas; the Viras adopt Dakshina and Vama disciplines; and the Divyas are adherents of the Sidhanta of Kaul (pp. 88-89). The Tantras offer unique disciplines through these Bhavas and Acharas to wake up the finer dynamism of spirit. Satisfaction of desires is not anathematised. The desires are sublimated. The Tantric solution of the problem of evil could have been given a better scope in the section. The religious aspirant cannot gain Shanti as long as *evil* confronts him and demands satisfactory solution.

III

(a) Dr. Sircar opens his chapter on Reality by weighing the relative claims of reason and intuition. Indian mind has not subordinated the claims of intuition in determining the nature of Reality (p. 92). Intuition is the direct worship of truth. Dr. Sircar quotes Prof. Whitehead: "Intuition is a private psychological habit and is without general evidential force." "Intuition is a function of rare and exceptional moments" (p. 92). A long drawn battle is still being waged between those who contend that reason is the final court of appeal and those who stand for the varieties of intuition. Pure philosophy gives the palm to reason while the mystics "claim immediate awareness" in intuition and say that in philosophy "the evidential

character of propositions must stop and point to their self-evidence and self-consistency" (p. 93). Dr. Sircar says that the criterions of Truth "are self-sufficiency which reason finds out, and self-awareness which intuition reveals" (p. 93). "Reason, of course, cannot formulate judgments in conformity with intuition, but the finest rational construction must ultimately be in harmony with intuition" (p. 93). Dr. Sircar appears to be divided in his allegiance to philosophy and mysticism. His philosophic outlook definitely makes him admire the claims of reason; but the deep fervour of mysticism in him makes the book very interesting to religious aspirants, and definitely makes him side with intuitive approach. He disqualifies philosophy to lay hands on the contents of the mystic experiences and says, "Philosophy is never committed to integrate all experiences" (p. 94). But in another place he makes amends for this statement by telling, "Philosophy builds up by observing and accepting the full facts of life". Indian philosophy takes into consideration, the ecstatic experience of Samadhi also (p. 95). But beneath this apparent divided loyalties, one can clearly see the profile of the philosopher in spite of the luxuriant language he uses to placate the mystic's position. Dr. Sircar's intuition is evidently the Vedantic Reason—that which gives the final certainty to all experiences by resolving all forces of contradiction in the centre of Buddhi. The intuition of common parlance should not be confused with the learned professor's use of the term. It is too dangerous to measure Truth with it. The intuition of common parlance is an impressionism whose roots are hidden in the 'logic of the sub-conscious or the unconscious, to use Dr. Bradby's term, whose sudden

jets through the layer of mind is mistaken as a visitation of Truth from the pure region of the soul. The earthly character of such intuitions gives various shapes to it, often one contradicting the other. Such intuitions must ever be judged by reason. But the intuition that springs from Buddhi can have no dual character. As a witness of all modes of consciousness it remains constant, and as the psychic dynamism becomes purer, we get its truer intimations of Reality. As Dr. Sircar's outlook is essentially synthetic, he reconciles the divergent claims of mysticism and philosophy by claiming the former as a discipline and the latter as a way of life. A more detailed treatment of the tests of truth in this section would have been helpful in understanding the problem of Reality.

Dr. Sircar's study of the Indian conception of the Beautiful is very well presented. No student of aesthetics can read it without being better illumined on the topic. Beauty belongs to the dynamic expression of Spirit. The Hindu mind idealises the Real. There are four theories of aesthetics—the objective theory of Bhatta Laullata, the subjective theory of Bhattachanayaka, the reflex theory of Sanku and the expressionist theory of Abhinava Gupta (pp. 131—133). The whole of life is covered in idealising the real. "There is beauty in Krishna's Rasa dance. There is beauty in Siva's dance of Death" (p. 140). "Nature is the creation of the divine art, and things appear ugly, because the inner meaning and rhythm are not revealed to us". Moral sense is different from artistic sense. "Artistic appre-

ciation is not to be regulated by the sense of ethical fineness". But it is a fact that artistic responsiveness of pure and impure souls are not the same (p. 142). Art educates not only segments of life but illumines the whole of it. The Divine is the Eternal Kavi.

(c) This section ends by a dissertation on values. The Hindu mind exhibits fine appreciation of the creative values of life. The urge to grow is appropriately termed Dharma. Duty is enlivened by the spirit of dedication. Vital urges require satisfaction. The classical scale of values from Dharma to Moksha through Artha and Karma is referred to, but not explicitly. We wish that this could have been more elaborately worked out. But the whole chapter follows the classical movement of values. Life is a great Yagna—(sacrifice). Evolution is not for self-gratification but self-repression. Dharma occupies the first place in the scale of values. Values became purest when man gains his true birthright *i.e.*, knowledge of Self. The conception of values in different schools of thought brings this valuable chapter to a fitting conclusion.

IV

The last section is a brilliant character study of the outstanding personalities of modern era and their contribution in vitalising true spiritual life in India. On a future occasion we expect to present the reader with Dr. Sircar's scholarly estimate of the surging currents of spiritual forces that have made modern India once again the home of spirituality.

SWE'ASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagisananda

[How to get absorbed in Brahman is described 'in the following Mantra.]

उद्गीतमेतत्परमं तु ब्रह्म तस्मिन्स्वयं सुप्रतिष्ठाऽक्षरं च ।

अक्षरं ब्रह्मविदो विदित्वा लीना ब्रह्मणि तत्परा योनिमुक्ताः ॥

उद्गीतं=expressly declared एतत्=this परमं=supreme ब्रह्म=Brahman तस्मिन्=in that त्रयम्=the triad सुप्रतिष्ठा=the firm support अक्षरम्=imperishable च=and अक्षरं=here अन्तरम्=the inner essence ब्रह्मविदः=knowers of Brahman विदित्वा=knowing लीनाः=merged ब्रह्मणि=in Brahman तत्पराः=devoted to it योनिमुक्ताः=released from birth (भवन्ति)=are.

This¹ is expressly declared to be the supreme Brahman. In that² is the triad³. It is the firm support⁴ and it is the Imperishable. Knowing the inner essence⁵ of this, the knowers of Brahman⁶ become devoted to it, merge⁷ themselves in Brahman and are released from birth⁸. (7)

Notes : 1. This (एतत्) :—This may refer to the visible universe inclusive of individual souls or to the Ultimate Reality behind it experienced in Samadhi as the Self of ourselves. In the former case, the first line would mean : "This universe is expressly declared (by the Vedas) to be the supreme Brahman." In the latter case, it means, "The Absolute (experienced in Samadhi) is what is expressly declared (in the Vedas) as the supreme Brahman," i.e., when the Absolute which is beyond thought and language is brought down to the plane of thought and language, it is described as the supreme Brahman or God. Sankara takes the line to mean that the supreme Brahman is described in the Vedas as above the world of cause and effect.

2. In that (तस्मिन्) :—This refers to Brahman. The triad or the world of difference may be said to exist in Brahman, either in reality as the theists would have it or by way of superimposition as the Advaitins would prefer.

3. Triad (त्रयम्) :—This may refer to any or all of the following: (1) the Triputi, i.e., the knower, the known and the relation between them, (2) time, space and causation, (3) the Avasthatraya or the states of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti, (4) the Trimurti or Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, (5) the Gunatraya or Satwa, Rajas and Tamas, (6) the three aspects of God, namely, Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Sutrātma, (7) the three bodies, Sthula, Sukshma and Karana, (8) the three worlds, (9) the three Vedas, (10) the three kinds of actions giving rise to Punya, Papa and Moksha. (11) The Bhokta, Bhogya and Preritri referred to in verse 12. Any way it refers to the phenomenal world.

4. The firm support (सुप्रतिष्ठा) :—There is another reading 'स्वप्रतिष्ठा'. The translation is according to the reading given in the text which is adopted by Sankara. The word may mean, 'The Absolute is the substratum of all manifested appearances'; or, 'It is the one support of everything, which always saves them from a fall'; or, 'The whole universe rests in it after Pralaya'. In the last sense,

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it may be considered to furnish an answer to the fourth question raised in verse I. It is called the firm support according to Sankara, because everything else is transitory. According to the second reading, the word means, 'established in itself,' Cf. स देवः कस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठितः । स्वे महिम्नि ॥

5. The inner essence (अन्तरम्) :—Cf. Taittiriya अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा etc., which describes the method of knowing the inner essence by progressing step by step from the gross body through the subtle and causal bodies.

6. Knowers of Brahman (ब्रह्मविदः) :—This refers to those who have understood the significance of Brahman, i.e., the Vedas. Some even have the reading वेदविदः.

7. Merge (लीनाः) :—It may refer to the complete forgetfulness of themselves and their surroundings in the enjoyment of the bliss of Brahman, or, completely becoming one with It as the salt doll merges in the ocean.

8. Released from birth (योनिमुक्ताः) :—Free from all evils incidental on birth, old age and death.

The two lines may be summarised thus :—Learning from a study of the Vedas that the Absolute or the Fundamental Reality is in every respect different from the subjective and objective world of our experience, the aspirant tries to come face to face with this Reality by self-analysis and introspection. Once he gets an experience of It in deep Samadhi, he becomes convinced that It is the supreme goal of human endeavour and thenceforward devotes himself to It to the exclusion of all worldly attractions, even after coming out of Samadhi. By continuous practice he becomes completely oblivious of the existence of even himself and the world, and finally becomes lost in the experience of the Absolute. Then he becomes free once for all from the ocean of Samsara.

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A Dangerous Advice

The Conference of the Bombay Presidency Depressed Classes, held at Yeola, Nasik District, on the 13th October marks a sensational development in the agitation of the Depressed Classes for equality of status in the Hindu fold. The newspapers report that a resolution to the effect that the Depressed Classes should completely sever themselves from the Hindu fold and adopt any other religion guaranteeing them equal status and treatment with other members of the faith has been unanimously adopted by the Conference attended by about 10000 people on the advice of Dr. Ambedkar, the

well-known leader of the Depressed Classes.

The reason for this resolve on the part of this section of the community is stated in the presidential address delivered at the Conference. After bitterly recounting the treatment meted out by Caste Hindus to the Depressed Classes, the President remarked that so far, their attempt to bring about a change of heart was futile and therefore a mere waste of energies and money. Complete severance from the Hindu fold was therefore the way of amelioration that he had arrived at after deep reflection. "We shall", he declared "cease our

fight for equality where we are denied it. Because we have the misfortune to call ourselves Hindus, we are treated thus. If we were members of another faith, none would dare treat us so." Dr. Ambedkar supported the resolution, and in asking the Depressed Classes to embrace another faith, left the choice to individuals, saying: "Choose any religion which gives you equality of status and treatment." He concluded, saying, "We shall repair our mistake now. I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of an untouchable. But it is not my fault. But I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power."

No true lover of Hinduism and Hindu culture can help feeling aggrieved, not so much because some Hindus are going to adopt other faiths as because they are being forced to do so by certain strange social practices which are in no way essential to Hinduism. The tragedy of the situation is that neither party recognises that there is no integral relation between Hinduism and untouchability. We do not know what the Hindu fundamentalists of this country think of this dramatic development. Perhaps they may feel jubilant that this move on the part of some of these troublesome elements will weaken the anti-untouchability movement in this country and thus help them to keep their Dharma intact. Such an attitude, no doubt, will be quite logical for them to adopt, but it will have its sure and certain nemesis from that much more potent factor known as the logic of life. If however they participate in the feeling of grief and apprehension that the rest of the Hindus entertain, it is time for them to recognise that neither the law of Karma nor the more recently concocted biological inter-

pretation of untouchability is going to satisfy any self-respecting member of the Depressed Classes whose voice we hear in the memorable words of Dr. Ambedkar: "I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of an untouchable. But it is not my fault. But I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power."

We must however point out that for the Depressed Classes themselves, this move on the part of Dr. Ambedkar and some educated persons like him is not going to be of any use. Whatever the faults of the caste system may be, one beneficial feature of it has been that when a few of the members of a caste rise in culture and influence, the caste consciousness forces them to work for the amelioration of their whole community. The activities of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers for the uplift of the Depressed Classes form in themselves an illustration of this point. But the step they are now contemplating is going to counteract this healthy influence. By giving up Hinduism these leaders are simultaneously withdrawing their leadership of the Depressed Classes. They will have in future no more chance of serving their community. For, the vast section of this class who are not educated enough to know anything of Dr. Ambedkar or participate in his feelings will doubtless remain where they are, and by becoming a Christian or a Muslim, Dr. Ambedkar and his followers will only lose all points of contact with them. Dr. Ambedkar will thereby be defeating the very cause that is so dear to his heart. Hence, rightly has Mahatma Gandhi remarked in his statement on the resolution in question: "Lastly I am convinced that a change of faith by him and those who passed the resolution will not

serve the cause which they have at heart, for the millions of unsophisticated and illiterate Harijans will not listen to him and them when they have disowned their ancestral faith, especially when it is remembered that their lives, for good or evil, are intertwined with those of Caste Hindus."

Another Depressed Class Leader's Challenge

There are not however wanting among the Depressed Classes, leaders of more mature wisdom who realise the fatal implications of the course suggested by Dr. Ambedkar and his followers. Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan, M. L. C., a well-known leader of the Depressed Classes, remarks in his statement that the advice of Dr. Ambedkar and the resolution of the Conference came to him as a thunderbolt. His statement runs: "Conversion to other faiths will weaken the numerical strength of the Depressed Classes and encourage oppressors. It will not be possible even in a long period of ten years for the whole of the Depressed Classes to embrace some other religion. The best advice to be given to these classes is to keep up their strength and fight for their rights and privileges from where they are, treating the Caste Hindus as untouchables. That is manly. Those that are not able to face their enemies and treat them as untouchables, let them emigrate to some other country where there is no untouchability."

There is no doubt that the extract given above brings into full prominence the danger that threatens the social interests of the Depressed Classes by the hasty and dangerous advice given by leaders like Dr. Ambedkar. However indignant a leader might be, he should not sacrifice the best interests of his followers merely to satisfy his feeling

of wounded self-respect or his spirit of revenge. It is in this respect that Dr. Ambedkar and his followers are blundering, and Mr. Srinivasan's warning is a timely corrective to this disastrous manifestation of self-respect.

We must however remark that even in Mr. Srinivasan's statement, the bellicose attitude goes beyond the bounds of propriety. A sense of indignation is quite legitimate and understandable in a situation like this. But to advise the Depressed Classes to treat all Caste Hindus as untouchables is not however the way of wisdom. When Mr. Srinivasan says so, his sense of self-respect seems to smother his prudence and recommend a course of action that will be detrimental to the interests of the Depressed Classes themselves. For there is a large section of Caste Hindus who are sincerely anxious to help the Depressed Classes and who spare neither their energy nor their purse in working for their uplift. To treat them at least as untouchables will be against the best interests of the Depressed Classes. Moreover the cultural elevation of their rank and file can take place only by closer association with, and not by segregation from, the Caste Hindus.

But what is most unsatisfactory in the attitude of both Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan is their failure to recognise that religion has a much greater significance than the social and political prizes available through it. For both of them overlook the fact that besides being a social system, Hinduism is also a spiritual gospel, and that when one chooses either to remain within its fold or leave it, the first consideration ought to be the spiritual values that are attached to it. This point has been well stressed by Mahatma Gandhi in his criticism

of Dr. Ambedkar's attitude: "If Dr. Ambedkar has faith in God, I would urge him to assuage his wrath and reconsider the position and examine his ancestral religion on its own merits and not through the weakness of its unfaithful followers." This recognition of the spiritual worth of religion does not however mean that, as some fundamentalists often urge, they should put up with all the insults and humiliations heaped on them in the blessed name of the Sastras. They must agitate and with the co-operation of the more liberal sections of Hindus try to purge their religion of these social poisons. This, and not Dr. Ambedkar's advice to abandon Hinduism, is the counsel of wisdom for the Depressed Classes to follow.

The Spirit of Hindu Social Institutions

In an article on the "Caste system of the Hindus" appearing in the July number of the *Hindustan Review*, Prof. Gulshan Rai unravels some of the important principles involved in the system. He points out that we can gain a real insight into the system by understanding the significance of the two words 'Varna' and 'Jati.' Varna, according to him, was not a division based on colour at all. It was purely an occupational classification, and the four well-known Varnas of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra indicated only the professions followed by the different groups. As distinguished from this was the Jati which was based solely on birth, and reflected the dislike of Indians to mix their blood with foreign elements. Prof. Rai maintains that according to the Indian social system it was the Jati that was unchangeable, not the Varna. A Jati or ethnic group classed in one Varna on the basis of profession used however to change the Varna

by the change of profession; but in ancient India where the family or the community, and not the individual, was the social unit, such changes used to be effected not by an individual's passing from one Varna to another but of the whole family or community doing so. Thus while the Jati of a group remained fixed, it rose or fell in the social scale in accordance with the change in the occupation of the people belonging to it.

Prof. Rai points out that it was through the institutions of Jati and Varna that all the Pre-Muslim invaders of India were absorbed by the Hindu society. The foreigners for sometime after their invasion used to be soldiers and administrators, and thus occupied the rank or Varna of Kshatriyas, although they might not be recognised as such by the indigenous Kshatriyas. But when they lost political power, they were compelled to adopt other professions, and according to the professions they adopted, they became sub-divisions of different Varnas, these sub-divisions of each Varna having marriage relations only among themselves and not with other sub-sects of the same Varna. Thus the foreigner gradually and imperceptibly got absorbed in the indigenous social organisation, but at the same time through the institution of Jati which is often identified now-a-days with sub-sect the conservative elements safeguarded themselves from intermixture of blood with foreigners.

How to Hinduise India

From these observations regarding Jati and Varna and the manner in which they helped the indigenous population to absorb foreign invaders, Prof. Rai proceeds to consider how Hindu society can in future absorb Muslims and Christians who have till now stood

outside Hindu social system. He says: "If in olden times our culture was adopted by other races, it was not adopted by individuals, but by families and groups of families. This group of families formed an endogamous unit of its own. It constituted a separate Jati, which after a few generations formed a sub-section of an Aryan Varna. The present-day method of individual conversion or Suddhi is therefore repugnant to Hindu way of thought. If we failed in modern times to absorb foreign races, it is due to two reasons. So long as the Muslims ruled the country, they held a kind of political importance which prevented them from sinking to the level of other peoples in the land. This Muslim political supremacy was not overthrown till about 200 years back which barely constitutes six or seven generations. During these two centuries India was overtaken by dark ages, and she passed through a period of civil wars, bloodshed and disturbances. Peace and tranquillity have been established only during the last one hundred years, which means hardly three or four generations. We have had no time during this period to study our social problems and find a solution for them. But one thing is clear. Western method of conversion will not do. The one most important lesson that was learnt in connection with the Suddhi movement of the Malkana Rajputs, was that you could not re-convert them unless you assured them that they could be taken by their caste *biradaries*. This is a clear verdict against individual conversion. If we are to reabsorb those whom we have lost and absorb amongst us fresh foreign elements, which are not very numerous, we should reject the Muslim and Christian missionary methods, and revert to our

ancient well-tried national methods. That method consisted in distributing the alien elements in one population into our pre-existing economic groups in accordance with the natural affinity of each foreign ethnic unit. This task has to a very great extent been already accomplished. The next step would be taken when the Hindu religious leaders take up the work of studying foreign non-Aryan religions, and then after a comparative study of these different faiths and methods of worship, come to find out how these different principles could be reconciled, and a synthetic whole created out of them. This process was started by men like Kabir, Nanak and others, but it was stopped by the disturbed period that intervened. This work should be re-started. The old Hindu religion sticking to its old fundamental principles, has from time to time assumed new shapes. We have absorbed the culture and religion of the Pre-Aryans. We have absorbed the most important principles of Jainism and Buddhism. We have probably absorbed the cults of the Central Asian invaders. I am sure we will also absorb those principles of Islam and Christianity, which are best suited for Indian conditions. When we have done that, it would be time to absorb even culturally the foreign elements we now have amongst us. But it will take a few generations more, if we begin the task in right earnest now. How all this is to be done must be left not to the bigoted Pandits and Mullahs of to-day but to the intelligent students of comparative theology."

Prof. Rai's suggestions are no doubt very profound and thought-provoking, and deserve the serious consideration of all well-wishers of Indian culture. We however feel that Prof. Rai overlooks one

important fact. Muslims and Christians are not like the Yuchis, Huns and other hordes from Central Asia. The latter had no culture of their own and the religions they professed were very primitive with no universal appeal in them. It is comparatively easy for a higher culture like that of the Hindus to absorb such people. But the case of Muslims and Christians is quite different. They, especially the Muslims, have a long-standing and historic culture of their own, and the religions they both profess have a deep spiritual appeal and are

buttressed by powerful organisations. Moreover they are religiously self-conscious, jealous and aggressive, and are out to swallow what they call the unbelieving population in this country. Would it not be necessary to make radical changes in the old methods in order to meet the entirely new situation? We for our part believe that no attempt at absorption can succeed unless the social outlook of the modern Hindu broadens and his allegiance to the essential principles of religion becomes deeper.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

KALYAN-YOGANKA (HINDI): Published by Manager, Kalyan, Gorakhpur, Pages 884. Price Rs. 3.

It is a delight to go through the special number of the Hindi Monthly Kalyan giving an exhaustive treatment of the various aspects of Yoga. The volume is excellently planned and executed and is an improvement upon the previous year's number in bulk and worth. The reader is regaled with a brilliant array of essays, excerpts and poems closely relieved by several charming coloured plates and instructive diagrams numbering over 400. We wish an extensive circulation for this superb issue which is bound to leave a holy impression upon any reverent mind.

(1) A TEXT-BOOK OF ELEMENTARY ECONOMICS. (2) A HISTORY OF INDIA: By K. S. Srikantan, M.A., F. R. E. S. Published by Messrs. V. S. Swaminathan, Madurai.

Prof. S. K. Srikantan has done a great service to the cause of education in South India by writing his very useful text-book on "Elementary Economics," suited to the needs of students in the Intermediate Class. The author explains in lucid language the fundamental conceptions on which the economic science is based and ably presents the theory

underlying the varied economic activities of the modern world. The appendices at the end of the book deal with such diverse subjects as advertisements, economic planning, factory labour, the silver debacle, population problem, foreign trade, Income-tax, etc., most of which seem to be reproductions of the author's contributions to the various journals. There are a few plates and figures which add to the value of the book. An index would further enhance the value of the book. V. B.

The second of these books is a History of India that will serve as an excellent text-book for students studying in the upper forms of our Secondary Schools. The author has embodied the results of the recent researches in Indian History and has kept in view the topical method in the presentation of the material. It is noteworthy that a chapter on the Indian States and another on the growth of Indian polity and culture through the ages have been included in the book. The book contains seventeen maps and a few illustrations. The publishers could have very well included a few more illustrations such as the Rathas at Mahabalipuram, specimens of Dravidian, Chalukyan and Indo-Aryan Architecture and a few illustrations in colour. V. V.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A Vedantic Teacher Honoured

Swami Prabhavananda and Sister Lalita (Mrs. Carrie Mead Wychoff) were given a farewell address by the members and friends of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood, at the Vivekananda Home, 1946 Ivar Avenue, on Sunday, August 13th, 1935, on the eve of their departure for India. Dr. Percy Houston, Vice-President of the Society, presided and read the following address on behalf of the members of the Society:

"The departure for India of our beloved Swami Prabhavananda and of our beloved Sister Lalita marks the end of the first stage in the history of The Vivekananda Home. It seems natural, therefore, as we bid them farewell, that we should recall to mind the events which led to the founding of this distant Mission, and express our earnest appreciation of what these two have accomplished for our good and for the dissemination of religious truth.

"It was in 1927 that Swami Prabhavananda, then stationed in Portland, Oregon, first came to Los Angeles. He came here to lecture on the Hindu religion. During his stay here Sister Lalita, together with some other devotees, asked him to form a centre in Hollywood. Her pious wish was not immediately fulfilled. When Swami Prabhavananda returned to Portland, Sister Lalita followed him there, and remained with him for a year. Later, in 1929, she prevailed upon him to carry out her desire. She offered him her home, where we are now gathered together, as the home of the new Mission. Her offer was accepted, and 1946 Ivar Avenue took the name of our revered Swami Vivekananda.

"Swami Vivekananda was to Sister Lalita far more than a name, far more even than the author of religious writings, for she had known him personally. In the year 1900, she became a devotee of the Vedanta, and entertained its great apostle in her home. The record of the friendship of these two may be read in the book of Vivekananda's life entitled *Swami Viveka-*

nanda: by His Eastern and Western Disciples. To acquaintance with the first of Vedanta's spokesmen in the West, she has added, with the passing years, an acquaintance with nearly all the Swamis who have succeeded him. To the younger among these she has been in the place of a mother.

"A year ago, not content with what she had already done for the cause of Vedanta in the West, she made a legal gift of her house to our Society, which then for the first time became formally incorporated.

"Of Sister Lalita, what now shall we say as we bid her farewell? She, of herself, we well know, would have us say nothing. But we cannot consent to such a silence. She has come to mean to us a great thing, and we must express our thought. She has become for us the symbol of what Vedanta may do for western women. Under its benign influence her life has been a fitting ideal towards which other women may strive, and in her egolessness, her humility, her sweet simplicity, and her love, she has been a shining example for all.

"Concerning Swami Prabhavananda, likewise, we must unburden our hearts. He has been these many years our constant inspiration. From the depths of the brooding East, mother of religions, he has brought us words of highest truth. From his lips we have understood as we could never have understood from the pages of books alone. In him we recognize the *guru* of immemorial tradition, the teacher, the master, the indispensable medium through which the hard-won secrets of divine wisdom are transmitted from generation to generation. From his lips we hear the precept; in his pure life we see the precept embodied. Words and works in him are one. The man as he lives among us is therefore proof and illustration of the doctrine he inculcates. Our debt to him is great—greater than we can ever repay; and because of him our debt to India is likewise great, in that she has sent

him to us, one of her noblest sons. Because of him we understand India better, love her more deeply.

"These things it was necessary for us to say of our beloved Swami Prabhavananda.

"But now, as we dwell upon what our leader has done for us, and meant to us, we are reminded that without Sister Lalita's devotion to Vedanta we might never have enjoyed his presence. Let us unite them in our words and thoughts as we say to them from the bottom of our hearts,—Godspeed!"

Dr. Houston then called upon Sister Lalita to say a few words. In response, she said: "This was all a great surprise to me. I hardly know what to say. It has been my blessed privilege to know Swami Vivekananda, and through him to have known most of the Swamis who came after him." She also expressed her joy in being with Swami Prabhavananda, and her happiness in the association of his students. Swami Prabhavananda's reply was as follows: "Words seem inadequate to express the gratitude and thankfulness for all the love and kindness I have received at your hands. I came to America a stranger in a strange land; but never for a moment did you and your people make me feel that I was a stranger. You accepted me as a brother of your own. I have also adopted your country as my mother country, and I have learnt to love my adopted mother as much as I love my own Mother India.

"An Englishman wrote a verse which has unfortunately been oft-quoted: "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." But I assure you from my long experience in the West that this is not true. If only we left the veil of ignorance and prejudice, we shall find the same human heart beating in the breasts of all.

"True it is, however, that the cultural life of the East and that of the West moved along different lines. But the greatest thinkers of the East and of the West believe to-day that the time has come when the East and the West must meet together and for the betterment of humanity, must join hands and assimilate the culture of each other.

We of the East have to learn of material things from you, and you of the West have to learn of the Spirit from us. This message of the Spirit and of Soul Consciousness, I brought to you from India and I have given this message to you in my humble way.

"As you are aware, since the dawn of civilization, India has held on to the belief that God can be realised, that the Kingdom of Heaven within can be reached in this life. India has always felt this summons of the Infinite and at no time in her history has India been without great souls who have actually realised God. "Again, a greater awakening has come in India in the past hundred years, since the advent of our Great Master Ramakrishna—perhaps greater than the greatest awakening India has ever witnessed. Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples have brought a new era in the history of India. And I have had the blessings of one of the greatest disciples of the Master—one who to me was a Man-God. I have touched the hallowed feet of one who became one with God. It is impossible for me to reveal to you in so many words anything of my Master. But I want you to understand that if my words have helped to quicken the Spirit within any one of you, I take no credit for myself—but blessed be the name of him, whose humble servant I am. In conclusion, I must say, I am glad I am going to India, but I will be glad again to be back, for you have become very dear to my heart."

In conclusion, Dr. Houston added these remarks: "May I say personally how very much the association with the Swami has meant to me? Not only have I profited by attending his lectures, but I have a close friendship with him which I hope will be permanent. I have come here week after week to enjoy lectures which sweep clear away the emotionalism which perhaps we have been used to in our churches, and strike at the root of truth itself. Not only has the Swami clear perceptions of spiritual truth, but he has a fine mind. I hope he will return to us full of added inspiration for our future benefit."

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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"
—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXII]

DECEMBER, 1935

[No. 8

HINDU ETHICS

॥ ॐ ॥

श्रियाचारः प्रियो येषु दमो येषु प्रतिष्ठितः ।
सुखं दुःखं समं येषां सत्यं येषां दयादणं ॥
दातारो न ग्रहीतारो दयावन्तस्तथैव च ।
पितृदेवातिथेयाश्च नित्योद्युक्तास्तथैव च ॥
सर्वोपकारिणो वीराः सर्वधर्मानुयालकाः ।
सर्वभूतहिताश्चैव सर्वदेयाश्च भारत ॥
न त्रासिनो न चपलाः न रौद्राः सत्ये स्थिताः ।
ते सेव्याः साधुभिर्नित्यमसाधुंश्च विवर्जयेत् ॥

An aspirant after virtue should, O, descendant of Bharata, always seek the company of people who are fond of enlightened behaviour, who have thoroughly mastered their passions, who accept the turns of fortune with an even mind, whose foot is truth, who are full of loving kindness, who though munificent in giving gifts are averse to accept any from others, to whom their parents are visible deity, who are hospitable, who are constantly persevering, who are keen at doing a good turn to all, who are heroic hearts and observers of Dharma in its entirety, who, intent upon gift, never hold back anything, who are fearless, steady and sweet-tempered and who never waver from the true path. On the other hand dishonourable men should always be kept at a distance.

SANTI PARVA, CH. 158, VERSES 23, 24, 25 & 27.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

[The reader will find herein illustrations of certain laws governing the state of Samadhi.]

The unflinching nature of Mathuranath's devotion was the effect of his testing the Master on numerous occasions

ALTHOUGH Mathuranath's intense devotion may appear to us as something very unusual, nevertheless it is beyond all doubt that it was an outcome of his testing the Master on many an occasion. He found that the temptations of enormous wealth, of charming women, of the prospect of gaining absolute control over himself and his family, and of handsome gifts to his relatives like Hriday and others could not in any way divert the Master's mind to worldly pre-occupations, as in the case of ordinary men. An external show of piety could not hide its true nature for a long time from the penetrating vision of the Master; but if any one took refuge in him with a sincere heart even after committing grave sins, the Master would receive him cordially, forgive him all his faults, and bestow on him the power to conceive higher and higher ideals and realise them in life. Through the miraculous power of the Master, even the impossible would become possible for his devotees.

Mathuranath desires to attain ecstasy

Living in the Master's company and finding him enjoying infinite bliss in the state of Samadhi, Mathuranath, worldly-minded

though he was, once felt the desire to have a similar experience for a while just to see what it was like. Mathuranath was now firmly convinced that the Master was capable of conferring all kinds of spiritual experience on any one by his sheer will. For he thought, "Shiva or Kali the Mother of the Universe, Krishna or Rama—by whatever name we may call the Highest Being, is not the Master himself identical with It? What wonder is there then if he can show some of those aspects of his to his devotee?" Certainly, it was not a matter of small importance. Whoever came into close contact with the Master would invariably develop this attitude day by day. All such people were led to believe that even the impossible could be made possible by his will, that he was capable of making any one experience all the truths of the spiritual world at his will. When it is difficult to make even a single soul feel like this through one's spiritual powers and purity of character, what to speak of carrying such conviction to numerous souls! It is possible only for the Avatars or divine incarnations. Among the important proofs of Avatarhood, this one is not the least important. And it was because the prophets foresaw that in this world of lies, fraud and crookedness much of deceit and false simulation will take place in their name that they proclaimed before all, "After my

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

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passing away many hypocrites will come to you, saying, 'I am the Prophet, the Saviour and the Refuge of weak souls.' Beware! Do not be deceived by their pretensions."*

Mathuranath's solicitations to the Master

No sooner did this thought occur to Mathuranath than he approached the Master with the solicitation that he might gain some spiritual experience through his favour. "Well, Father," he entreated, "you must see that I get into an ecstasy." We can fairly guess the Master's reply. As usual with him on similar occasions, he said, "Everything will come in its proper time. Can we expect to see a full-grown tree and enjoy its fruits, simultaneously with the sowing of the seed? Moreover, you are all right now, experiencing both worldly joys and spiritual bliss. If these ecstasies come, your mind will lose all contact with this world. Who will then take care of properties? They will be usurped by any and every cheat. What will you do then?"

The Master tries to change his mind with the illustration of Uddhava, the great devotee of God, and the milk-maids of Brindavan

But who would listen to these warnings? Mathuranath persisted in his importunities—the Father must make him enter into an ecstasy. When the Master found that all his arguments were in vain, he went one step further and said, "Devotees do not like visions. They want only the direct service of the Lord. The visions

*Vide Matthew, XXIV, 11, 23, 24, 25, 26.

make one conscious of God's glories and thereby generate awe, thus throwing the attitude of love into the background. When the Lord Krishna went away to Mathura, the milk-maids of Brindavan became overwhelmed with grief on account of their separation from the Beloved. Knowing their pitiable condition, the Lord sent Uddhava to console them. Now, Uddhava was a Jnani (with the intellectual bent of mind). Hence he could not understand the attitude of the people of Brindavan—the attitude of loving service to the Lord. He would look upon the pure devotion of the milk-maids as something physical and therefore of a low order. Therefore he was specially selected with this object also in view that he would receive further enlightenment from these simple people of Brindavan. After his arrival there he began to argue with the milk-maids, saying, 'Why are you all weeping and wailing while repeating the name of the Lord Krishna? You know He is the Lord of all and present everywhere. It is not possible that He is in Mathura alone and not in Brindavan. Therefore stop your sighs and groans, and closing the eyes look into your hearts just for a while. You will find the Lord ever residing there with His beautiful complexion like that of the clouds, holding the flute between His lips and wearing the garland of forest flowers.' To this the milk-maids replied, 'What is this, O Uddhava, that you are saying in spite of your being an illumined soul and a friend of Lord Krishna? Have we attained Him through meditation, discrimination, or asceticism like the sages and the hermits? We who have fed Him and decorated His person

with our own hands, are we to do the same now in meditation only? How is it possible for us? For had our mind been in our possession we might have engaged it in meditation and prayer. But long ago it has been dedicated to the lotus-feet of the Lord. Have we got anything at all to call our own with which we may identify ourselves and then say our prayers? Uddhava became stunned with surprise. It was then only that he understood of what quality and depth the devotion of these milkmaids had been, and he returned to Mathura after recognizing them as his spiritual teachers and showing them proper respect as such. Now do you not see from this incident that a genuine lover of God does not want visions? He finds delight only in the Lord's service. Moreover they do not want visions and other experiences, as they disturb their attitude of pure love." Failing to satisfy Mathuranath even by these words, the Master said at last, "Well, what do I know? I shall inform the Mother. Let Her do whatever She pleases."

*Mathuranath attains Samadhi
and again prays to be relieved
of it*

Just a few days after this, Mathuranath entered into a state of ecstasy. The Master used to recount the incident thus: "He sent for me. Going there I found him quite a changed man. The eyes were red and shedding tears profusely while he was talking of things relating to God, and there was repeated tremor in the chest. The moment he saw me, he clasped both my feet and said, 'Father, I confess my mistake. This state is going on since three days. I cannot attend to the estate affairs even if I try my best. Everything

is being mismanaged. Take back your ecstasy, please; I don't want it.' 'Why!' said I, 'Did you not hanker after it?' 'Certainly, I did,' replied he, 'and there is joy in it, too. But what of that? The whole estate is going to ruins on account of it. Well, Father, your ecstasy befits you alone. We have no need of it. Do take it back, please.' 'Did I not tell you this very thing beforehand?' I remarked laughingly, whereupon he said, 'True, Father, you did. But how could I know then that it will possess me like a ghost and I shall have to obey its whims for all the twenty-four hours in the day, being unable to do anything independently even if I try?' Then I passed my hand over his chest to bring him back to the normal state."

*The ecstatic states cannot last
long in an aspirant who is not
a man of renunciation*

Indeed, one does not achieve everything by merely entering into an ecstasy. Few are the people who are competent to stand its exacting demands. For it is impossible to be established in that state so long as there persists the least trace of desire exerting its downward pull. That is why the scriptures have enjoined on the travellers along the path of spirituality that they must rid themselves of all desires from the very beginning. They have said, 'त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमाप्नुः' By renunciation some attained immortality." One who has attained Samadhi through a momentary surge of emotion while myriads of desires for wealth, honour and so forth, are still teeming in one's mind, can never retain it for a considerable length of time. Rightly has Sankara, the

great teacher, remarked in the Vivekachudamani:

आपातवैराग्यवतो मुमुक्षुर् भवाच्चिपारं प्रति-
यातुमुद्यतात् ।

आशायाहो मज्जतेऽन्तरालो निष्ठ्य करटे विनि-
वर्त्य वेगात् ॥

—"Those who proceed to cross the ocean of the world without acquiring beforehand the means of genuine renunciation are held back by the neck by the alligators of desire, and perforce drowned in the bottomless waters."

HINDUISM NOT TO BLAME

[Does Hinduism recognise the inequality of men? the question has been brought into prominence in some present-day religious controversies. The following is a discussion of this point.]

A Paradoxical Position

THE Indian Press has of late been flooded with statements of leading Indians regarding the threat held out by Dr. Ambedkar that he and his followers of the Depressed Classes have decided to give up Hinduism and embrace some other religion which will give them equality of status. Thanks to the much condemned Communal Award and the consequent recognition of the value of religion in gaining political power in the country. Dr. Ambedkar is naturally receiving the attention of a jostling crowd of political suitors all disguised in religious costumes. The leaders of the Hindus who will be the main losers if the proposed secession takes place have also addressed themselves to Dr. Ambedkar, pointing out to him that change of faith will have no miraculous effect of raising the social and economic status of the Depressed Classes and that its political consequences on their community will be quite disastrous. It has also been pointed out to him that he is misguiding people when he asks them to change their religion out of purely secular considerations, and that if he

abandons Hinduism, he ought to do so after considering its merits and demerits as a religion.

It is generally supposed that the Doctor has left this point entirely out of consideration, and his decision is attributed entirely to a fit of anger and wounded self-respect. This, however, is unfair to the Doctor; for in one of his statements he has stated the reason for his dissatisfaction with Hinduism as a religion. He says referring to Hinduism: "Inequality is the very basis of it, and its ethics are such that the Depressed Classes can never acquire their full manhood... I agree with Mr. Gandhi that religion is necessary, but I do not agree that man must have his ancestral religion if he finds that religion repugnant to his notion of the sort of religion he needs as a standard for the regulation of his own conduct and as a source of inspiration for his advancement and well-being." Here the Doctor has clearly given his estimate of Hinduism as a religion and it is for the Hindus to say whether this estimate is correct or not. As far as we have seen, only two critics of Dr. Ambedkar's decision have made references to this aspect of

his statement. One of those is Pandit Malaviya who in a way contradicts the Doctor's statement in the following words: "There is no religion the followers of which do not sometimes fight with each other. There are quarrels among brothers and brothers, one depriving the other of his just rights and possessions. The sin of such quarrels, such wrong and such injustices done by one brother or fellow man to another must not be laid at the door of religion. There is no religion in the world which preaches equality of man in his relation to God, as clearly as the Hindu religion does. If we, followers of our religion, fail to act up to its high and humane teachings, it is we who are to blame and not our religion. The noble teachings of our religion are as much the inheritance of the Depressed Classes as of the rest of Hindus." The other person we refer to is one Sridhara Sastri, described as a representative of priests, who, as is generally the case with persons of his order, declared unhesitatingly at a debate in Nasik that Hinduism recognised inequalities and therefore there could be no question of equal treatment, even though it might mean that Depressed Classes were leaving Hinduism.

The Social and Spiritual Contents of Religions

It is strange that a critic and a defender of Hinduism like Dr. Ambedkar and the representative of the priests respectively should concur on this point, and differ from the view of an enlightened Hindu like Pandit Malaviya. This in itself is an indication that there is much confusion of thought about this matter among the friends as well as the foes of

Hinduism, and a consideration of it in some detail in these pages will not, we suppose, be therefore superfluous.

It is more or less a common feature of all religions that they show a tendency to disregard the natural distinction between their spiritual content and their social forms. Every religion no doubt declares its primary function to consist in guiding man to his spiritual destiny, but rooted as these religions are in particular social environments, their teachings are often bound to compromise with social elements that are sometimes even at variance with their spiritual content. Even in comparatively simple religions like Christianity and Islam this has taken place. In the days of slavery, for example, Christian nations sought justification for that doctrine in the curious idea that slaves have no souls. The religious teachings have also been utilised to enlist the popular sanction in favour of wars, of autocratic States and of the hierarchy of the Church. In Islam too the great teaching that Muslims are brothers has often been utilised by sectarians and interested propagandists to teach hatred of other religionists in the minds of people, and the doctrine of war in defence of religion has been the fruitful source of invasions, plunder, massacres and forcible conversions in the hands of greedy kings and unscrupulous religious leaders. In the case of a religion like Hinduism whose history is to be measured in millenniums and whose origin is not to be traced to any single founder, this liability for confusion between the social forms and spiritual content of religion is all the more great. Perhaps in no religion is there such

divergence of opinion between the fundamentalists and the liberals regarding the essentials and non-essentials of religion as in the case of Hinduism—the former maintaining that all the existing social forms and observances constitute the central core of Sanatana Dharma and the latter that the real Sanatana Dharma is not a bundle of social laws and popular customs but a body of principles governing the relation between God, man and the universe, and sets of moral disciplines and spiritual practices capable of bringing out the divine potentialities of man.

Does Hinduism Recognise the Inequality of Men

Now it is this fundamental difference in outlook, this allegiance to the crystallised social practices on the one hand and the central spiritual content on the other, that is responsible for such divergent opinions on the question of equality in Hinduism. The priest and Dr. Ambedkar both agree that Hinduism recognises inequality, because for both of them caste system forms the very essence of Hinduism, and in caste they see a frank recognition of the social superiority and inferiority of men, culminating in the practice of untouchability of which Dr. Ambedkar's caste men are the victims. It is no doubt true that society everywhere has its gradations of high and low, rich and poor, noble man and common man, and the difference in the natural capacities of individuals too is not a special feature of men in India. But while in other countries these inequalities of life are not justified on religious grounds and are even overlooked under the influence of political theories, here in India

religious speculation has applied itself to a systematisation of these inequalities in some forms and thereby given them a religious garb. Rightly or wrongly it is this alliance between religion and social inequalities as embodied in the caste system which some of the friends as well as the foes of Hinduism have in mind when they characterise it as a religion based on inequalities.

The modern mind would at once flare up with indignation when it is plainly stated about a religion that it does not recognise all men to be equal. Nurtured in the 19th century notions of democracy, with its slogans of liberty, fraternity and equality, it revolts instinctively against the assertion that men are after all unequal. But modern thought is coming to recognise that by merely overlooking the real fact of inequality the interests of the weaker section have only suffered, and the States all over the world are to-day following a policy of giving special protection to the weak in place of allowing unrestricted competition based on the false democratic assumption that all men are equal. The recognition of inequality is not therefore in itself a sin; the sin or virtue consists in the use made of this recognition. If the recognition of inequality means in practice a justification of the tyranny and exploitation of the weak by the strong, then it becomes an unmitigated evil; if it is recognised only to afford facilities of growth to the weak, then it becomes a blessing.

We agree with Dr. Ambedkar and the representative of the priests that Hinduism recognises the inequality of men; but we hasten to add that this recogni-

tion is of the latter type, and not of the former kind.

The Conflict of Tendencies

We are sure that the critics of Hinduism will raise a volley of protests against this assertion of ours. Dr. Ambedkar and company who may be counted among such critics will doubtless indignantly point to the various features of caste system and the barbarous doctrine of untouchability as positive proof of the fact that the theory of human inequality has been utilised in this country only to perpetuate the dominance of the strong over the weak under the garb of religious sanctions. Our reply to such criticisms is that these are perversions analogous to the religious justification of slavery among Christian and aggressive wars among Muslim communities, to which we have made reference before. The instinct of self-preservation impels men in power to adopt measures for the defence of their social, political and economic interests, and in a social environment where religion enjoys great prestige in the minds of people, they naturally utilise its teachings for the furtherance of their own class interests. Just as Dr. Ambedkar is criticising Hinduism to-day for its partiality for the strong, religion in every form has for this reason been severely indicted by Communist thinkers as a device of the haves to exploit the have-nots. No man who is sincerely religious and has also made a comparative study of religions will maintain that there is no truth in this charge; but he will also maintain, as we have done in defence of Hinduism, that this is a form of perversion, and to reject on this account even the spiritual content of religion will be like throwing the baby with the bath.

There are two tendencies in life described in Hindu religious literature as Daivic (divine) and Asuric (diabolical)—the first tending more and more towards the expression of man's spiritual nature and the other towards suppressing it by various manifestations of selfishness. True religion is always an off-spring of the former, and wherever it is seen to be perverted from its true objective, this will be seen to have taken place under the influence of Asuric tendencies—the selfish, oppressive and grabbing nature of animal humanity. In Hindu socio-religious institutions also these two tendencies have been at work. The institutions of caste and untouchability which have laid Hinduism open to the charge of insisting on inequality among men are themselves examples in illustration of this point. What is at present known as caste is only a crystallisation on hereditary basis of the original ideal of the four Varnas or cultural divisions based on the special aptitudes and tendencies of men. The Brahmana is the man of thought and contemplation, the Kshatriya is one endowed with qualities of leadership, the Vaisya is an enterprising business man and the Sudra is the man who is only fit for subordinate positions under others because of his deficiency in enterprise and intellectual powers. There is no enforced superiority or inferiority involved in this except what the natural gifts of individuals exact recognition from their fellow men. This ideal has, however, been perverted into the institution of caste or Jati which is constituted of innumerable hereditary groups, some of them claiming fancied superiority over others and enforcing preferential treatment from

those who are weaker than themselves. According to the doctrine of Varna superiority or inferiority is entirely a matter of culture and not of birth, and the superior man is he who abandons interest in sensuous life due to his preference for intellectual and spiritual pursuits. He leaves the good things of life for the enjoyment of his cultural inferiors and himself leads a far more abstemious life than the others. In caste, however, the position is reversed, and superiority becomes a matter of open claim on the part of hereditary cliques because of the special material advantages it entitles them to. Varna is a natural aristocracy of virtue and piety while caste is an aristocracy of birth and privileges. The one is a social manifestation of the genuine religious spirit and is therefore born of the Daivic tendency in man. The other, clearly an off-spring of Asuric tendency, is anything but religious, and the responsibility for it should never be laid at the door of Hindu religion.

Now coming to untouchability, it originated in the great disparity in cultural endowment between the main stream of society and the groups of uncivilised people with whom it came into contact. Immediate absorption was impossible. Segregation was adopted as a temporary measure and as an indication that these people required special attention so that they might be culturally prepared for ultimate absorption into the rest of society. As long as Indian culture was in a vigorous and healthy state, this work was being accomplished little by little, and several tribes that were originally beyond the pale of civilised society have been culturally elevated and Hinduised in the true sense of the

term. But the same process of social crystallisation, of the form suppressing the spirit, took place here also as in the case of the institution of Varna. The custodians of culture forgot that certain people have been marked as outcastes only to enable society to bestow special attention for their elevation, just as the Government to-day have classified certain groups of people as Depressed Classes only to mete out preferential treatment to them which they will not get when merged in the rest of society. The small voice of true religion came to be submerged in the clamorous roar of the Asuric tendency in men. Those who ought to have worked for the cultural elevation of the outcastes joined hands with vested interests for whom it was economically advantageous to keep these people in a semi-slavish condition. Out of this unholy alliance between the priest and the capitalist was born the monstrous doctrine of untouchability founded on the fallacious and un-Hindu assumptions that moral degradation of a specially heinous kind is hereditarily transmitted among the outcastes, that this essential sinfulness cannot be redeemed as long as the body lasts, that no educational effort can improve these people, and that the only thing that men of culture can do is to keep sedulously aloof from all social contact with them, of course with the exception of what is required for the purpose of exploiting their labour. The priest sanctioned what the monied man wanted, and he got in return the latter's liberal patronage, protection, and unhesitating recognition of holiness.

The Voice of God

But both the parties concerned forgot that they were sinning

against God, and that their theories were in direct contravention of the revelation of God to the Hindu race. For in the Gita the Bhagawan has declared : "I am the same in all beings, there is none hateful to me nor dear. But those who worship me with devotion—they are in me and I too am in them. Even if the most sinful man worships me and worships no other, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has decided aright. He soon becomes righteous and obtains lasting peace. Proclaim it boldly, O Arjuna, that my devotee never perishes. For those who take refuge in me, O Arjuna, though they are of the womb of sin—women, Vaisyas and Sudras—even they attain to the highest state." If this is of the essence of Hinduism, the assumptions behind the doctrine of untouchability fall to the ground. In the light of these ideas there is no degraded condition that cannot be remedied by proper educational efforts. As we have contended, the grouping of the culturally backward people into a different class becomes significant only in so far as it facilitates special attention being bestowed on them for their uplift. Today the Hindu conscience has come to recognise this, and the modern anti-untouchability movement is the result of it. For, the removal of the very necessity for segregation, and not the perpetuation of it, is the only justification on the part of religion for recognising certain groups of people as culturally backward.

An Illegitimate Use of the Karma Doctrine

It will be interesting to investigate how, in spite of the highly altruistic principles of Hindu religion, there have come into vogue

the peculiar un-Hindu assumptions underlying the present-day practice of untouchability, to which reference has already been made. The mischief is to be traced to a misapplication of the doctrine of Karma. There is the common Hindu belief that the birth of a man and the course of his life's events are influenced by his actions in previous lives. On the strength of this belief the hereditary principle has been applied to the conception of caste, and men are supposed to be born in particular castes, high or low, according to the nature of the Karmas that determine their birth. Hence birth in any caste has been looked upon as an index of one's spiritual stature. The group of castes described as untouchable is specially looked down upon as the dust-bin of humanity, a veritable concentration camp of sinners from whom no higher developments of personality need be expected at least until they give up their present bodies and gain birth in more exalted castes as a result of better Karma. The unholy combination of priests and economic exploiters therefore taught the people that no special educational effort need be undertaken to elevate these classes, and their duty towards them consisted only in keeping as aloof from them as possible. Any one can see that if there ever was a perversion of a great doctrine, here was one. The doctrine of Karma is only meant for the satisfaction of individuals when they see that no visible action of theirs is responsible for their particular fate in life or when they find that matters go beyond their control in spite of their best efforts to prevent it. It is also its purpose to invest men with a sense of moral responsibility for their actions,

to warn them that as they sow, so they reap. Man, however, makes an illegitimate use of the doctrine when he speculates about other people's Karma and seeks justification for his callousness to other people's suffering on the ground that they have merited it due to their Karma. The law of Karma is a concern only of the moral agency at the back of the universe ; for man who knows nothing of its mysterious workings, the supreme duty consists in doing all he can for the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of his fellow-men. If he is true to the spirit of Hindu Scriptures, he is to view the sight of suffering and ignorance as a call from the Divine to exercise his altruistic spirit, and not hypocritically justify his own selfishness and lack of human sympathy by invoking the law of Karma. Moreover the idea that a person's caste is an index of his spiritual stature is a doctrine that is seen so often contradicted in life that it requires theological prejudice of an extraordinary type to convince a man of it. No sensible person can doubt that the untouchable castes are in a low state of culture only because of the influence of a hostile environment, and that if this can be changed they can be raised to higher cultural levels like any other people. The principles of Hindu religion are not responsible for their distorted application by interested parties.

Adhikaravada

We have till now been contending that from the social point of view genuine Hinduism insists on the inequality of men only with a view to help the weaker party. Now the social side of a religion is what is most liable to distortion

in the hands of interested parties, and that is why it is so difficult to arrive at the correct intentions behind some Hindu institutions. But our point that the inequalities of men are insisted upon only for the benefit of the weak can be more easily proved by reference to the purely spiritual aspect of religion. There is, for instance, the Hindu doctrine of Adhikaravada according to which different people must have different forms of spiritual practices, higher or lower as the case may be, in agreement with their spiritual competency, because just as a higher lesson will not benefit a boy of a lower standard, an advanced form of spiritual discipline will be beyond the capacity of a man at a lower level of spiritual evolution. To assume the equality of all in this respect from a false democratic sense will be disastrous to the best spiritual interests of people concerned, and every one who knows something of spiritual life will therefore admit the importance of recognising the inequality of men from this point of view. It must, however, be pointed out that the false theory of hereditary competency has been applied even in this sphere, say, when it is declared that only persons of a particular class can take to the order of Sannyas. The theory is so manifestly absurd and contradictory to the spirit of Adhikaravada that in spite of the protestations of the orthodox, the history of asceticism in this country has been an open violation of the hereditary interpretation of this doctrine. Barring a few such exceptions it may be said that the recognition of difference in spiritual competency has been wisely applied in this country, and has been responsible for the richness of Indian religious

tradition in diverse forms of spiritual practices suited to the needs of various grades of spiritual aspirants. This is the secret of the rich harvest of spiritual personalities, of sages, saints and incarnations that the religious soil of India has produced. Religions which overlook differences in the spiritual capacities of men and prescribe a standardised form of belief and discipline have always been deficient in this respect, although they may show a remarkable capacity for organisation and for infusing a

dogmatic zeal into their followers. To shut one's eyes to the obvious facts of life is not certainly the way to human welfare.

Hence to conclude, we agree with Dr. Ambedkar and the priest referred to before, that Hinduism does recognise the inequality of men. But the spirit behind this recognition is quite different from what they have in mind. It is not for the exploitation of the weak but for bestowing special attention to their requirements.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[We are resuming the publication of the reminiscences of the Holy Mother, which was stopped for the time being in order to make space for some serials shorter than it. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of Indian womanhood revealed through the little acts and simple talks of every day life.]

IT was morning when I went to the Udbodhan office. The Holy Mother was peeling the fruits for the worship. As soon as her eyes fell upon me, she said, "I am so glad to see you here. It is the day of the Bodhan.* (I had entirely forgotten about it). Please arrange these flowers for the worship of Sri Ramakrishna, and keep the fruit-tray on this side." I obeyed her orders. After I had arranged the flowers and the fruits, the Mother went to the adjacent room. It was time for her bath. She brought her comb and an oil-pot and sat by my side. I hesitated to touch her head. Just

like a girl she said, "Please comb my hair." This removed my hesitation. After her bath, Radhu came there and said, "I shall have my breakfast of curd and flattened rice." Radhu's breakfast was made ready there. The Mother ate a grain of it and handed the rest to her niece. After I had finished combing the Mother's hair, I began rubbing her body with the oil. The Mother said, "Several young men went to Jayrambati for initiation; but I could not fulfil their desire. With utmost fervour they said, 'Please give us a little of the dust of your feet. We shall preserve it in an amulet.' Such was their devotion and faith!"

While combing, a number of her hairs came out. The Mother said,

"Here you are! Preserve these." I felt myself really blessed. I had a strong desire for some of her hair.

Then I accompanied the Holy Mother to the Ganges for her bath. After returning home, she finished the morning worship and then distributed the Prasadam. That took a great deal of time.

Shyamadas Kaviraj, the celebrated physician, came to examine Radhu. The Holy Mother sent me to find her. After a while Rash Behary Maharaj invited the physician upstairs. When the examination was over, the Mother asked Radhu to bow before the physician. Radhu did as she was asked. After the physician had left the place some one inquired, "Is the physician a Brahmin?"

Mother: No, he is a Vaidya.

Devotee: Why, then, did you ask Radhu to bow down before him?

Mother: Why should she not do so? The physician is so full of wisdom. He is equal to a Brahmin. To whom should one bow down if not before him? What do you say, my child?

The food-offering to Sri Ramakrishna was over. The Holy Mother finished her meal. We all sat down for our lunch. The Mother said to me, "This Dal has been nicely cooked. You will enjoy it."

It was time for her to take a little rest. So as not to disturb her, we went to the next room. She said, "Look here, the doors and windows are shut. The heat is unbearable. Please open the windows." I carried out her command. After a little while she left the room. The afternoon offering to the Master was made in the Shrine. The Mother sat on a small carpet on the northern

verandah of the Shrine-room. I was seated by her quietly. Suddenly I saw some grey hair near her forehead. I felt sorry that I had not removed them in the morning. The Mother echoed my thought and said, "Please remove the grey hairs from my head." I removed many of them. It was now time for the devotees to pay their respects to the Holy Mother. My carriage was at the door. I had to go to our Kalighat home. It was painful for me to think that henceforth it would not be possible for me to visit the Holy Mother every day. I prostrated before her. She said, "If possible come on the Mahasthami Day.*"

It was the sacred day of the Mahasthami. My sister and I arrived at the Udbodhan office early in the morning. After a while, a few women devotees brought some flowers. They worshipped the Holy Mother and went to the Ganges for their bath. The Mother asked me, "Will you stay here to-day? It is the day of the Mahasthami." I answered in the affirmative. A few moments later, revered Sarat Maharaj (Swami Saradananda) came there to salute the Mother. We retired into the next room. The Mother was seated on the bed with her feet resting on the ground. Many devotees came and bowed before her.

Later on, we went to take a bath in the Ganges in the company of Maku and other women-devotees. The Mother said she would finish her bath at home, as rheumatism prevented her from bathing in the Ganges every day. After returning we saw many women-devotees worshipping the Holy Mother.

*The second day of the Durga-Puja which is considered very auspicious by the Hindus of Bengal.

*The day previous to the commencement of the Hindu festival, the Durga Puja.

Many of them brought new cloths as an offering. After the worship, they wrapped the body of the Mother with the cloths, as they do with the image of Kali at Kali-ghat. Then she laid the cloths aside, one by one. To some devotees the Mother would say, "It is a nice piece of cloth."

A Brahmachari came to the room and said that the men-devotees would come now to bow down before the Mother. What an impressive sight! With flowers, full-blown lotuses and Bael leaves in their hands, the men-devotees came there one by one, and after worship and salutation, went away. Some time passed in this manner. The members of Balaram's family came and worshipped the Holy Mother. I was the last to go to her. After the worship I wrapped her body with the cloth, when she said suddenly, "I will wear that cloth, as to-day I must put on a new one." She at once put on the cloth given by me. This brought tears to my eyes. After all, it was an ordinary piece of cloth. There were so many costly cloths around her. I was the poor daughter of the Mother. Her excessive affection for me made me bashful. The Mother said, "What a fine border this cloth has!"

A woman dressed in an ochre robe worshipped the Mother and placed two rupees near her feet. The Mother said, "Goodness! Why should you do that? You have just put on the ochre robe. You have Rudraksha beads on your arm." The Mother asked her about her spiritual teacher. In reply the woman said that she had not been initiated. "Without initiation," said the Mother, "without any spiritual realisation, you have put on this sacred robe.

This is not proper for you. The robe you have put on is very holy. I was about to salute you with folded hands. All will bow down at your feet. You must earn power to assimilate it." The woman said, "I have a desire to be initiated by you."

Mother: How will it be possible!

But the woman insisted. Golap-Ma supported her. The Mother seemed to yield a little. She said, "We shall think about it."

Gauri-Ma came with the girls of her Asrama. They all worshipped the Mother, took Prasadam and went away.

After finishing the worship in the Shrine-room, Bilas Maharaj came there and whispered to the Holy Mother, "I do not know, Mother, if Sri Ramakrishna has accepted the food-offering to-day. An impure leaf, carried by the wind, dropped on the food. Why was it so? Many devotees brought offerings from home. I do not know what has happened." The Mother asked if he had sprinkled the water of the Ganges over the food. He answered in the affirmative and went away. I felt troubled in mind to hear of this.

The worship of the Holy Mother went on in the same way. No sooner were some of the heaps of flowers and Bael leaves removed than a fresh pile was formed near her feet.

It was the time of the noon-day worship when a party of three women and men, from a distant part of the country, came to pay their respects to the Holy Mother. They were very poor, all their possessions consisting of one piece of cloth each. They begged their passage to Calcutta. One of the party—a man devotee—was having a private talk with the Mother.

There seemed to be no end to the conversation. The time for the noon-day worship was passing by, and the Mother must perform it. The inmates of the Udbodhan house became annoyed. One of them said to the devotee, in unmistakable language, "If you have any more to say, you had better come down-stairs and talk to the senior monks." But the Mother declared with some firmness, "It does not matter if it grows late. I must hear what they have to say." She continued to listen to him with great patience. In a whisper, she gave him some instructions. Then she sent for his wife as well. We inferred that they must have experienced something in a dream. Later on we came to learn that they had received some sacred Mantram in their dream. After about an hour they took leave of the Mother. The Mother said, "Alas, they are very poor! They have come here with great hardship."

After the noon-day worship, we had our meal. The Holy Mother now wanted to enjoy a little rest, and we retired into the adjoining room.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon. After the worship in the Shrine, Rash Behary Maharaj said, "A European lady has come to pay her respects to you; she has been waiting for a long time." The Mother asked him to bring the lady to her. As she bowed down before the Mother, the latter clasped her hand as one does in shaking hands. The words of the Mother, that one should behave according to the time and conditions, were verified in this instance. Then she kissed the lady. The latter knew Bengali, and said, "I hope I have not inconvenienced you by

this visit. I have been waiting to see you for a long time downstairs. I am in great difficulty. My only daughter—a very good girl—is dangerously ill; so I have come here to crave your favor and blessings. Please be gracious to her so that she may be cured. She is such a nice girl. I praise her because one seldom finds, now-a-days, a good woman among us. I can vouch that many of them are wicked and evil-minded; but my daughter is of quite a different nature. Please be kind to her."

Mother: I shall pray for your daughter. She will be cured.

The European lady was much encouraged by this assurance from the Holy Mother and said, "When you say that she will be cured then she must be cured. There is no doubt about it." She spoke these words with great faith and emphasis. The Mother, with a kindly look, said to Golap-Ma, "Please give her a flower from the altar. Bring a lotus." Golap-Ma brought a lotus with a sacred Bael-leaf. The Mother took the lotus in her hand and closed her eyes for a few moments. Then she looked wistfully at the image of Sri Ramakrishna and gave the flower to the lady with these words, "Please touch your daughter's head with it." She accepted the flower with folded hands and bowed down before the Mother. "What shall I do with the flower after that?" she asked.

Golap-Ma: When it is dried, throw it into the Ganges.

Lady: No, no! This belongs to God. I cannot throw it away. I shall make a bag out of a new piece of cloth and preserve the flower in it. I shall touch my daughter's head and body every day with it.

Mother : Very well, do that.

Lady : God is reality. He exists. I want to tell you something. A few days ago, one of my babies was bed-ridden with fever. With great fervour I prayed to God, "O Lord ! I feel that you exist, but I want an actual demonstration." I wept and laid my handkerchief on the table. After a long time I was surprised to find three sticks in its folds. I gently touched the body of the child thrice with the three sticks. That very moment he was cured of the fever."

As she narrated the incident, tear-drops trickled down her cheeks. She said, "I have wasted much of your valuable time. Please forgive me." "No, indeed," said the Mother, "I am greatly pleased to talk to you. Come here again on Tuesday."

The lady bowed down and took leave of her.

Jogin-Ma had an abscess on her back. It was operated on. The Mother said, "What a pity ! On such an auspicious day Jogin-Ma is lying in bed. She had a great desire to do many things to-day ; but she could not come to this room even once." "Are you going to Jogin-Ma ?" she asked me. "Please tell her that I shall see her presently." From Jogin-Ma's room I returned to the Holy Mother and saw Prijanath prostrating before her. The Mother kissed him on the chin. His eye was badly hurt by an umbrella-stick. A bandage was put on it. The Mother was greatly concerned about him. She said again and again, "Fortunately the eye has not been blinded." It was time for me to leave. The Mother asked me to come again.

WHEN THE EGO DIES, ALL TROUBLES CEASE

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the head of the Vedanta Society, Hollywood, America. The reader will find much illumination in the Swami's clear and simple exposition of the philosophy of Atman from a practical point of view.]

ONE of his disciples once asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Sir, why do we not see God ?" Sri Ramakrishna replied, "The ego is the maya, the veil that covers God. The ego is like a heavy cloud that hides the Eternal Sun. If, by His grace, the cloud of ego is dispersed, God becomes revealed. When the ego dies, all troubles cease, and man transcends fear, for he realises the Sun of Knowledge."

What is ego ? Man is the spirit and he has a body, a mind, and

intelligence, and ego. What in Western psychology is included in the one word MIND is, in Hindu psychology, divided into the mind, which receives the impressions from the senses, the intelligence, which distinguishes between these impressions, and the ego, which experiences the consciousness of them. Furthermore, in Western psychology, mind or ego is synonymous with soul, whereas in Hindu psychology, soul is a separate existence (substance) apart

from the mind or ego. One may ask, why should we accept the soul as apart from the mind ? The proof of the existence of a soul separate and apart from the mind is given in the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali. That great Hindu psychologist pointed out that, "the states of the mind are known because the lord of the mind, the Purusha (the soul), remains unchangeable." Comte, the Western Positivist, pondered over how it is possible that we read our own thoughts. The reason we are able to do so has never been explained in Western psychology. Patanjali's aphorism explains why this introspection is possible. Swami Vivekananda, commenting on this aphorism, states : "Both mind and body are in a continuous state of flux. The mind and the body are like two layers of the same substance, moving at different rates of speed. Relatively, one being slower and the other quicker, we can distinguish between the two motions. For instance, a train is in motion, and a carriage is moving alongside it. It is possible to ascertain the motion of both of these to a certain extent. But still, something else is necessary. Motion can only be perceived when there is something else which is not moving. But when two or three things are relatively moving, we first perceive the motion of the fastest one, and then that of the slower ones. How does the mind perceive ? It is also in a flux. Therefore, another something is necessary which moves more slowly, and then you must get to something in which the motion is slower still, and so on, and you will never find an end. But logic compels you to stop somewhere. You must

complete the series by knowing something which never changes. Behind this never-ending chain of motion is the *Purusha*, (the soul), the changeless, the colourless, the pure. All impressions are merely reflected upon it, as a magic lantern throws images upon a screen, without in any way tarnishing it."

So, this soul alone is the unchangeable reality, ever free, divine and pure. The soul is the Self in man. And the quest of philosophy is for knowledge of this Self. We read in the Upanishads, "Give up all vain talking, and know thy Self." This knowledge, however, must not be an inferential knowledge, merely. We must have direct knowledge, that knowledge which is the same as "being and becoming" : the knowledge of oneness of God. "I and my Father are one"—this is direct Self-knowledge. For, the Self which is the being in man, the one unchangeable reality, is one with God.

The Self is consciousness itself. He is the Sun of Knowledge. The Katha Upanishad says, "He shining, every other object shines in the universe." A single ray of His light illumines the world. By that light we are conscious of ourselves and of one another. The knowledge or consciousness we express through the instruments of mind, senses, and body is a reflection of the Conscious Self. The mind and senses are not conscious by themselves ; they are the instruments through which consciousness manifests itself and through which we acquire knowledge of the objective world. He is the consciousness of all conscious existence. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "If He turns that light of consciousness toward Himself, He becomes revealed. At night the watchman goes from

place to place, holding the flashlight before him. By its light he sees the people's faces, and by its light the people see one another, but they cannot see the watchman's face. If they wish to see him, they must ask him to turn the light on himself. So, he who desires to see the Lord, the Self within, must pray to Him, 'O Lord, in Thy mercy do Thou turn the light of Thy wisdom toward Thine own Face, that I may behold Thee.'" The saint Ramprasad says, "Light the lamp of wisdom in the shrine of thy heart, and behold the Face of Divine Mother."

In this connection one may ask, "Why and for what use need we attain Self-knowledge, or consciousness of God?" The answer is, "Therein lies our freedom, our salvation." Kapila, the father of Samkhya philosophy defines this salvation as "the complete cessation of miseries." Is not that what every man is seeking, each in his own way? But, ignorantly, we are seeking to end miseries and establish happiness in the objective world, in the external conditions of life. And we are always disappointed. The finite world can never give us the eternal happiness we are all seeking. This world is a world of relativity and as such can give us only short-lived experiences of happiness, of misery, of life, and death. To quote from the experiences of the sages of the Upanishads, "There is no joy in the finite. Infinite alone is happiness." How are we to look upon our varied experiences in the world of relativity and to seek abiding joy in the Self is taught by Sri Krishna in the Gita. He says, "Having made the same, pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, engage thou in battle

of life. The wise, possessed of this evenness of mind, go to that state which is beyond all evil. When thy intellect has become immovable, and firmly established in the Self, then thou shalt attain Self-realisation. When the mind, absolutely restrained through the practice of concentration attains quietude, and when, the Self being seen by the self, one is satisfied in his own Self; when one feels that infinite bliss which is perceived by the purified intellect and which transcends the senses, and established therein he never departs from his real state; and having obtained which, he regards no other acquisition superior to that, and where established, he is not moved even by heavy sorrow;—let that be known as the state, called by the name of Yoga,—a state of severance from the contact of pain."

The greatest obstacle to this attainment of Self-knowledge is the ego. "When the ego dies, all troubles cease." We must transcend the ego to attain divine wisdom. And the ego vanishes in what the Hindus call Samadhi, superconscious state.

The Vedas mention the seven planes or centers of consciousness. Ordinarily the mind dwells in the three lower centers, which the Yogis identify with the plexuses—(sacro-coccygeal, sacral, and solar), and man remains attached to worldliness, to lust, to greed. The fourth center of consciousness is in the region of the heart. When the mind rises to this center, spiritual awakening comes. The Yogi sees a divine light within the heart and is wonder-struck by its beauty and glory. His mind no longer runs after worldly pleasures. In the region of the throat is the fifth

center of consciousness. When the mind rises to this center, the Yogi meditates on God continuously, and gives up all vain discussions and pursuits. The sixth center of consciousness is between the eyebrows. When the mind rises to this center one becomes merged in divine consciousness, though the consciousness of a separate ego still exists. In this center, seeing the beatific vision of God, the Yogi becomes mad with joy and longs to be united with Him. But he cannot, because there is still a thin veil of ego causing separation; just as the light in a lantern though apparently accessible, is surrounded by intervening glass. The center in the brain is the seventh. When one rises to that plane Samadhi is attained. That is the transcendental consciousness. The ego is dissolved, as it were. The highest spiritual illumination comes, and the Yogi realises the Self as one with God. This experience cannot be defined in words. For the Yogi to try to express what he realises in this state is like the "salt doll that went into the ocean to show how deep it was."

Vedanta gives two processes for the attainment of Samadhi and freeing ourselves from the ego. One is called Jnana Yoga or the Path of Knowledge, and the other is known as Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Devotion. The Path of Knowledge is the process of negation. "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am neither the elements nor the categories. I am beyond happiness and misery; I have no disease, or grief, or death. I am 'not this,' 'not that'." One has to negate every content of consciousness and realise Consciousness Itself. One has to know in his own soul, "Brahman alone

is the reality, all else is unreal. I am Brahman."

This is a difficult path to follow, for one may misapply and misunderstand the whole principle of religion and truth. In India as well as in the West we find much misunderstanding of the Vedantic principle of the divinity of man. There are those in India who thoroughly believe the truth, "I am Brahman" without actual realisation of it. They think that because they are Brahman, no evil or good can touch them. And as a result, instead of rising above good and evil, they remain in evil; and instead of realising the Self beyond ego, they become egoists. In India we call such misunderstanding "indigestion of Vedanta." In the West one finds this "indigestion of Vedanta" in another form. They say, "I am divine. Hence I have every right to health, happiness, and prosperity." They want to *demonstrate* the principle of divinity by *getting* the evanescent things of life. And instead of realising the Self which is beyond all relativity, they become bound to the relative experiences of life. Instead of rising above ego, they become egoists by their repeated self-assertions. Instead of finding the spirit, they become *matter-bound*.

Indeed, it is difficult to get rid of the ego. It asserts itself, in one form or another. It is like the peepul tree, which, though you cut it down to its very roots, shoots out a new growth the next day. As long as one has physical consciousness, the ego does not die. That is why Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Devotion is considered an easier and more natural process for realising God. As long as the ego will persist, let it do so as "I, the servant" as "I, the devotee."

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "I like to ply the boat of my mind between the fifth and sixth centers of consciousness. I do not desire to remain in the seventh center long, for I have the longing to taste the sweetness of God, to chant His name, and sing His praise."

If this attitude of "Thou art the Lord, I am Thy child" is genuine and perfect, then the ego of a devotee is not harmful, nor

an obstacle. It is like a sword which, after touching the philosopher's stone, is turned to gold. The sword retains its form, but it can no longer injure anyone. The dry leaves of the cocoanut tree are blown off by the wind, and leave marks on tree trunk. So, only the form, the mark of the ego is left in one who has true devotion for God. Through intense devotion one attains Samadhi and realises God.

RELIGION IN THE CHANGING WORLD

By P. Nagaraja Rao, B.A. (Hons.)

[Mr. P. Nagaraja Rao is a Research Scholar in the Philosophy Department of the Madras University. His brief presentation of the theories of religion and spiritual life held by some of the eminent thinkers of the world will come as a new source of information to those who confine their study of religion to ancient texts and their orthodox commentaries.]

MISS Underhill in her 'Golden Sequence' mentions a story of Osbert Sitwell which is both instructive and relevant here. A traveller in the Equatorial forest looked out of the window of his lodgings one day to find out whence certain strange sounds he had heard proceeded. He beheld a huge anthropoid ape in chains, one of those tragic creatures just verging on the human—bowing in solemn adoration before the splendour of the rising moon. The traveller gazed at the spectacle struck with awe. "I had seen," he said, "the birth of religion—innocent nature emerging from its sleep and already finding in that first vague moment of consciousness something beyond itself which it must adore." But is this a disclosure of God, or a revelation of the vital roots of religious consciousness? Is this religion? If this be the beginning

of religion, what is the end? What is religion to-day? What is the content of religion? And what the nature of religious experience? The question bristles with difficulties.

But it is a *fundamental* question. It goes to the very roots of human life. What is happening to religion in this changing world? Will posterity know 'religion'—not any particular religion—but 'religion' as we understand it? Will religion survive? Or, contrariwise, is religion any longer under the attack of science? What is the status of religion to-day?

Now first of all—what is religion? People are apt to assume straightway that religion is an answer or seeks principally to answer the question of Faust—"What at bottom holds this world together?" It deals with this question doubtless, but it goes further. It prescribes a scheme of life

by determining our attitude to the very cause of existence, the true end of action perceived in the light of the answer to the Faustian question. There are in the first place, many answers. It is an instructive phenomenon. The very multiplicity of the answers, the bewildering divergence of each answer from another, the vehemence with which each answer is asserted to be exclusively and finally correct answer are all important aspects of the phenomenon itself.

Let us analyse the answers—The outstanding answer to the question is theism. Theism covers almost three-fourths of the available definitions of religion. There are a number of sharply marked stages in the development of theism. In its pure form we have its best exemplars in Vaishnavism and Christianity. Religion to the theist begins in man as "a vital, distinct, autonomous and universal demand for something perfect." This results in an attitude called the religious attitude. The religious attitude is a definite concrete attitude towards the determiner of our destiny, contrasted with such other attitudes like the ethical, the aesthetic and the logical. The theists name such a determiner of our destiny God (the omnipotent, the good, the Creator). The central principle through all theistic thought is 'to know the way of the Lord's life (the divine life) and try to live the life of the Spirit'. This can best be done not 'by co-operating with God as a fellow worker' but by absolute self-surrender. This is the famous doctrine of Prapatti (self-surrender) of which Ramanuja spoke. These theists believe 'that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Lord's

will.' An unfailing faith, or a will to believe (to use the phrase of James) is necessary for religious life. James defines the negative origin of religious attitude thus: "So long as the egoistic worry of the sick soul guards the door, the expansive confidence of the soul of faith never gains entrance." The phrase "Life of the Spirit" might be elusive, but it is the vitamin that sustains the religious life. The fundamental message of the gospel is the feeling of awe or idea of the holy of Professor Otto before a great over-powering being, God. Dr. Otto tells us that this 'idea of the holy' is the quintessence of religious life. It is a distinct non-rational category. This feeling of the 'numinous' is an *a priori* value category of religion. The feeling of the uncanny, the feeling of dependence, the thrill of awe, and the feeling of self-abasement attend the sense of the holy. Rapture and exultation and mystic union are the several attempted definitions of this mental state. Dr. Otto lays great stress on the point, that there must be a personal God, 'a not ourselves' to use Arnold's phrase.

A good many modern Christians, in the words of Evelyn Underhill, have reduced the message of the Gospel to a few humanitarian virtues such as love for mankind, fellowship, service and suffering which ameliorate the "light afflictions" which mark the temporal lot of man-kind. These are mistaken to be the substance of Christianity whereas they are only the symptoms of Christianity. It is wrong to replace the 'eternal glory' of an awe-struck sense of a Transcendent God by a shallow immanentism and an emphasis on the here and now. If we are to reduce the Christ-

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ian adoration of God to altruism and the Christian charity to humanitarian sentiment, "we shall have pious naturalism abounding in good works." But such a life would lack the creative energy which comes from the faith in the eternal source of power, God. The acknowledgment of a transcendent, perfect, good God is the corner-stone of all theism.

We have examined the nature of the theist's God, and the feeling of the theist towards the determiner of his destiny. The theist best expresses his attitude in prayer. An examination into the forms of prayer gives us an idea of the various shades of theism in their development. The ordinary man of the world asks for the good things of life—for cattle and wealth, and abundance of food and numerous off-spring as in the early Vedic days. There is "the prayer of the priest which consists of magical spells and mystical formulae," not a simple direct request. He asks God, "I have made the offerings and I must get those in return." There is on the other hand the prayer of the righteous man who asks for the things of the spirit and not merely for the good things of the world. As contrasted with the prayer of the righteous man, we have the prayer of the orthodox. Both ask for the things of the spirit; "one is easy and natural," the other is "rigid and mechanical;" one overrides tradition and the other is overridden by tradition; "one sets God above scriptures, the other the scriptures above God." We have the prayer of the Prophet and the saint as contrasted with the prayer of the metaphysician and the philosopher. Both are intent on the higher things of the spirit. Both have a lofty vision of God and pray

unto him. The prayer of the one is warm and concrete and that of the other is abstract and cold. To the former God is a person whom he realises in his heart; to the latter God is a principle whom he approaches "through the logical staircase and leaves the natural slope of intuition adopted by the prophets."

There are some rationalists who also profess a religion but not a religion with a God but only with a Good. They tell us that "biologically considered man is nothing more than the latest of a series of living creatures and that he did not arrive on this planet faultless and finished but is slowly ground into shape by the shocks of circumstances." They tell us that the supernatural in religion should be given up. They say God is the name we tremblingly give to the unseen and inexplicable. "He is the sanctuary of ignorance." They tell us that religion is the biological device to keep man living on for ever. The golden age for the religious man is not the fabled past but the future vision. They say "that religion is only a rearrangement of our prejudices." The tendency of religion is to mistake desires for facts, to take the world to be what we should like it to be than to see it as it is. The Sociologist tells us that religion sprang from the need for living in society. The mechanistic psychology of to-day tells us that religion is at best the day-dream of a being with an ape-like pedigree. Dr. Freud has told us in startling terms in his admirable and ingenious book *The Future of an Illusion*: "An examination of the unconscious shows to us that the dynamic drive of ethical strife and religious aspirations is a pack of mere illusions." "God is the

function of the unconscious." "Religion is quite in conformity with pansexualism." Religion is only an incident in the psychological development of man and society which has to be cast off. The higher religious experiences are "idealised sex emotions." The mystic experiences are only the 'projections of the morbid craving of the psychologically perverted.' Some humanitarians have spoken of religion as the influence of the social group to conserve the social value. To them religion is social utility. They laugh and tell us that every religion has its Popes, Crusades and heresy huntings. Some have made religion a play-thing of statecraft. "Religion," in the words of Radhakrishnan, "when it is used in this fashion, becomes a capitalist propaganda." There is now the strike of the wage-earner who wants a new social order. The extreme rationalists have told us that most of us are afraid to think that what we want is not so much the 'will to believe' of James, as the wish to know. They tell us that all the troubles of the world are due to ignorance, half-knowledge and stupidity. They tell us that all the grave dangers of mankind are due to our uncritical faith in a God and a religion. Poverty, disease and destitution, superstition and all the standing and cynical mockeries of religious formalism and dogmatism are not to be attributed to the malicious machinations of a Satan. His Satanic Majesty rules by no right divine, but by right human. What is wanted is sanity and criticism which can unsettle our petrified opinion, shatter dogmas and dissipate our fantastic illusions and our credulous misconceptions of the story of a God and a past and the grotesque miscalculation

of a future life. To such a rationalist, what is required is to be good in the ordinary logical sense of the term. One great rationalist of our day, Prof. Joad, finds God to be a practical joker as represented by Faust. God seems to have created the world for his amusement and occupies his whole time in deriving His entertainment from the spectacle of its antinomies. God's chief diversion seems to be the behaviour of man who is the butt of the universe. When his Maker afflicts him, he praises Him; when He visits him with misfortune, he persuades himself that he is doing all this for his own good. "What a conceited ass," thinks the Almighty, "whatever I do he thinks that it is all for his best." Such is the practical joker, God. The rationalist insists on sanity and a life of intelligence and social beneficence. The religion we need, according to Russell, is the wish to know, and not the will to believe.

To me religion is in essence an attempt of man to express his notion of a perfect entity or order. It is a flight after ideality. The ordinary theist paints God in his own image. It was Ee-nophon who said, "If oxen and lions had imagination, they would make God in their own image." Our conception of religion depends upon our metaphysics. To me the world of reality is one absolute consciousness, not a personal God. "A personal God might satisfy the emotional needs of man, but it cannot be the highest concept." What we all of us have is only an experience partial. To become one with the Absolute is the experience of the highest type. It is being and not knowing. "Art and reflection can be recommended by some as substitutes for this expe-

rience," but we behold a Law in nature and there must also be a Law in life. Russell's philosophy does not prove the failure of man so much as the inadequacy of the intellect as against the truths proved on our pulse. Religious experience is not mere hallucination or day-dream. It is the intuitional realisation of the Absolute. Prof. Royce tells us that the mystics are the most radical empiricists, for to them the facts of religion are as much a fact as a green leaf or the sun is for a dispassionate observer. No stable conviction can be built on mere dialectics. The methods of religion might be optional, but the conclusions are obligatory. Religion can be identified with emotion, with feelings and rituals, but all these views are right in what they affirm, but wrong in what they deny. Religion is an immediate experience, it is living the life of Brahman. It is not a form of thought, as Hegel puts it, but it is "what an individual does with his solitariness." The Upanishadic 'Tat twam asi' is an

illustration of the above-mentioned experience. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. This feeling of unity is present in every type of mysticism, be it either neo-Platonism, Christian mysticism, or Sufism, or Walt Whitmanism, or the Echartian type of mysticism. This experience is reached not so much by placating God, as by transforming our being. The mystic emphasis is more on being than on doing. "The soul sees, the mind consults, and the heart approves." This is the highest religious experience of which the Upanishad speaks, and which the greatest of Indian souls have experienced. We shall conclude this paper with the saying of a great western mystic which gives us a glimpse of what religion at its best is. "Blessed indeed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, but more blessed are those who hunger after the presence of God, and most blessed are those who having attained the eternal now hunger and thirst after nothing at all."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA BIRTH CENTENARY

By Swami Suddhananda

[The Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna falls in February next, and will be celebrated in different places in the course of next year. In this article Swami Suddhananda, formerly Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, expounds the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world, and appeals to the public for help in the Centenary celebration.]

BORN in the year 1836 at Kamarpukur, an obscure village in the district of Hugli, Bengal, Ramakrishna Paramahansa lived his comparatively short life of fifty years mostly in the Dakshineswar Kali Temple on the Ganges about 5 miles from Calcutta, the premier city of

India. His life was not full of innumerable outward activities, but in the inner world of his mind it was full of intense activity, which moulded his character in such a way that to the fortunate few of his contemporaries who came in contact with him, it was a great object-lesson for mould-

ing their own lives. Sri Ramakrishna, by his various spiritual disciplines—his actual practice, to the letter, of the different forms of Sadhana as inculcated in Hinduism with its diverse forms such as Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Vedantism, as well as of the Mahomedan and Christian methods of Sadhana—realised the one absolute truth, the undivided Truth-Knowledge-Bliss, which is termed Vishnu, Shakti, Brahma, Allah or God by different religions. He at last came to the conclusion that though different religions are apparently contradictory, yet they are all true, and every sincere devotee, to whatever religion he may belong, comes ultimately to the same goal.

It is gratifying to learn that his birth Centenary is soon going to be celebrated throughout the world in an adequate manner. I shall try to point out in this short article how this celebration of his Centenary, in which the study of his life and teachings will of course form the principal feature, will help India as well as the whole world to come to a state of mutual understanding and harmony.

Do we not see that the main obstacle to our mutual understanding is the belief in everybody's mind that his religion alone is true and all others are false? The most liberal among us may conceive that others' religions may contain some truths, but we think that our religion is the highest. In Hinduism the Vaishnavas contend that Vishnu or Krishna alone can give salvation, whereas the Shaktas claim the same thing about their favourite Deity—Shakti or Kali. The Vedantist on the other hand says that unless you realise the one absolute formless Brahman as true and all

else false, there is no salvation. For want of space I refrain from mentioning the innumerable sects and subdivisions of these various cults warring with one another, and refer the reader to his own practical experience. The Mahomedan will tell you that Allah alone is true and Mahomed is His only prophet. The Christian on the other hand believes that Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God, and that none can enter the Kingdom of Heaven but through Him. I may mention here another class of persons who are to be found among all religions—Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian, and are gradually growing in number; they are educated in the so-called modern style and have studied modern science. They call themselves Atheists or Agnostics and say that they cannot sincerely believe in any of the existing religions as these are mutually contradictory and full of superstitions. The days of Crusades and killing or burning a person for his religious profession is almost gone from the world, perhaps never to return. Bloodshed and cruelty in the name of religion, even if they exist now, are not a very common feature of public life. But persecution with the pen and abusing each other's religion, are, I am sorry to say, still rampant. In some places, perhaps, a little toleration is preached and practised. Still looking at another's religion with equal reverence as at one's own is a very rare phenomenon indeed. Communalism is still the great bane of every society, and I think, the coming Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of harmony, will help to a great extent to promote the noble object of uniting the different religions of the world in

a grand ideal of universal religion. How is this to be brought about? By closely studying the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. His life teaches us that we are not to discard the particular doctrines and forms and rituals of our own creed. A Hindu is not to cease to be a Hindu, Mahomedan cease to be a Mahomedan or a Christian cease to be a Christian. Let every religionist stick to his own faith and practise it as zealously as ever, rather let him be more zealous in his particular religious practices, but let him also study the religious doctrines and practices of the other religions with reverence. Let all religionists gather under a common banner of universal religion without giving up their particular distinguishing traits, and make a crusade against immorality and irreligion which can be summed up in one word as selfishness.

With regard to the agnostic educated class to which I have referred, I shall tell the reader how Sri Ramakrishna who was himself a staunch believer in God, dealt with a person of that class, and he will be charmed by his method of teaching.

Once a gentleman came to him and said, "Sir, I have lost my peace of mind, and though I have tried all sorts of human means to restore it, I have failed. I do not believe in the existence of God. So I cannot pray to him for help in this matter. Can you, Sir, show me any way of getting it back?" Reader, what advice would you have given to this questioner. Perhaps you would have tried to persuade him to accept your own faith, which to such a person would have been of no avail. What was Sri Ramakrishna's advice to him? He gently said, "Brother, can you not

pray in this way: Oh, God, if you exist extricate me from this trouble." It is said that the gentleman met him long after, expressed his gratitude for the piece of advice he had received, which, he said had exactly suited his nature, and described how praying in that fashion he was not only cured of his troubles but in the end became a staunch believer in God.

If you read Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, you will find innumerable instances of his catholic way of teaching. He was an ardent believer in the doctrine of Incarnation (Avatara) and also in the Lila of Radha-Krishna literally, like an ordinary Vaishnava. But when he met a person who could not believe in the doctrine of Incarnation, he would tell him, "You do not believe in Incarnations—what of that? Think of the formless God in which you believe with earnestness and devotion. Only don't be dogmatic and quarrel with others who are of a different persuasion." About Radha-Krishna he would say, "You do not believe in Radha-Krishna Lila literally—what of that? But of course you can try to imitate in your life Radha's intense love for Krishna, and have an all consuming love for your God." To the orthodox Hindus he would say with reference to Christ, "Why call him Jesu Khrishta, as if he was foreigner or alien—think of him rather as Rishi Khrista, and you will find a place for him in your own heart."

Want of space compels me to refrain from quoting more examples. Suffice it to say that a western scholar like Max Muller and a western writer and thinker like Romain Rolland have found in Ramakrishna a teacher from whose noble life and teachings they could learn lessons in catholicity.

Already many sincere souls throughout the world have come to this broad outlook by studying Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. His coming Centenary, by preaching his gospel of harmony throughout the world will surely help many more sincere truth seekers in learning about this noble truth of the harmony of religions. Thus the movement for peace and concord and brotherhood will increase in strength as well as intensity, and God willing, will help to usher into this world of strife and

quarrel the Kingdom of Heaven which every one in his heart of hearts is seeking to find established.

Therefore, gentle reader, do you not feel inclined to join this Centenary movement and help to your utmost ability to make it a success which, you must admit it eminently deserves?

In this short article I have tried briefly to bring out the one prominent feature of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. I hope to deal with other aspects of his teachings in future.

TWO MOODS

By Babubhai V. Gami, B.A. (Hons.)

[The writer is the head of an educational institution in Baroda State. He is also a Sadhaka, and the following article is based upon his own intimate convictions.]

IT is everybody's experience that sometimes he is in a bright, happy and light mood, and sometimes he is feeling the weight of gloomy despondency. This alternation of Light and Darkness is the rule of the world and the principle working in our existence. Day and night, bright half and dark half, Uttarayana and Dakshinayana, Bright and Dark periods in the life of nations—all go to prove this double principle in the workings of the universe. The solitary, super-conscious heights achieved by individuals and nations are destined to the equally deep depths of the sub-conscious ocean of life surging below, until the sub-conscious is raised up and transformed to the light and nature of the super-conscious.

These heaving up and falling down of the spirit and the mood of the individuals and nations

come along the natural course or evolution of the universe. It is the way in which Nature is working to reach her goal. In the case of man where there is consciousness of this principle of the workings of the universe, the progress is rapid, and there is vibration of life, light and strength.

In the light of this nature of the universe, if one wishes to lead a progressive life, one must learn to preserve the protective balance in the event of clashes of conflicting tendencies. How can this balance be achieved? Unless a man establishes a strong foundation for the steady movement of his motion, he would easily tumble down and be a prey to the forces struggling to get the upper hand in the fight.

In the face of the opposing downward forces working in the universe it is not easy to secure a sound balance and rise up. It

requires a strong adamant faith in the Wisdom, Truth, Love and Helping Hand of the Almighty. Even in the most trying circumstances, when even the last plank of our hope is shattered and we are drowning in this great ocean of life, that faith should never lessen in its brightness and strength. Even in the uplifted Hand of Almighty ready to strike a blow we must have the faith to see His loving care for us.

Such a faith must be mixed with the spirit of self-surrender, if we desire to get the progressive balance in life.

An individual should cease to believe in his own works. Whatever he does, even the breathings should be offered up to the Divine Will. And as an humble servant of His, he must take care to carry out His biddings in the minutest details. Either in peace or in war, in calm or in clash, in lull or in storm, he must think that he is doing His work and it is His Will and Wisdom that is guiding him.

There should not lurk in the recesses of our being even the most

trifling thought and will which think and work for ourselves alone. Offer up every thing which you call your own to Him. Then it is His look-out whether to make or mar you. You are His servant. Your duty is to think, feel and work for Him alone. Then you are able to establish such a balance in life that no circumstance will trouble you, and the periods of Darkness in life will lessen day by day and the periods of Light will gain in strength and duration. And at last the lost Sun who is now pent up in caves of Panis will shatter the limits and rise high up in the sky. There will be constant Light of Usha, and the Darkness of Night will disappear and the Dark Mother will take up the form of the Bright One.

Let us then pray to this Bright Usha, to visit our dark habitations. Let us pray to this luminous Agni, the Divine Will-Power, to give us Light and Strength and show us the way through the sacrifice, to the Heavens, the Swar, the abode of the Sun of Truth—God.

VIEWS OF LIFE FROM THE HINDU STANDPOINT

By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.

[Mr. Chandavarkar is an experienced educationist of Hyderabad. In the following article he presents, with references to the original authorities, the various stand-points from which Hindu thinkers have viewed life.]

BOTH the immensity and the complexity of Life's problem demand for its solution, however partial it may be, certain definite views of that life. Unless and until we have certain accurate views of the goal, we cannot hope to march on successfully. Pilgrim's path is ever beset

with thousand pitfalls. 'To travel hopefully is always better than to arrive.' Struggles and scrambles intensify the sweetness and the glory of any achievement. Of all the problems, the problem of life—its goal, its *sumum bonum*, its purpose—has been ever presenting varied

aspects and view-points. What is human life, how has it come into existence, why is it so constituted, what is its end and aim, whither it is travelling and what will be its final state are all questions which have been agitating the minds and engaging the earnest attention of all the thinkers and philosophers, the saints and Sadhus, Rishies and Yogis from times immemorial. To the extent to which each one of these has presented, or rather has endeavoured to present, solutions to these eternal problems, to that extent they have been the benefactors of humanity. The muster-roll of such has been richly ornamented from Lord Manu to Ramakrishna Bhagavan. What views of life did such benefactors hold individually and collectively? Were their views antagonistic or identical? Let us humbly seek answers to these questions of questions, as briefly as possible, trying to avoid all metaphysical intricacies or philosophical doctrines of an abstruse nature.

Bhartrihari, the poet-saint of love, piety and non-attachment significantly observes: 'न जाने संसारः किममृतमयः किं विषमयः'—'Is this Samsara full of joy and happiness or sorrow and misery? I do not know.' He leaves the reader in doubt with regard to the answer. His is a big mark of interrogation. But there is one word which is very significant. That word is Samsara. Let us begin the theme of our inquiry with this view of life.

(i) The life is spoken of here as Samsara. What does this word connote and denote? Its root meaning is 'That which moves' (सं = with, स = to move). Continuous motion harmonious progress, and rhythmic movement—dynamic and not static—are therefore the essential conditions of

life. Excelsior should therefore be its motto. 'Awake, arise.' उत्तिष्ठत, जाग्रत Move and act is the notion conveyed by this word. In this movement or progress lies the glory of one's achievement. Now this progress indicates struggle. Struggle again presupposes tremendous odds and temptations of life. The pilgrim should naturally avoid these and progress. It is a combination of Amrita (nectar) and Visha (poison). Only its proportion in each may vary. Knowing this be *in it* and *out of it*.

(ii) Other thinkers prefer to call life a Sagara or an ocean—Samsara Sagara—सागरोऽयमतीव विचित्रः—strange is this ocean. It has its waves that rise and fall. There storms will be, tempests will occur but calm should prevail. Cross this ocean of misery before the frail barge dashes against any rock and is broken to pieces. Vast ocean is life to be sure! Mark its immensity, its vastness, its grandeur and sail on to the haven. Its harbour is the Paramapurusha. The drop is to be ultimately united with the waters of that immensity. Poet Wordsworth also thinks alike.

(iii) Life is compared by some others to a great wheel—Samsara Chakra as they call it. A wheel rotates. Browning may call it 'the great Potter's wheel.' Omar Khayam may say 'Potter, Potter, gently tap'. But Kalidasa significantly remarks: "नीचं चक्रं युपरि च दशा चक्रे निक्रमेण" Like the wheel it goes up and down. The poor may be wealthy and the wealthy may be poor. The happy may be sorrowful and the sorrowful may be happy. सुखं दुःखादुर्वंधी दुःखं सुखादुर्वंधी Happiness and misery will make the wheel rotate. If then the miserable feel disheartened, they

ought to look up and hope for better days; if the wealthy or the happy feel vain and proud, they ought to take the warning that the wheel will turn. Pride goeth before a fall. How have the mighty fallen!

(iv) Life is sometimes spoken of as a battle-field. This suggests to us the idea that one ought to bravely wage war against worldly miseries and try to march triumphant. The world is for the brave नयमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः। 'Soul is not to be gained by the weak in body and mind' say the Upanishads.

(v) Life is also compared to a game. It is 'Leela' (लीला) sport. Prof. Huxley has a similar idea. It is, he says, a big game of chess. In order to win the game one ought to know the rules and play well. It may be Krishna *Leela* or Rama *Leela*. It may be the 'Dance of Nataraja' or Tandava-Nritya. Shakespeare may speak of it as a stage. We are the actors. The Great Power who is the Sutra-Dhara, the Chief Manager is behind, in and out also.

(vi) Life is again spoken of as a Kshetra or Field. The farmer could reap there as he sows. He ought to weed out the wild plants, till it with Jnana and Karma and reap आनन्द or Bliss Eternal. The Gita refers to it as Kshetra and Ksherajna.

(vii) Life, says the Vedantin, is *Maya*—Illusion. Not that it is entirely false or a dream. Its reality is hidden from us. How? Say the

Upanishads 'हिरण्ययेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापि हि तं मुखं' Truth is hidden from us by the glitter of gold. Let us realise we are the sparks of that Great Fire. 'A God in Germ' sings Robert Browning. 'Microcosm of the Macrocosm.' A noble ideal to be sure. Once the dross is removed or burnt out, the pure gold will shine brilliantly. In the fire of Vairagya—non-attachment—it is to be burnt out. Remove the veil of Heranya and Truth will be visible.

All these views are by themselves correct and never antagonistic. Their variety is misunderstood as antagonism. Virakti or renunciation is wrongly supposed to be inaction. It is a means for true action. The path may be one of Karma, Jnana or Bhakti. It is bound to lead on to that one goal. The struggle of the finite to be one with the Infinite is indeed glorious. The progress of civilisation or culture is typified in that struggle which may be described as the war between Gods and Demon. Krishna is the Charioteer. That is the Dharma-Yuddha—a war not to end all wars or to make the place safe for democracy—but a war of righteousness, justice, equity, patience and perseverance. Vairagya is the armour. Victory is triumph over death. Many such Mrityun Jayas or victors of death—have lived and gone. The attainment of that state must form the most important quest of all human beings.

THE HINDU CONCEPTION OF THE DEITY

By T. M. P. Mahadev, M.A.

[The following is a review of a recent publication—The Hindu Conception of the Deity by Bharatan Kumarappa, M.A., Ph.D., published by Luzac and Co., 46, Great Russel Street, London; price 12sh. 6d., pages 356. The review gives a brief but penetrating analysis of the position adopted by Theism and Absolutism with regard to Ultimate Reality.]

DR. Bharatan Kumarappa in his book *The Hindu Conception of the Deity*, traces the development of the conception of the Deity in Indian Thought beginning from the age of the Upanishads and culminating in the philosophy of Ramanuja. That the abstract Monism of Sankara is the earlier and the concrete Monism of Ramanuja a more developed and perfect form of philosophy is the view maintained by him. Reality is at first conceived as a bare, contentless unity, and then, details, come to be filled in, with the result that Reality is found to be a concrete universal. The learned Doctor observes that the Upanishadic conception of the nature of the Deity "passed from an earlier stage of speculation and investigation where the view that was reached was that Brahman was primarily an ultimate, all-pervading conscious principle, to a later stage, where Brahman, besides being conceived thus, came also to be regarded as possessing many transcendent qualities as well as several perfections." While Sankara took the earlier of these views to be the 'End of the Veda,' Ramanuja discerned the flaw in such a doctrine, rejected it as unsatisfactory and brought to a perfection the other stream of Upanishadic wisdom which regards the Deity as the supreme, all-perfect Person whose modes are the intelligent beings and the inert things of this world. Ramanuja directs his invectives against "the unfortunate Advaitin," refutes his doctrine of non-difference, shows the concept of *maya* to be a self-contradiction, saves the individual from the pitiable plight into which he is thrown

by the system of Advaita, and arrives at the most lofty conception of the Deity which he defines, neither as a pure non-differenced substance nor characterless thought, but as the highest Self, "characterised essentially by thought and bliss as well as by the six attributes of wisdom (jnana), strength (bala), lordship (aisvarya), might (virya), energy (sakti) and glory (tejas), of great beauty, absolutely unrivalled, free from all evil, filled with an infinite number of excellent qualities, and abounding in love."

In interpreting the Upanisads Dr. Kumarappa follows the method of the modern critical scholar and not of the traditionalist. But the conclusion at which he arrives through this method is that "the predominant thought of the Upanisads seems ... to be that Brahman pervades the world as its Soul." It would appear that, according to him, the dominant view of the Upanisads is Visistadvaitic. But that such a conclusion is not warranted by a critical study of the Upanisads will be evident when we consider the opinion of George Thibaut who, of all persons, cannot be charged with partiality for Sankara. "The task of reducing the teaching of the Upanisads to a system consistent and free from contradictions is an intrinsically impossible one," he writes. "But the task once being given, we are quite ready to admit that Sankara's system is most probably the best which can be devised." This Dr. Kumarappa himself seems to recognise when he says that Ramanuja received his main inspiration from the devotional religion to which he belonged, though the view

which he advocated is not altogether lacking in the Upanisads.

With copious quotations principally from the *Sri Bhasya*, the Doctor criticises the system of Advaita, its view of the Absolute as attributeless, its theory of world-illusion, its doctrine of non-difference, its conception of release, etc. It is not our aim, here, to attempt an answer to the charges levelled against the system of non-dualism. Almost all the objections have been replied to by later Advaitins. One would wish, however, the author of the book under review had considered at least some of the replies and tried to refute them. Neither is there space, nor is it necessary for us to repeat the arguments advanced by the Advaitin in defence of his view. But we cannot refrain from pointing out certain flaws in the Visistadvaitin's understanding of Advaita and certain difficulties which beset Theism in general and its formulation by Ramanuja in particular.

In defining Brahman as reality, intelligence, bliss, the Advaitin never means that intelligence and bliss are states of the mind. "That consciousness is the activity of a self which is other than its conscious state is seen from the fact that consciousness consists of momentary mental states which require a permanent self as their substrate and relating principle," observes Dr. Kumarappa. Here, there is a confusion between consciousness (or intelligence) which constitutes the essential nature of the self and the psychosis of the internal organ which, as a modification of maya, falls within the category of not-self. Chaitanya is not chitta. Intelligence is not intellect. The scriptural text "The mind consists of food" is quoted by the Doctor as an evidence for the view that consciousness was regarded by the philosopher who was responsible for the passage as the result of non-conscious processes, and as therefore not ultimate. But the Upanisadic seer never intends 'mind' to mean consciousness or the self. It is a precious contribution of the Hindus to

the science of psychology to have proclaimed even so early as at the age of the Upanisads that mind is a product (subtle, it may be) of matter. But the Hindu thinkers never confuse mind which is constituted by particular, perishing, psychical presentations with the imperishable, immutable Intelligence. Mind is the adjunct of the self, and because of its clarity there is a reflection of intelligence therein. Hence consciousness which forms the essential nature of Brahman is not an act of the mind. Similarly, by bliss the Advaitin never understands 'a pleasing state of consciousness.' What is called pleasing states of consciousness are only reflections of the prototype Bliss in the pure psychoses of the intellect. Hence, all objections to the view, that intelligence and bliss constitute the essential nature of Brahman, are baseless.

"When some texts declare that Brahman is free from qualities, the Advaitin makes a mistake of interpreting them in isolation, without considering other texts which describe Brahman as having several qualities," says Dr. Kumarappa. But the Advaitin never makes the mistake of isolating texts. He is interested in the harmonious interpretation of Scripture as much as any one else. But when a person is confronted with two contradictory statements, there is no other go for him but to abandon the one and accept the other. Scripture would have no purport in predicating of the Absolute attributes which are established in empirical usage. Therefore through the device of certain interpretative principles, the Advaitin holds that restating the attributes which are to be found in empirical usage, Scripture denies them in respect of Brahman. It passes all comprehension how such a passage like "He is the witness, intelligence, pure and attributeless (saksi ceta kevalo nirgunas ca)" negatives only "the evil qualities depending on Prakrti."

That from the existence of non-sentient matter in the world, we may

infer the existence of an intelligent principle which animates and supports, just as from the existence of a living body, we infer the existence of a soul or intelligent principle which animates it, is one of the arguments for the existence of God which Ramanuja refutes. Some of the defects in the analogy as pointed out by him are: (a) "the soul does not bring into existence the body which it animates," (b) "the soul does not entirely of itself support the body," (c) "the fact that the various parts of a body cohere together may be due to other forces than to the fact that it is animated by a soul," (d) "the existence of animated bodies, moreover, has for its characteristic mark the process of breathing which is absent in the case of the earth, sea, mountains, etc." Now, there are certainly these defects involved in the analogy of soul and body. But does not Ramanuja himself employ this analogy for explaining the relation of the world to Brahman? "Ramanuja's teaching... in regard to the relation of Brahman to the world, is this," says Dr. Kumarappa, "The world, consisting of matter and souls, is the body of Brahman. He is distinct from it and forms its Soul."

Ramanuja's conception of the Deity is that of a Theist. God is the supreme Person possessed of infinite perfections. "He has for His essential attributes thought, bliss and freedom from evil. He is characterised by every perfection, and above all by love." But Theism must face the dilemma which Mr. Bradley formulates in his *Appearance and Reality*. "If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God

becomes a finite factor in the whole... Short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with Him.... We may say that God is not God, till He has become all in all, and that a God, which is all in all, is not the God of religion." There are two ways of escaping from this dilemma. We can say either that God is finite or maintain that he is the Absolute seen under the limitation of the mind. Theists like James Ward and William James regard God as a *primus inter pares* and not an *ens entium*. The Deity is the foremost among the finites, a purusa-visesa, the creator of creators. William James pictures God as the Big Brother fighting against odds. God and men are fellow-soldiers in the struggle to banish evil from the world. The escape which these philosophers suggest is easy but hazardous. A finite God will cease to be God. The Advaitin's conception of the Deity avoids this difficulty. God is the Absolute seen under the limitation of maya. Brahman qualified by nescience is Isvara. The Deity is essentially a human concept, and hence the concept cannot be perfect. *Sub specie temporis* the Absolute appears to be possessed of attributes, and we call that God. Ramanuja strives to strike a middle ground. He would not admit that God is finite; nor would he subscribe to the view of the Advaitin that he is the Absolute. It is here that we find the contradiction of Visistadvaita to lie. To envisage a God that is infinite, absolute and eternal and at the same time to characterise the empirically established distinctions and differences to be absolutely real is, to our mind, a contradiction.

SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagisananda

संयुक्तमेतत्क्षरमक्षरं च व्यक्ताव्यक्तं भरते विश्वमीश ।

अनीशश्चात्मा बध्यते भोक्तृभावाज् ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

क्षरं=perishable अक्षरं=imperishable व्यक्ताव्यक्तं=manifest and unmanifest च=and एतत्=this संयुक्तं=bound together विश्वं=universe ईशः=the Lord भरते supports अनीशः=without the Lord आत्मा=the self भोक्तृभावात्=because of being the enjoyer बध्यते=is bound देवं=God ज्ञात्वा=knowing सर्वपाशैः=by all fetters मुच्यते=is released च=and.

The Lord supports this universe which consists of a¹ combination of the perishable and the imperishable, the manifest and the unmanifest.² As long as the self does not know the Lord, it gets attached to worldly pleasures and is bound; but when it knows God,³ all fetters fall away from it. (8)

Notes : This verse reminds us of verses 16 to 19 of the fifteenth chapter of the Gita. The Ultimate Principle is here spoken of as superior to and controlling Nature or Prakriti and Purusha or the soul, which together constitute this universe in its subtle as well as gross aspect.

1. *Combination*:—If we take any object it will be found to have a gross or manifest aspect as well as subtle or unmanifest aspect. And these two are joined together by the relation of cause and effect. So also every object in this universe will be found to be the result of a combination of spirit and matter. Cf. Gita Chapter xiii, 26.

2. The last two lines point out attachment to worldly objects as the cause of bondage, and realisation of God as the only remedy for it.

3. *Fetters fall away &c.*:—This shows that the aspirant after realisation should direct his attention more towards the positive effort of knowing God than to the negative one of removing the bondage. All positive effort should be directed towards the realisation of God. The moment God is realised the fetters vanish of their own accord without any separate effort.

ज्ञात्वा द्वावजानीशानीशावजा हेक्का भोक्तृभोग्यायंयुक्ता ।

अनन्तश्चात्मा विश्वरूपोद्यकर्ता त्वं यदा विन्दते ब्रह्ममेतद् ॥

ज्ञात्वा=the conscious subject and the unconscious object ईशानीशः=the master and the dependent द्वौ=both अजौ=are unborn भोक्तृभोग्यायंयुक्ता=who is engaged in bringing about the relation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed एका=another one हि=too अजा=is unborn एतत्=this त्वं=triad यदा=when ब्रह्म=Brahman विन्दते=realises आत्मा=the self अनन्तः=infinite विश्वरूपः=having assumed the form of the universe अकर्ता=inactive भवति=becomes.

The conscious subject and the unconscious object, the master and the dependent, are both unborn. She too who is engaged in bringing about the relation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed (between these two) is unborn. When one realises all these three as Brahman, the self becomes infinite, universal and inactive. (9)

Notes : This verse deals with the त्रिपुटि or the three elements of thought,—the subject, the object and the relation between the two. These three are said to be unborn, because nobody knows when and how they came to be. The conscious subject is described as the master because it exists independent of the object in deep sleep, while the object is considered to be dependent because it cannot exist independent of the perceiving subject. The second line refers to how the subject and object are brought into relation by the inscrutable power of Maya, which invests them with the character of the enjoyer and the enjoyed and thus gives rise to all kinds of sufferings. This reminds us of Yoga sutras II-17 and 23, where junction of द्रष्टा (the seer) and दृश्य (the seen) is described as the cause of avoidable misery. It is in deep Samadhi that this relation is finally severed and all the three merge themselves into one in Brahman, and the Atman which, till then, was known to be finite, active and different from the universe regains its natural infinitude, inactivity and universality.

क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षरं हरः चरात्मनावीशते देव एकः ।

तस्याभिध्यानाद्योजनात्तत्त्वभावाद् भूयश्चान्ते विश्वमायानिवृत्तिः ॥

प्रधानं=matter क्षरं=perishable हरः=spirit अमृताक्षरं=immortal and imperishable एकः=one देवः=God चरात्मानौ=the perishable and Atman ईशते=rules over तस्य च=his अभिध्यानात्=by meditation योजनात्=by union तत्त्वभावात्=by becoming one with him भूयः=again अन्ते=in the end विश्वमायानिवृत्तिः=cessation of all illusion.

Matter is perishable, but spirit is imperishable and immortal. The one God rules over the perishable and the self. By meditating on Him, by uniting with Him and becoming one with Him, there is further cessation of all illusion in the end. (10)

Notes : The first two lines of the verse are more or less identical in thought with the first two lines of verse 8. Only it takes care to explain the word, Kshara as matter and Akshara as spirit. Some try to make out a difference by explaining the word, Hara, in this verse, as referring to the Ishwara or Personal God and Deva to the Absolute. The last two lines point out the various stages by which to reach the Absolute. The word योजनात् (by union) refers to Savikalpa or Samprajnata Samadhi and तत्त्वभावात् (by becoming one with Him) to the Nirvikalpa or Asamprajnata Samadhi.

1. *Spirit (हरः)*:—The word, in classical Sanskrit, means the Lord Siva. But here it may refer to the personal God.

2. *Cessation of all illusion (विश्वमायानिवृत्तिः)*:—The reference here is to the illusion by which Brahman is mistaken as the universe.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Goal of Women's Movement

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's address at the last session of the All-India Women's Conference held in Madras in the month of October was a striking pronouncement, setting forth the ideal and the goal of the Women's Movement as she conceived them to be. She contended that the goal of the movement was not the creation of a nation within a nation, the perpetuation of the idea that women had separate interests, rights and points of view from the other half of the nation. In her own inimitable way she remarked: "The whole justification for any Women's Movement in any part of the world is that it is deliberately and consciously merely a temporary phase of the work for the consolidation of the position of women, in order to enable them to take their part in the life of the world. It is only in that spirit that I ever participate in any gathering purely of women. I hear a great deal in other parts of the world of feminism, women's part, women's movement and women's point of view. I have never understood the meaning of this limitation, this segregation, this deliberate dis-inheritance of womanhood from the common inalienable rights of humanity. In India, more than in any other country, must we realise the fundamental fact that women cannot be isolated from the common life of the nation. To-day, when we meet in women's gatherings to discuss questions of educational policy or social reform or political rights, we must bear in mind that, when we use the word 'women,'

we dare not use it in the sense of a separatist definition or as something hedged round by any limitation. But women meeting as women can only do so, dare only do so, by the reaffirmation of their faith in their own destiny and their being part of the common nationhood, the common purpose, the common struggle and the common achievement."

Hence she concluded that Women's Conference would gain its true objective when it would write its own epitaph, when the leaders of the Movement would gather together and say, "We who have lived and given our life for this work are now ready to die because no longer do the women of India need the protection of a women's organisation. They are so consolidated in their strength, courage and ability that they can take their proper part in the common life of the nation, in the economic deliverance of the country, in the educational regeneration of the people, in the social re-construction of India. In all these great matters of vital import in the life of the nation, there is no sex inequality, no sex isolation, no sex disability, but there is unity of vision, action, sacrifice and service." And the only benediction she could therefore give at the Conference was "that by their own action women might hasten the day when these organisations would go to their resting place, because Indian women would have once again resumed the great and noble destiny of being half of the nation,—the half that lead the vanguard of progressive measures of life."

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Give up Self-confessed Inferiority

Perhaps it is only several years hence that women will feel satisfied that the consummation hoped for by Mrs. Naidu has been actually reached, but they will be hastening this date if they will embody in themselves the ideal and outlook that she wanted them to adopt. According to her women were not working towards a new ideal, but towards the remembrance of an ancient Indian ideal, and the need for reminding themselves about it was the penance they had to make for the abrogation of their own destiny. She was not one of those who believed that woman was a down-trodden creature, who ever suffered from that dreadful inferiority complex that looked outside her own strength for her regeneration or deliverance. "To say that we are smothered by man-made laws," she said, "that we are trampled by man-made conditions, that we are imprisoned by man-made injustices is to deny ourselves that element of God-head which creates its own destiny. Therefore, I think that the time has come when Indian women at all events, should make the great re-affirmation that woman is indivisibly the heart of the humanity, and that she legislates for her own destiny and that she creates ideals and policies for her country's emancipation and progress. But to sit with folded hands, to say you are not allowed to do this or that, that the professions are not open to you, that economically you are dependent, that you are slaves, that you are hide-bound by conditions and conventions—this is to acknowledge a lack of self-respect that makes you feel wrongly that you are dependent for your very elementary women's heritage

on the whims of those to whom you yourselves in years and generations of weakness and love of ease and protection have given your destiny to keep and mould or mar." There was no need for several resolutions asserting the rights of women; only one resolution carried into action was enough. "That resolution is literally in the dictionary meaning of the word—the resolution that women will wipe out from their forehead the label of their self-confessed inferiority which is unreal, that they will wipe out the idea and language of dependence, that they will not assert their right but fulfil their duty.... There is necessity only for resolution on the part of women that they shall be women of the highest stature of their womanhood."

That the reaffirmation of woman's being indivisibly the heart of humanity, that the wiping out of the label of self-confessed inferiority can help women to overcome the various difficulties that are supposed to exist in their way is amply illustrated by the example of the illustrious speaker herself. In fact it is her example that gives weight to her words.

On the main object of Christian Missions

The Church of England Diocese of Madras celebrated its Centenary last month, and organised in connection with it a public meeting under the presidency of the Governor of Madras. From the several speeches delivered on the occasion we give below two interesting extracts relating to a topic that has of late been receiving increasing attention from the Hindu public. The first which forms part of the presidential address runs thus: "It is not

merely by the number of communicants that it contains that the work of a Christian organisation is to be judged. The influence that it spreads around is always far greater than the number of its individual members. Missionary work consists not merely in converting people to a particular religion, *though that may well be its main object*, but it also consists in providing educational facilities, medical comforts, and all forms of charitable enterprises. Looking back on the history of our Church and Diocese we may take legitimate pride that its efforts have always been directed to the cure of suffering and the alleviation of distress. Indeed there must be very few in this presidency who do not realise the great influence for good that the Church has been."

That the humanitarian and educational activities of Christian Missionaries in this country have received due appreciation goes without saying. If this has not been whole-hearted, it is because these works have always been utilised for furthering the proselytizing activities of the Christian Missions. What is the main object of the Christian Missions—humanitarianism or conversion? is the question that is generally asked by non-Christians in this country. The cautious and well-guarded statement in the extract given above namely, that "missionary work consists not merely in converting people to a particular religion, though that may well be its main object" leaves room for doubt and gives one the impression that among Christians themselves there is a difference of opinion as to the main object. There may be such difference of opinion among laymen, but that the ecclesiastics have no doubt on this point is made

clear by the speech made by the Metropolitan of India, Burma and Ceylon on the same occasion.

Can Christianity save the World from the Peril of Bombers?

In the speech referred to, the Metropolitan says by way of reply to Mahatma Gandhi's advice to Christian Missionaries that they must confine their activities to humanitarian work and eschew conversion from their programme of work: "I saw certain words uttered recently by a man for whom I have sincere respect and affection. Mahatma Gandhi appealed apparently to missionary bodies to abandon any desire for conversion and to content themselves with humanitarian efforts. The world at the present time has come to the conviction that what is needed is a change of heart, if war is to be avoided and the peace of the world maintained and international co-operation achieved. It is not those who are missionaries by profession who have come to that conviction but businessmen as well as men in every other walk of life. You cannot have a change of heart without the spirit of God working in the heart of men. That is the one source through which man can receive a new heart, a new purpose, a new will and the power to overcome the evil by which man is beset and which is the cause of all the world chaos and unrest of the present times. It seems to me strange that at a time when the leaders of the world, though perhaps not professing any direct conviction of the Christian faith themselves are yet convinced—that nothing but a change of heart will save the world from disastrous wars and from international strife, a great soul like Mahatma Gandhi should wish that the

Church—which is seeking to lead men to surrender themselves wholly to the presence of Christ, so that they may be delivered from those evils which hold them down—should undertake only humanitarian enterprises and not deal with that life-giving spirit which only can effect that which he is striving to accomplish—the uplift of the Harijans.

"Knowledge by itself is not going to uplift any race. Knowledge is a public danger unless it is controlled by due morality. The world sees that constantly at the present time. So, it is not by our schools giving secular knowledge that we are going to uplift the Depressed Classes. It is only when, with that knowledge is given knowledge of the one true God, and men and women are led into a vital fellowship with Him, and when that change of heart is acquired, that moral control is achieved over the knowledge which science of the present day places at the disposal of man. An aeroplane which enabled me to travel from Croyden to Denmark in a few hours, might under other conditions be used for discharging bombs upon defenceless cities to the destruction of men, women and children. Knowledge without moral control, is a danger and a curse and not at all a blessing. So that is the answer which I give to Mahatma Gandhi—that we are out to do what we want done. We are out for the uplift of people, to deliver them from degradation, and it can only be done if the power of the spirit of God dwells in them. Knowledge alone might be to them a curse. You must first establish their right relationship with God and their fellowmen, and then they will be uplifted from the degrada-

tion which is now holding them down."

In this most fallacious piece of reasoning there is one line of argument that is sound. Christian Missionaries will do what they want to do, that is, convert people into Christianity, whatever others may think of it. That is quite right on the part of bodies which have come with this as their avowed purpose. It is idle on the part of any non-Christian to expect them to give up their objective as a result of advice and appeals. Their activities can be counteracted only if Hindus try to Hinduise the large masses of their co-religionists.

But what surprises one is the cool assumption that Christianity alone can bring the power of the spirit of God to dwell in man and thereby truly uplift them, and that Christianity alone can save them from misusing knowledge, say, as the speaker remarked, by teaching them to use aeroplanes for communication alone and not for the destruction of defenceless cities. There is, however, a tinge of irony in this statement, although the speaker is quite unconscious of it. For is it not strange that the same newspaper should give a report of this speech praising the virtues of Christianity as well as the busy activities of Italian bombers in defenceless Ethiopia? Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian countries in the world; and yet it is the land of slavery, of barbarous customs, of ill-health, ignorance and what not; and it is to remedy this state of affairs and bring the light of civilization to its dark corners that Mussolini has sent his Military Mission supported by aeroplanes and machine guns that are showering destructive shells and poison/gases on Ethiopian cities. And Italy too is a Christian coun-

try, the centre from which Christianity spread over the rest of Europe, and the seat of the greatest Christian Church in the world. No non-Christian can therefore help laughing at the learned

Metropolitan's claim that conversion to Christianity alone can elevate people from degradation and teach them that aeroplanes are not to be used for bombing but only for communication?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

RAGHUNATHABHYUDAYA (Sanskrit) : By Ramabhadramba. Published by the University of Madras. Price Inland Re. 1; Foreign Rs. 2.

Falling in a line with the Mathuravijayam of Gangadevi published from Trivandrum some years ago, the above Kavya in 12 cantos celebrating the glorious achievements of the Chola King Raghunatha Nayaka with romantic descriptions, luscious images and easy movement, offers another practical repudiation of the sweeping remarks made by some, especially interested Western observers, with regard to the literacy—much less the literary achievements, of Indian womanhood prior to the British rule. The poem reveals that Ramabhadramba was a poetess of no mean order, and it can be said that it is worthy of perusal by any lover of Sanskrit poetry. The work is of special interest to the student of History as it is based on an episode of South Indian History.

B. T.

METHODS OF PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT : By Irving S. Cooper (pp. 117). Price Re. 1. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

This is a brief manual of Occultism written by a fairly advanced student and approved by C. W. Leadbeater in his Foreword. It is written in a clear and simple style without introducing technical terms. The author first deals with the indications of a psychic realm, (enveloping and interpenetrating this gross world of ours), furnished by clairvoyance in waking life, sleep, trance, mediumistic phenomena, etc., and then explains why only a very small

number of persons are psychic now, i.e., able to sense and move in that realm. He next sets out the hope and belief, that after developing character, especially the traits of selflessness, sympathy and love, along with the intellect, some thousands of years hence, mankind as a whole would be psychic, i.e., would know, move about and do things without the use of the gross senses and organs. Meanwhile, in view of the present indiscriminate and reckless resort to mental medicines, hypnotism, clairvoyance, clairaudience, breath control, mediumistic phenomena, etc., performed often by ill-equipped and characterless persons for mercenary purposes, the author does well to remind his readers that, on the physical side, serious injury, especially to the eyes, the digestive organs, the lungs and the brain is not infrequently the result of such resort, while on the spiritual side, there is either no profit, or worse, there is a downfall, to all concerned. He points out that the Hatayoga and Rajayoga systems of India always stressed and still stress the great aim of life to be reached through steps (Sadhanas) that prepare a foundation of lofty character and then open up the larger consciousness. These Yogic steps, e.g., breath control, concentration, meditation and Samadhi, when carried on under the eye of an expert and pure Guru, are free from the above-mentioned dangers; and psychic powers which are developed incidentally are duly subordinated to the main objective—the realisation of God, through the larger consciousness. The book is neatly printed.

B. V. N.

(7)

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