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The Parliament of Religions

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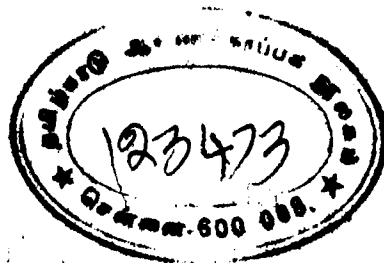
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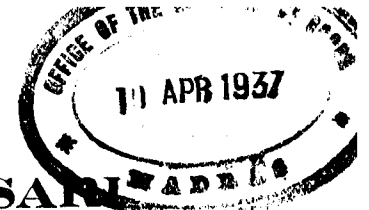
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXIII]

APRIL, 1937

[No. 12

HINDU ETHICS

विसञ्चारि निरालम्बं पञ्चद्वारं चलाचलं । पूर्वं ध्यानपथे धीरः समादध्यान् मनो नरः ।

तस्य तत् पूर्वसंरुद्धमात्मषष्ठं मनोऽन्तरा । स्फुरिष्यति समुद्भ्रान्तं विबुधम्बुधरे यथा ।

जलबिन्दुर्यथा लोलः पर्णस्थः सर्वतश्चलः । एवमेवास्य तच्चित्तं भ्रमेति ध्यानवर्त्मनि ।

अनिर्वेदो गतक्लेशो गततन्त्रीरमत्सरः । समादध्यात् पुनश्चेतो ध्यानेन ध्यानयोगवित् ।

विचारश्चविवेकश्च वितर्कश्चोपजायते । मुनेः समादधानस्य प्रथमं ध्यानमादितः ।

मनसाक्लिश्यमानस्तु समाधानं न कारयेत् । न निर्वेदं मुनिर्गच्छेत् कुयदिवात्मनो हितम् ।

पांसुभस्मकरीषाणां यथा वै राशयश्चिताः । सहसा वारिणा सिक्ताः न यान्ति परिभावनम् ।

क्रमशस्तु शनैर्गच्छेत् सर्वं तत् परिभावनं । एवमेवेन्द्रियग्रामं शनैः सपरिभावेत् ।

The mind has five egresses and has no resting place. A wise man should at the outset hold this fickle and wandering mind to the meditative way. When the mind has been checked thus within, it will become luminous like the capricious lightning that lines the cloud. In the process of meditation that indrawn mind wanders about like a drop of water on the surface of a leaf. One who understands the practice of meditation should shake off all dejection, worry, lassitude and malice, and apply himself again and again to it. The sage who is practising meditation comes to be endowed with discrimination, knowledge and power to avoid evil. When the mind is exhausted one should not press it on to concentration. Nor should the silent meditator fall into depressing moods; he should ever be mindful of the good of his self. A heap of dust or of ashes of cowdung-cakes cannot be kneaded into a ball by throwing a quantity of water all on a sudden. By gradually mixing it with water the entire heap can be made into a lump. So too the senses and the mind should be consolidated into a unified idea by a gradual process.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva CXCH 10, 12, 13, 15-18, 19½, 20½.

56 & 57

THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

[In the following paragraphs is given the substance of some of the important presidential addresses delivered at the Parliament of Religions held in Calcutta in connection with Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations.]

I

IT is in the fitness of things that, at the conclusion of the year-long celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's centenary, a Parliament of Religions should be held. A parliament of this type, attended by savants professing different religious faiths and representing the cultural heritage of diverse races, is no doubt one of the best means of bringing about inter-religious, inter-cultural and inter-racial concord. For most of our mutual prejudices are due to lack of understanding of others' points of view, and it is only when we exchange thoughts with one another, free from political passions and sectarian prejudices, in an atmosphere of amity and concord, that we can learn to appreciate the spiritual heritage of others.

The idea of Parliament of Religions became popular all the world over perhaps after the famous parliament of that type held in Chicago in 1893, which brought Swami Vivekananda into public lime-light. For India, however, the idea of such parliaments, in the sense of people of different faiths coming together for mutual understanding, is not anything new. From time immemorial we used to settle our religious differences by fair discussion in learned assemblies between the best representatives of different faiths. The best and the most enlightened of our kings like Asoka, Harsha and Akbar were patrons of all faiths known to them, and

they always used to have with them representatives of different religions, forming as it were permanent Parliaments of Religions.

But it is in the life of Sri Ramakrishna that one comes across the most original development in modern times of this idea of establishing religious concord by mutual appreciation and acceptance. What exactly his contribution is, we do not mention here just now, as it has been dealt with, together with proper reference to its historical background, in a subsequent part of the essay. Suffice it to say that nothing can be more appropriate, than a Parliament of Religions, to celebrate the centenary of one whose special mission in life was to declare the truth of all religions. Rightly did Swami Vivekananda say with reference to him, "Aye, long before ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different sects had been mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here, in sight of this city, was living a man whose whole life was a Parliament of Religions, as it should be."

The response from far and near to the call of Sri Ramakrishna has been encouraging. The newspapers report: "Savants from different parts of the globe, professing different religious faiths and representing the cultural heritage of diverse races, met together at the Parliament of Religions that commenced its session yesterday (1st March) afternoon at the Calcutta Town Hall under the distinguished

presidency of the world-renowned philosopher, Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal.... The historic hall, which was artistically decorated for the occasion, was filled to capacity by a distinguished assemblage of delegates and visitors who had journeyed from remote parts of the world to pay their tribute of respect and admiration to the prophet who was the 'consummation of two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred million people,'—a great symphony composed of the thousand voices and thousand faiths of mankind."

During its several sittings many messages from leading men and papers of religious and cultural importance were read. It will be difficult to give here a summary of all these. We have therefore to confine ourselves to a summary of the presidential addresses delivered by some distinguished personages on different days of the Parliament.

II

Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, the well-known Indian scholar and philosopher, presided over the first day's deliberations at the Parliament of Religions. He is one of the few contemporaries of Sri Ramakrishna yet alive, and had seen the Master in flesh and blood. In his presidential address he referred at first to the early life of Sri Ramakrishna, to his mad quest after God, his austerities, the methods adopted by him to overcome greed, lust, and pride of caste, and to his experiments with even non-Hindu religions like Islam and Christianity. Proceeding he remarked: "Ramakrishna was a composite personality. In contemplating Truth from the absolute point of view (Nirupadhi) he negated all condi-

tions and modes (Upadhis), but from the relative or conditioned point of view (Sopadhi) he worshipped Kali, the Divine Mother, as well as other modes and embodiments of the Deity. He worshipped the one in all and the all in one, and he saw no contradiction but only a fuller reality in this. So also he reconciled Sakar and Nirakar Upasana (worship of God with attributes and without attributes). For him there was nothing in the material form of the Deity but God manifesting Himself. The antagonism between matter and spirit did not exist for him."

He next proceeded to describe Sri Ramakrishna's conception of spiritual universalism in its historical perspective, and its points of resemblance and difference from those of his illustrious contemporaries. Ram Mohan Roy sought the universal religion in the common basis of the Hindu, Moslem, Christian and other faiths. He found that each of these great religions was based upon that common faith with a certain distinctive historical and cultural embodiment. The work of formulating a universal religion free from Hindu or Christian theology fell to Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen, who attempted this on an eclectic basis, and thus organised rituals and modes of worship. He stood for selective eclecticism. Keshab Chandra would emphasise the central essence of each religion, and acknowledge its truth. In this sense Keshab Chandra would say—It was not that every religion contained truths but every religion was true. So he selected from each religion what he considered its essence, both theoretical as well as practical. He formulated a collation of all those partial aspects in the

Brahmo faith and more especially in the New Dispensation creed. The New Dispensation would thus select the 'distinctive' central essence from each religion and make a collection, a "boquet of followers", as it were. Here it was that Ramakrishna differed from Keshab Chandra. Indeed he differed from his predecessors in two essential respects. First he maintained that the practices of each religion with its rituals and disciplines gave its essence more really and vitally than its theoretical dogmas or creeds. Secondly, it was Ramakrishna's conviction that it was not by selective eclecticism but by syncretism and the whole-hearted acceptance of a religion that its full value and worth could be realised and experienced. According to him selective extracts would kill the vital element in each religion. The observances, practices and rituals of each religion were organic to it. He would be a Hindu with the Hindu, a Moslem with the Moslem and a Christian with a Christian in order to experience the whole truth and efficiency of each of these religions. Such was the Paramahansa's syncretism.

Ramakrishna was thus a cosmic humanist in religion, and not a mere nationalist. He gave the impulse and initiative to universal humanism, and that must be completed in the present age. Religious expression was not the only expression of the ultimate experience. There were also science, philosophy or better scientific philosophy, art or the aesthetic sensibility and mystical experience, all these being phases of humanism. And the consummation was to be found in cosmic humanism which freed mankind from its limitations of outlook by finding man in the uni-

verse and the universe in man. And men must seek it to be free, not of this or that state, but of the solar system and stellar systems and beyond, in one word, of the universe. Man wanted a parliament of man, voicing the federation of world cultures, and what they sought to establish was a synthetic view of life conceived not statically but dynamically as a progressive evolution of humanity.

III

The third day's presidential address was delivered by Dr. Tagore. At the outset he remarked that he undertook to speak that day not because he claimed possession of any particular idea of God authorised by some time-honoured institution, but because he respected the memory of Sri Ramakrishna. "I venerate Paramahansa Dev," he said, "because he, in an age of religious nihilism, proved the truth of our spiritual heritage by realising it, because the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of Sadhana, and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all time the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and pandits."

Proceeding, Dr. Tagore said he had nothing new to tell. As a poet and as lover of man and of creation, he might perhaps claim to have caught the hushed voice of humanity and felt its suppressed longing for the Infinite. They had, in their human nature, a hunger for Bhooma, for immensity, for something a great deal more than what they needed immediately for the purposes of life. Even in the animals there was this touch of the Infinite which urged them to outlive their own life in the life of the race, accepting sufferings and mak-

ing sacrifices for its sake. The spirit of sacrifice in the parents, their desire to enable their descendants to find better opportunity for food and shelter, was due to this touch of the Infinite. But in the human being this sense went much beyond the struggle for physical life, much beyond extended time and extended space. For man the intimate perception of the Infinite lay in that intensity of consciousness, which he attained only when he realised ultimate value in some ideal of perfection, when in the realisation of some fact of his life, he became aware of an indefinable truth that immensely transcended it. He had realised that a life of perfection was one which had its enjoyment of the great and the beautiful, of the good, of something that they called Truth, which was deeper and larger than any number of facts.

This region did not acknowledge loyalty to physical claims. It was beyond the life of what was called the self that was ever intent upon seeking food and shelter, and upon the perpetuation of the race. That region was mysterious, yet waiting for recognition. It was called the spiritual—a word that was vague only because we had not yet been able to realise its meaning completely.

Harmony was the nature of the spiritual. When Buddha preached *maitri*—the relationship of harmony—he had this truth in mind, namely, that their treatment of the world was wrong when they treated it solely as a fact which could be known and used. He felt that the meaning of the world could be attained only through love, because it was an expression of love which waited for its answer from their soul emancipated

from the bondage of self. Their emancipation could not be negative, for love could never lead to negation. Perfect freedom was a perfect harmony of relationship and not a mere severance of bondage. The soul's emancipation was in the fulfilment of its relation to the central truth of everything, and it was impossible to define because it came at the end of all definitions.

This great law of harmony, which was the essence of the spirit, was revealed in Nature too. The evening sky was revealed to them in its serene aspect of beauty, though they knew that from the fiery whirlpool, which were the stars, chaotic outbursts clashed against one another in a conflict of implacable fury. But over and through it all, there spread a mysterious spirit of harmony, constantly modulating rebellious elements into creative unity, evolving ineffable peace and beauty out of the incoherently battling combatants perpetually struggling to elbow out their neighbours into a turmoil of dissolution. And that great harmony, that ever-lasting Yea,—that Truth, which bridged the dark abysses of time and space, reconciled contradictions and imparted perfect balance to the unstable. That all-pervading mystery was what they called the spiritual in its essence. It was the human aspect of that truth which all great personalities had made their own in their lives and had offered to their fellow-beings in the name of various religions as the means of peace and good will, vehicles of beauty in behaviour, heroism in character, noble aspiration and achievement in all great civilisations.

But religions, when they degenerated into sectarianism, forgot this

spirit of harmony and freedom that constituted their essence. In sectarianism religion approximated to the standard of materialism, the distinctive feature of which consisted in the measurability of its outward expression or the finiteness of its boundaries. Then the love of power, which was really love of self, aggressively domineered over the religious life of man, and that which was the only means by which man could hope to set his spirit free itself became the worst enemy of that freedom. Of all fetters, those that falsely assumed spiritual designations were the most difficult to break. Of all dungeons, the most terrible were those invisible ones where men's souls were imprisoned in self-delusion bred by vanity. For undisguised pursuit of self had safety in its openness, like filth exposed to the sun and air. But the self-magnification, with its consequent thwarting of the best in man, that went on unashamed when religion deadened into sectarianism was a perverse form of worldliness under the mask of religion. It constricted the heart into narrowness much more effectively than the cult of the world based upon material interests could ever do. Desecration of truth in unworthy hands caused more blindness of reason and deadness of moral sensibility than any other deficiency in education, just as the truth represented by science, when used for ignoble traffic, threatened us with annihilation.

Sectarianism bred a spirit of unmitigated vulgarity, possible only when they had no doubt in their minds that they believed in God while their life ignored Him. The pious man of sect was proud because he was confident of his right of possession of God. He rid the Infinite of its won-

der, and made it as trivial as their house-hold furniture. For the object of their possession must necessarily become smaller than themselves. Without acknowledging it the bigotted sectarian nursed the implicit belief that God could be kept secured for himself and his fellows in a cage which was of their own make.

It was at that stage that religion, which began as a liberating agency, ended as a vast prison house. Built on the renunciation of its founder, it became a possessive institution in the hands of its priests. Claiming to be universal it became an active centre of schism and strife.

Great souls, having a comprehensive vision of Truth, had the power to grasp the significance of each different form of Reality that was one in all. But the masses of believers were unable to reconcile the conflict of codes and commands. Their timid and shrunken imagination, instead of being liberated by the vision of the Infinite in religion, was held captive in bigotry and was tortured and exploited by priests and fanatics for uses hardly anticipated by those who originally received it.

"I say to you," he therefore appealed, "that if you are really lovers of Truth, then dare to seek it in its fulness, in all the infinite beauty of its majesty, but never be content to treasure up its vain symbols in miserly seclusion within the stony walls of conventions. Let us revere the great souls in the sublime simplicity of their spiritual altitude which is common to them all, where they meet in universal aspiration to set the spirit of man free from the bondage of his own individual ego, and of the ego of his race and of his creed. In that lowland of traditions where religions,

challenge and refute each other's claims and dogmas, there a wise man must pass them by in doubt and dismay.

"I do not mean to advocate a common church for mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform. The self-expression of God is in the variedness of creation; and our attitude towards the Infinite must in its expression also have a variedness of individuality, ceaseless and unending. When a religion develops the ambition of imposing its doctrine on all, it degrades itself into a tyranny and becomes a form of imperialism. . . . What I plead for is a living recognition of the neglected truth that the reality of religion has its basis in the truth of man's nature, in its most intense and universal need, and so must be constantly tested by it. Where it frustrates that need and outrages its reason, it repudiates its own justification."

IV

Sir Francis Younghusband presided over the fifth day's session of the Parliament. He said that he had gone all the way from England because of the very deep regard which he had for many years past for the great work of Sri Ramakrishna. The first reason for the attraction he felt for Sri Ramakrishna was that Ramakrishna, more than any other man, had taught the great simple principle of not merely tolerating other reli-

gions, but also of deeply appreciating them and penetratingly entering into them. He was speaking as a Christian, and what profoundly moved him was the way in which that great saint entered into the Christian religion, entered into the very simple spirit and teachings and life of Christ, so that in a way, they, Christians were able to understand their own religion better from the way in which Ramakrishna had entered into it. It was not only that Ramakrishna had affected the Christians but also the Muslims, the Buddhists and others of other religions. Mankind was very much indebted to Ramakrishna for having spread the ideal of the unity of religions and for having lived it in his own life. That doctrine rested upon a very simple principle upon which the whole universe was governed, and that was unity in diversity. Diversity always existed, varieties there would always be as there always had been. Each one of them was different from the other as each particle of the universe was different from the other. They had to retain, each one of them, his own individuality but they must also realise that deep down was the fundamental unity — unity of all differences, of all varieties, of all diversities. It was not possible to make every one think and act like one another. By acting upon the doctrine mentioned above, each one became truer to oneself and truer to the divinity within one.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

ONE day when the Holy Mother was confined to bed with her fatal illness, I went to the Udbodhan office to pay my respects to her. No one else was in the room. She had been feeling slightly better for a few days. During the daytime she used to rest in that room. It was the month of April. No sooner did I take the dust of her feet than she began to ask me about the welfare of the members of my family. Seeing her body extremely thin and emaciated, I said, "Mother, this time you look very ill. I have never seen you in a worse condition."

Mother: Yes, my child, I am very weak. It seems to me that the duty of this life, as ordained by Sri Ramakrishna, is now over. There is a constant yearning in my mind for him. I do not desire anything else. I used to love Radhu so much. I have done a great deal for her comfort and happiness; but now I do not care even for her. Her very presence annoys me. At her sight I think, 'Why should she come before me and drag my mind down to a lower plane?' Sri Ramakrishna, for the sake of his work, kept my mind so long on the worldly plane through Radhu,—otherwise could I possibly have lived after his passing away?

Devotee: Mother, it is very painful for us to hear such things from you. What will be our fate if you

also go away? We lack very much in renunciation and spiritual discipline. Renunciation is almost out of the question as far as we are concerned. Without you, where shall we get the strength to live in this world of lure and temptation? Whenever any weakness crept into our mind, we ran to you, and you showed us the way to overcome it. Now, where shall we go? It will leave us extremely helpless.

Mother (with great force): Why should you be helpless? Is not Sri Ramakrishna looking after your welfare? Why should you worry so much? I have already surrendered you at his feet. You must move within a circle. You cannot go outside it. He has been protecting you all the time.

Devotee: No doubt we remember many a time the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, but we do not always realize it. Belief and doubt alternately assail our mind. But we see you most tangibly. We always tell you about our weal and woe. You also advise us as to what course we should follow in life, after thinking of the pros and cons of everything. Therefore it convinces us beyond the shadow of a doubt that we have at last found refuge in you.

Mother: Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna alone is our protector. If you forget this, you will find yourself in a maze. Do you

know why I asked you today about your mother and other members of the family? Before that I had heard about the death of your father from Gonen. Then I asked him if your mother had any other relative and also about her means of livelihood. I further inquired if she were dependent upon you. Coming to learn that she could manage without you, I thought, 'That is good. This boy has pious intentions. Now through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, there will be no serious obstacle to prevent you from leading a spiritual life.' Everyone should serve his mother. It is all the more incumbent upon you because you have all come to me with the purpose of dedicating your life to the service of others. Had your father not left any money for your mother, I would have asked you to earn money and look after her comfort. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, that obstacle has been removed. Simply see that the money left at her disposal is not wasted. Make some arrangement about it, and look after her as much as you can. Is it a small advantage for you? One cannot earn money in strictly honest ways. Money always taints the mind. For this reason I ask you to settle the pecuniary affairs of your mother as soon as possible. Such is the fascination of money that if you involve yourself too much in it, you will feel attracted to it. You may think that you are above money and that you will never feel any attraction for it as you have once renounced it. You may further think that at any moment you may leave it behind. No, child, never harbour this thought in your mind. Through a tiny hole it will enter into your mind and then strangle you gradually.

You will not even know it. Especially as you belong to Calcutta, you know the value of money. Settle your mother's affairs as soon as possible and run away from Calcutta. Further, if you can persuade your mother to go to a holy place, you can both lead a spiritual life, forgetting your worldly relationship. Just now your mother is stricken with grief. I think this is the best arrangement. Your mother also is now quite advanced in years. Always talk to her about God. You will really fulfill the duty of a son if you can help her to gather the means for her ultimate journey. You have grown by sucking her milk. How much suffering did she undergo to raise you to manhood! Know that service to her is your highest duty. But it is a quite different matter if she stands in the way of your spiritual life. Why don't you bring her to me? I shall see what she is like. I may give her a few words of instruction if I find it suitable. But beware! Don't involve yourself in worldliness on the plea of serving your mother. After all, it is nothing but the maintenance of a widow. It means a very trifling sum. Try to settle her affairs as quickly as possible, even at a loss. Sri Ramakrishna could never bear the touch of money. You are all out in the world, taking his name on your lips. Always remember his words. Money is at the root of all the disasters you see in the world. You are young. Money will attract your mind to other temptations. Beware!

Devotee: I thought of bringing my mother here once for your blessing. But I checked this desire on account of your ill health.

Mother: No, no! Bring her one day. So many people are coming

here, and as regards the body, it will only be worse day by day. Bring her as soon as possible. In the morning I feel a little better. Can you bring her at that time? Don't be late, otherwise they will not allow you to come to me.

Devotee : Mother, it is very painful to hear these words from you. From the words you are repeatedly using to tell about your body, it seems that you have no further desire to maintain it.

Mother : To keep the body alive or not, does not depend upon me. It is the will of God. Why should you be worried about it? You cannot stay with me for a long time. You generally live in the Belur Math or elsewhere. How many of you have the advantage of staying with me or talking to me? You do not even let me know your whereabouts.

Devotee : No doubt it is not possible for us to stay with you always, but we have the firm conviction that you are alive. Whenever any weakness comes to our mind, we know that we can remove it simply by your presence.

Mother : Do you think that even if this body passes away, I can have any release unless every one of you whose responsibility I have taken on myself, is out of bondage? I must constantly live with them. I have taken complete charge of everything good or bad regarding them. Is it a trifle to give initiation? What a tremendous responsibility we have to accept! How much anxiety we have to suffer for them! Just see! Your father is dead, and that at once made me worry about you. I thought, 'What is this test again that Sri Ramakrishna is making him pass

through? That you may come out of this ordeal is my constant thought. For this reason I gave you all this advice. Can you understand everything we say? If you could do so, that would have lightened my worries to a great extent. Sri Ramakrishna is playing with his different children in diverse ways, but I have to bear the brunt of it. I cannot simply set aside those whom I have accepted as my own.

Devotee : Mother, it fills our mind with terror even to think to whom we should go or what will become of us during your absence.

Mother : Why? Rakhal* and other children of Sri Ramakrishna are here. Are they to be taken lightly? You are very fond of Rakhal. Ask him about any doubt that crosses your mind. And what is there to ask? It is not always profitable to ask many questions. You cannot assimilate even one thing. It will only add to your worry if you stuff your mind with ten ideas. Dive deep into what you have already received. Practice meditation and always repeat His holy name. Live in pious company. Never allow egoism to raise its head. Look at Rakhal. How childlike he is! Even now he is just like a small child. Look at Sarat†! How much work he does! How much trouble he undergoes, but always his lips are closed. He is a holy man. Why should he undergo all these troubles? They can be absorbed in God day and night if they merely wish it. Only for your welfare, they drag their mind down to the worldly plane. Always keep the picture of their character before your

* Swami Brahmananda.

† Swami Saradananda.

eyes. Serve them with all your heart and soul and always keep in mind whose child you are, under whose protection you live. Whenever any bad idea crosses your mind, say, 'I am His child. Is it possible for me to stoop so low?' You will find that this thought will strengthen your mind and you will attain to abiding peace.

SPIRITUAL IDEALS: PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

By Swami Gnaneswarananda

[Swami Gnaneswarananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order and is the Head of the Vedanta Centre at Chicago. The following article embodies a lecture delivered by him in March last before an American audience. The neglect of the impersonal ideal as a philosophic abstraction and the dismissal of the personal one as trite convention leave the faithless common man devoid of any religious attitude. A logical statement of the constitutional necessity of both the ideals for man in search after Truth, Beauty and Goodness, and a critical appreciation of both the ideals form the subject-matter of this essay.]

FROM the very dawn of human civilisation advanced thinkers, philosophers, and mystics have conceived the highest principle that underlies everything, in terms of the impersonal, in the form of an abstract principle. We find evidence of it in the famous literature of the Indo-Aryans, beginning from the Vedas and the Upanishads, down the ages in mythology and great epics. The Upanishads, for the first time in the history of humanity, described the highest principle as Sat-Chit-Anandam, in other words, Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss-absolute. That is to say, the highest ideal of man is the attainment of (a) absolute existence—so that his existence will not be impaired by anything; (b) absolute knowledge—so that there will be nothing he cannot know, and (c) absolute bliss—so that there will not be any thing to cause him suffering of any kind. Coming down into a later period we find the very same ideal described as Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram—meaning truth, goodness and beauty. We find that in the West

also among the neo-Platonists and the Platonists, these three words have been extensively used. They describe God as the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, giving a little personal or concrete touch to it. God is the ideal in which humanity can conceive in a concrete form the highest fulfilment of truth, goodness and beauty. Although the neo-Platonists do not describe God in terms of the personal, yet in their delineation of the abstract there is a delightful touch of the concrete. The Indo-Aryans of the early Vedic age conceived God as both personal and impersonal. As an aspirant advances in his thoughts, as his mind becomes thoroughly trained in the philosophical understanding of the subtle, he rises above the concrete idea of God and conceives the final truth in terms of the abstract.

Which one of these conceptions is more beneficial to humanity—the concrete or the abstract? Could they be compared at all? The human mind is so constituted that it can only function in terms of limitation in time, space and causation. In

order to think, it gives a concrete form to the absolute principle. Who can comprehend beauty without thinking of anything of beauty located in space or time? We shall come gradually to the consideration of a state of our consciousness where we do not have to think by means of the mind. We know by means of another faculty. Consider now how we think with our minds. It must concretize an abstract principle and place the objects of its thought in space and time, and describe for them a chain of causation. White cannot be thought of unless we think of white snow, linen, clouds, etc. The objectification of the mind might not be distinctly definite, but if you analyse your concept of whiteness you will find that it occupies some concrete manifestation. To be more definite, could you enjoy love without having any object to love? Love is an abstract principle. In order to manifest and enjoy that love we superimpose it on an object, in which we realise our ideal. Friendship too is an abstract principle. Could we enjoy 'friendship' without thinking of a particular friend or friends? And yet love or friendship exists irrespective of your or mine, or anybody else's realisation of them. There is an abstract ideal behind every realisation which we project out of ourselves in the form of a concrete manifestation. Without doing so the finite mind cannot function at all.

If humanity had to start from the very beginning to attain to its highest ideal of perfection, without being allowed to manifest its idealism in the form of concrete personal images, I doubt very much if it would have made any progress at all in the realm

of religion, philosophy or spiritual realisation. The fact that the human mind can function only through the concrete does not prove that the impersonal or the abstract idealism does not exist. Not only does it exist, but fundamentally it is the only truth. Redness as is manifest in a flower is not the all of redness—it is just a partial manifestation of redness which is really limitless. The abstract is limitless, and hence, infinite; whereas the concrete is limited, therefore changeable and destructible. If you want to transcend limit, you have to realise the abstract instead of the personal or concrete. You cannot transcend limitation thinking of form or quality. Suppose you enjoy friendship or love in a particular person, by your body and mind, you should know that it is only one manifestation, which does not exhaust the source of infinite love or friendship in you or in your friend. Such a relation is subject to change and destruction. Nevertheless, love exists in spite of the particular manifestation to or from which you have found yourself attached or detached. It is in the abstract alone that lies the fullness and completion of any ideal which one might want to realize in one's life. You might have twenty good friends and your expectations could have been realised in all of them, but could you ever say that the highest ideal of friendship has been exhausted in your concrete relations? You will always realise how infinitesimally small and inadequate are your concrete achievements compared with what remains in the realm of the unexpressed. The abstract is the ocean, and the concrete the ripples; the abstract is the atmosphere, and the concrete the pleasant breeze

—the two are one and the same, in the last analysis.

There is a special type, however, that wants to transcend the personal and to be absorbed in the impersonal. One cannot conceive of the abstract or think of it by one's finite mind. There is a deeper stratum of the human consciousness which we very seldom consciously exercise, with the help of which one can realise the abstract and the impersonal. But it requires a good deal of exercise and practice to unfold that deeper faculty. For that reason one's spiritual march starts very often along the common highway of the concrete. Consequently Hindu religious philosophy teaches two separate systems, established and elaborated by many great leaders.

Bhakti Yoga, accepting the concrete conception, teaches that the highest ideal is God, in whom is manifest the highest ideal of absolute perfection. God is good. He is the concrete embodiment of truth, love, beauty, and all other abstract qualities of perfection that the human mind can conceive of. But that again does not mean that God is a person who has all these qualities. It must not be forgotten that it is for the convenience of our finite minds that such a conceivable ideal is presented to us. A personal conception of God is necessary for the finite human mind to function on it, but it must be understood that such a conception does not exhaust the abstract idealism behind. Hinduism, with the understanding of the highest abstract principle, regards the concrete conception of different Gods and Goddesses as so many relative manifestations of the same one Brahman, or the Absolute. Philosophy establishes the

truth that the highest ideal is something abstract, and all we can think of it is that it is the zenith of truth, beauty and goodness. In mythology we find that those abstract qualities have been concretized and evolved into the conception of three great personalities which form the Hindu trinity. The True has been concretised as Brahma, the Beautiful as Vishnu, the second person of the trinity, and the Good in the form of Shiva, the third person of the trinity. They preside, respectively, over the three great functions of projection, preservation, and dissolution, or bringing back into the source, as expressed by the three Sanskrit words: Sristi, Sthiti and Pralaya. That these are the three aspects of one great power, even an ignorant worshipper of any concrete form never fails to recognise. But every devout worshipper must adhere loyally and faithfully to his own desired form or Ishtam. Thus the masses of the Hindu people have made these concrete personalities live with them in their everyday life. Literature, music, poetry, painting, nay, every effort of the human heart, including modest house-keeping, have developed to a certain state of spiritual perfection around these concrete conceptions of the abstract.

We very often hear people condemn the concrete conception of God, but a thoughtful mind never dares to trifle with such an uplifting philosophy. One has to be broadminded and must carefully remember that the concrete conception is one's personal ideal and does not exhaust the abstract principle of which it is a manifestation. If you have a red garment and like the colour of it, you have no right to say that it is the

only red, which entirely covers the quality of redness. It could be manifest in different shades and be enjoyed differently by different persons. If you have any understanding at all, you will leave others to enjoy their ideal and not try to convince them that their's is wrong and yours is the only right conception. Such a tendency of intolerance shows that you do not understand your own ideal, which is no more an ideal but a mere idol. On the other hand, an idol, so-called, can be conceived of as an ideal. If I admire a little image and project my highest conception of divinity and perfection in it, and if I do not condemn or disturb others who do not think so—knowing that there could be innumerable ideals and conceptions of Divinity—the image is not my idol but the symbol of my ideal in a concrete form. Whereas, if in one rigid conception you confine everything and fail to see that outside of your conception there could be others—you criticize them and call them idolatrous—, your conception is an idol, not theirs; you are idolatrous, not they.

Herein lies the depth and distinction of Hindu philosophy, which I want to explain. If one wholeheartedly accepts and holds on to a concrete ideal, finding in it the expression of a particular phase of one's abstract idealism, for one's own convenience of comprehension, one does in no way limit or corrupt the highest universal principle. Step by step we evolve and understand more and more the universal abstract ideal behind our personal deities. Our inner faculties of higher understanding develop and expand by our sincere devotion to our chosen ideal, so that we are able, gradually, to conceive of that totality

of which our individual ideal is a part. Consequently, for the advancement of humanity towards the goal of infinite perfection, personal idealism is a necessary step. Allow me to make a personal statement as an illustration. Had it not been for living personalities in whom I have witnessed my highest ideal of purity, goodness, and spirituality, I would not have been interested in religion at all. And I can say that it is more or less true of all of us. I am leaving aside those highly advanced souls who can remain absorbed in the impersonal. I am thinking of the average man or woman who has to use his or her untrained mind. For such, a concrete personal ideal is a necessary step. But we must not forget that a step is a step. When we mistake the step for the goal, we become dogmatic and narrow-minded, and hence criticize others and create disturbance for the rest. Such has been the case with many who adhere to personal conceptions without any understanding of the universal background of the impersonal. The trouble is that we too often accept a personal religious creed as a matter of fact. Because my fore-fathers believed, I believe. One very seldom goes deeper into one's own consciousness to find out if one really believes in such creeds even with one's own standard of analysis. Not only does such a mind never think of making any progress towards the highest ideal, but it never can even think of the existence of any besides its own. Such form the dogmatic, narrow-minded, and ignorant population of the world, and they are responsible for most of the trouble created on the face of this good earth. An idol is not made of stone, brass or wood but of the narrow-mindedness and rigidity

of one's understanding. I do not call a stone image an idol. I have been with people who, though highly evolved in their spiritual understanding, can still worship any image, which to them is just a stimulus to get into an exalted state of inner realisation. Would you still call that an idol? When we study geography, the maps, globes, etc., that we use to help our understanding are not the countries we study. The map of America is not the United States. It only helps the unfolding mind to study the country more conveniently. You cannot do without the map. But supposing the map occupies the place of the real country and you cannot see anything beyond your little paper. You have made an idol of your map and you need be awakened for your own good. The personal ideals of spirituality can stand and ought to be numerous, and are to be treated as maps, figures, and other instruments to help the advancement of understanding of a progressive mind—and there are few of us who can do without such help—but should never be considered as the goal. It is a convenient step towards the understanding of the abstract, the limitless, the one universal reality without a second.

In the history of humanity God-men have appeared from time to time, in all ages and in all countries, in whom the rest of the world has realized the fulfilment of the highest conception of perfection. In a Moses, Zarathustra, Confucius, Christ, Krishna, Mahammed, Buddha or Ramakrishna we find more efficient ready-made patterns of perfection than we could conceive by means of our finite minds. Could you form by means of your mind a higher conception of human perfection than you

can in the concrete figure of a Buddha, for instance? You may not be able to give a better one than what was lived in a Christ or a Buddha. Subtract the lives of all such God-men and women from the store of our understanding. What remains is only words without very much sense. Consequently, I for one feel very grateful to all these great heroes, our spiritual ideals, who have come on earth to inspire us with concrete standards of different ideals of perfection. A rational mind has no difficulty to find that in each one of these great ones there is a concrete manifestation of the highest ideal of goodness and spirituality. If we accept any one of these heroes and give our heart's admiration and sincere devotion to him, nay, if we meditate and keep constant contact with such ideals by means of our love, it goes without saying that a good deal of their character will be reflected in us. We shall be Christ-like or Buddha-like ourselves. If we think of, concentrate, and meditate with love and devotion on any manifestation, if our consciousness occupies any concrete object of thought, gradually our mind and body will reflect the qualities of the object of our devotion. The same effect is attained with kindred feelings like hatred, fear or anger. Suppose you are scared or obsessed by the fear of a buffalo, and that sense of horror has exercised such a powerful influence on your consciousness that constantly you think of an ugly looking buffalo. I will say that very soon you will come to look like a buffalo, and act like one. It is a psychological fact. Therefore if you are constantly attached to the personal ideal of a Christ, Krishna or Moses, and if you have learnt the art

of keeping your mind in close contact with such an ideal, by means of your thoughts, acts, and speech, what will be the result? You will attain perfection. If I make another statement perhaps it will shock you but nevertheless it is a psychological fact. Suppose that in the Christ is contained a very perfect ideal, and a person constantly thinks of him as his deadliest enemy on earth and constantly meditates on him with the worst possible hatred—remember that if you hate anything you cannot disassociate your consciousness from that —, what will be the result? That man, too, in spite of his resistance, will reflect upon himself Christ-like qualities. This has been accepted as a method by the great Rishis. As you can meditate through love, you can do so through your hatred. By constant meditation on an ideal or object, no matter how it is done, one reflects its qualities. If your whole personality reflects the qualities of a Christ, what more spiritual perfection do you want? Supposing you have chosen your ideal with caution, knowing fully that by meditating on such you will reflect his qualities, you will find that gradually you will lead an ideal life, your inner faculties will broaden and sharpen thereby, and gradually you will transcend the limitation of your ideal in form. He will not only appear as the concrete deity but also as an all-pervading essence running equally through all. You will see your God in everything. Such expansion and transformation of God-consciousness has happened in the lives of many. With extreme love a woman started to meditate on an image of baby Krishna, realising in him the concrete manifestation of God—truth, purity, beauty and love

—, and Gopala, or baby Krishna, in a concrete form, was her companion for many years. Eventually the personality of Gopala expanded for her, and she saw Gopala in everything. Finally she remained absorbed in the realization of the One Absolute. Both these realisations are phases of the one and the same Absolute Brahman.

Very often I lose all sense of limit in space or time as I look at the star-spangled firmament. The heavenly luminaries which at first give me the idea of the vastness of infinite space vanish from my consciousness, and what remains is an abstract Truth—something which cannot be expressed in the human language. At other times, when my human faculties like love, affection or admiration get the better of me, I do not care for the infinite. I feel a hunger for the concrete. I want my God to come to me in a human form, to sit by me, to talk to me, and to exchange and share my human dealings with me. Am I absolutely wrong? Can man enjoy a closer relationship with the Infinite? Does the Absolute come down in the form of an Avatar, or God incarnate of Hindu philosophy, to give the God-thirsty souls a chance to enjoy contact by means of their senses? Yes, it is the Formless which manifests itself in the form of the concrete. You realise the Absolute behind such a concrete figure. He gives you the opportunity of touching Him, of seeing Him by means of your mortal eyes, and of sharing all your human faculties with Him. Suppose God comes to you in the form of a human friend and lives with you every day, helps you and loves you, and you love Him, wouldn't that be a condition you are eager to enjoy? It is the craving of

the human heart which makes the Absolute become concrete.

There was a time when I was deeply interested in the study of the philosophy of the Absolute, which is abstract and monistic, and I did not have any use for dualism or the philosophy of the concrete. I refused to read about Krishna, Christ or Buddha, calling such matter "sentimental stuff." Even the personality of Sri Ramakrishna did not attract me. I did not want to be a slave of God. I wanted to realize the Absolute and be one with it. For years I did all I could to stay as close as possible to my ideal, maintaining a respect for those who wanted to follow a different path from mine. Once I was puzzled because I could not establish any logical harmony between the abstract and the concrete. I admired both and could not say that one was true and the other false, but I could not synthesize the two into one rational philosophy. When I was expounding monism in one of my classes, the question was asked, "What place do you give to those who sincerely worship and adore a personal God?" I could not arrive at any conclusion. I wanted some time to ponder over it, so I said, "Give me some time. I shall discuss it next week." Those seven days I was practically buried in books. I consulted big fat volumes but could not arrive at any definite conclusion. A neighbour's little girl used to come to our Centre very often, whenever she wanted to play or visit. We used to call her our little mother and she felt very happy. Of course, I used to entertain her and play with her as much as I could. She came on her usual visit on the morning of the seventh day, pushed my volumes

aside, and wanted me to play with her. But I could not spare the time for her. I said, "Mother, go and play with so and so." Being disappointed she became angry and stubborn. She threw my books away. "You are naughty," she said, "you have been reading, reading and reading for days, and you have not played with me at all." She was carrying a little doll in her arms. Pointing to it she continued, "Mother says this doll is my baby, but I don't think so for it is only a doll. You are my baby, aren't you? But I think I am going to love my dolly more than I love you. I cannot play with you whenever I want to. That is one trouble with you. My dolly is always ready to play. And then when these people talk to you and you talk to them, I cannot come at all. But my dolly is always mine. Yet what bothers me most is that you are too big! If I want to caress my dolly I can, but you would not let me caress you. What good are you? I'm through with you. I shall call my dolly 'Swami baby,' and love it." And she ran away. Do you realise that she gave me the truth which my big volumes could not? She solved my puzzle once and for all times. Do I not feel like saying, "Brahman, you are too big for me, a poor little child? I want to love you and play with you but you are not ready to play with me. You are absorbed in your big work. When I want to caress you, you hide behind your mist of limitlessness. I wish you were like a little doll so that I could handle you more freely. I would not let you be so great. I want you to come to me in the form of my dolly."

To satisfy our sincere craving, that limitless one comes to us as our little dolly. It gives us the opportunity to love it, leading us eventually to the highest goal of perfection. Thus the two conceptions are not only not contradictory, but are absolutely necessary for our growth and comprehension. You cannot compare one with the other and say, "This is high and that is low." You cannot give any extra credit to those who are attached only to the absolute or to the concrete. Each one is equally great in his own place. Human nature loves variety. Why not enjoy the same dish with different sauces? At times when it gets a little too monotonous to reason, discriminate, and renounce, I want to contact the abstract in a concrete form, and even when I enjoy the concrete I know that my little doll does not exhaust its infinite background. It cannot even be separated from the one Absolute; so loving my doll, I love the Infinite. If you do not like my doll, what does it matter? I am not going to argue or quarrel with you. I did not use up all the material out of which dolls are made. You go ahead and make your own. If you don't care for any doll, I do; so let me have mine. There is no harm in our loving a doll

so long as we know that we need the concrete as a step to reach the infinite. Even being absorbed in the Infinite sometimes you feel like having a contact with it; you want that Absolute to play with you. Then again you make a doll out of the Infinite and play with it. Ramakrishna started with the concrete conception of God as a human mother and gradually got absorbed into the Absolute. But he was not satisfied to stay there. He wanted to play. Consequently he had to have the concrete 'Mother' again. He only epitomized the truth that the concrete deity, when loved with all your being, melts into the Absolute, and makes you transcend all your limitations. And then again, if you want to exercise your faculties, that limitless One appears in the form of your personal deity. The personal is only a reading of the impersonal, and the impersonal is the background for the personal. Knowing the truth, let us go forward in our own way without creating any disturbance for others. Knowing that your conception is your personal choice, you should let others enjoy theirs, too. Thereby we will be able to establish peace, love, strength of understanding, power and perfection.

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

By Dr. M. H. Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., L.T.

[Dr. Syed of the Allahabad University belongs to that not very large group of academicians whose writings discard all cultural compartmentalizations and disclose a perfect matching of deep erudition and broad outlook. In the following spontaneous reflections is pointed out in a simple and lucid manner the urgency of cultivating moral purity as the first and principal condition of all higher realisations, individual and collective.]

I

MAN often feels lonely when his friends desert him and relatives discard him. Naturally he feels miserable and wretched. If he happens to be a spiritually-minded person he should remind himself of the fact that he is never *alone*. The Supreme Being whose life he fully shares is ever with him. He is lonely only so long as he turns his attention away from Him and remains occupied with the objects of his senses and worldly affairs. Whenever he puts himself in tune with the Infinite and begins to live, move and have his being in Him, he not only shakes off the spirit of loneliness but acquires full power, plenty and peace by virtue of his being in close proximity with the Divine Spirit. He is ever ready to befriend him. There is nothing wanting on His side. Ishwara along with His spiritual hierarchy of perfected and liberated beings, is ever responsive to us. The moment we think of them they welcome us. We have to purge ourselves of all our worldly desires, vanities and shortcomings in order to make ourselves fit receptacles for their spiritual influence. The pure beings alone can merge themselves in the Pure who is the source of all bliss and happiness.

II

Those who have been vouchsafed with a clear understanding of Divine

wisdom should consider themselves really very fortunate, in as much as they have found the supreme value of life and have been directed to tread the path of spiritual progress. They should incessantly struggle with their lower nature and try to overcome their vicious tendencies, the result of their past *Samskara*. In the course of time they are bound to succeed.

III

I met a German young man who was at the time engaged in vigorous physical exercise the like of which I had never seen before. I expressed my admiration for his method of developing his body. He smiled and remarked, "You know we have lost the war, that is why we are rebuilding ourselves and putting fresh life into our nation." His words, simple and unostentatious as they were, inspired me considerably and I began to reflect on them in the following ways:—We are so often discouraged by our failures that we generally cease to make fresh efforts, and consider ourselves incapable beings, altogether oblivious of the fact that we are made after the image of God and that we potentially share divine life. *Self-confidence*, in the true sense of the word, is absolutely necessary. If we sincerely believe in our hidden and unevolved powers, and in the boundless possibilities of progress

upward, we should never be daunted by our failures of any kind and in any department of life. Every effort that we strenuously make, though it may result in failure for the time being, is a step forward in achieving our goal. Every cause that we set up is bound to have its result sooner or later. So we should go on struggling. Our efforts may be accompanied by temporary failures, but we should always look ahead for final victory which is as certain as death.

IV

"Europeans, as a rule, have an innate dislike and mistrust of the doctrine that the world is vain or unreal They demand a religion which theoretically justifies the strenuous life. All this is a matter of temperament and the temperament is so common that it needs no explanation. What needs explanation is rather the other temperament which rejects this world as unsatisfactory and sets up another ideal, another sphere, another standard of values."* These remarks contain some element of truth as well as lack of true understanding of the complete view of life, its ideals, progress and final destiny.

V

When we look around us and closely observe the moral, material and economical condition of mankind, we are grieved to see them full of sorrow and suffering of every kind. There seems to be no prospect of human suffering coming to an end.

Heart-rending misery, agonising pain, various kinds of disaster, cyclone, earthquake, floods, famine

* Sir Charles Eliot. *Hinduism and Buddhism IX-XI—Introduction.*

and pestilence, are seen all over the world sometime or the other. There is no country where all people are happy and contented. The number of unhappy people is certainly greater than the number of happy ones. What is the cause of this state of affairs? Is there any possible explanation of the ever-increasing volume of pain and suffering in this world? There is no smoke without fire and there is no effect without a cause. Every action whether good or bad bears its fruit.

If we observe the conduct of the majority of people to-day or the past, we find that they are more inclined to break the moral law than to respect and conform to it. We sin, therefore we suffer. This process of sinning and suffering seems to be unending. Its true cause is not far to seek. It is within us. We alone can prevent it.

VI

'Ceasing from evil ways' is an uncompromising condition for moral and spiritual life. All the religions are unanimous on this point. Without moral life there is no progress to higher life. It is interesting to bear in mind that not only religious teachers disapprove of immorality but the public opinion of the world also looks down upon it. The public and its opinion is not different from the One Life which we all share. The Self in the Divine men and in the man of the world is one and the same. The instinctive moral sense of both the type of men repels immoral deeds which are rightly condemned by what is called public opinion.

VII

There is no fear of eternal hell for one who accepts the Hindu view of

life. On account of his evil deeds a man is consigned to hell fire for a time being but when his evil *Karma* is exhausted he is set free from its torture. He can begin his life afresh and cease from evil ways in order to avoid recurrence of agonising experience in hell.

LAYMAN'S ETHICS

By Dr. B. Bhattacharya, M.A., Ph.D.

[Within the limits of the ensuing essay Dr. Binayatosh Bhattacharya, Director of the Baroda Orient Institute and author of several important contributions to the study of Mahayana Buddhism, propounds a scheme of pure ethics for the layman, eschewing all religious lables. Among the bewildering tangle of civil and sacerdotal regulations and statutes, the great advantage of promulgating a simple commonsense code of ethics, which comes within the comprehension of the lowliest and the unlettered, cannot be over-estimated. This, however, does not give the least warrant to suppose that ethics resting on external transiencies without deriving its sanction and support from the central idea of religion, namely, potential divinity and consequent solidarity of man, could admit of any enduring value. The following lucid presentation of the elements of common ethics, we hope, will be appreciated by all interested in public welfare and especially in the education of adults.]

WE are living in an age when religion has become a byword for discord, strife and exploitation. Religion which should bring peace and harmony and solace and comfort to human beings, has become to-day the source of strife and unhappiness. It has led men to commit acts of cruelty and deeds of violence. To quote the words of Beranger: "When in our days Religion is made a political engine, she exposes herself to having her sacred character forgotten." The most tolerant become intolerant in her fair name. Her high and elevating principles are forgotten in the strife and struggle for political supremacy. This worldliness—this hard-heartedness of those who profess one or other form of religion has exposed religion itself to great danger and reproach. No one can deny that in these modern days the divergence of religious practices from religious principles is very great. Religion is no longer a man's

best armour. It has come to serve him as the worst cloak.

The question then naturally arises, how best can we save ourselves from the onslaught of materialism and from the false position that has arisen from the divergence between religious principles and its preachers. Some thoughtful scholars have dreamt of a universal religion, based upon the fundamental essentials, collected from the doctrines of all the existing religions. Some, on the other hand, have gone to the other extreme and have ruthlessly tried to demolish the outward forms of religion. These later have been led by a spirit of *negation* which refuses to understand the past and think of the future. To them the present counts for everything. They forget that the past, present and the future are but the conventional phrases set up by man. Time is but one and indivisible and is an attribute of the Infinite in finite form.

Irreligion connotes irresponsibility, irresponsibility to oneself and irresponsibility towards others. For such, life has no value. "From the dust unto dust returneth" is all that they know and believe in. The utter barrenness of this view-point one need not labour to point out. "True religion is the foundation of society and when that is shattered by contempt, the whole fabric cannot be stable and lasting."

In the domain of law, we find three laws constantly operating in the world. The first is the Divine Law, the second the Moral Law and the third the State Law. The first belongs to religion, the second to the domain of ethics, while the third to polity. In bidding good-bye to religion we are refusing to admit the operation of Divine Law or the Law of God. The State Laws, by their very nature, cover very little ground, and are limited in their operation. The problem thus arises as to how to make men good, how to make men righteous or how to set the wheel of righteousness in motion? or in other words how to make this little planet of ours habitable, when the principles and practice of various religions are divergent and confusing?

Some admit the existence of God, while the others stoutly deny Him. Like Cicero some believe that we have within us the spark of the *Divine Spirit*. "Whatever that be, which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and divine, and upon that account must necessarily be divine." To them the

"Soul in earth is an immortal guest

A spark which upward tends by Nature's force

A stream that is directed from its parents' source,"

while others will have nothing to do with things which their eyes do not see and their senses do not perceive. Some have faith in the transmigration of spirit, while others will laugh in contempt at these silly doctrines. Some will hold the Vedas as the repository of all religious wisdom while others will cite the Bible, the Koran or other holy books. The science of comparative religion has shown their heterogeneous character and wide divergence of doctrines so as not to admit of their universal applicability.

When, however, we examine the moral side of all religions, we find much greater agreement. Wherever man may live, to whatever community he may belong, his needs are almost the same, and in order that he may obtain the necessities of life and live happily along with others and not come in clash with them, a body of laws must be in existence which is required to be followed by all men. Moral laws have been relegated to the province of religion, and to-day, if we have to recover the moral laws, we have to hunt the religious scriptures. Man's needs being the same everywhere, these moral laws, at least their general framework, remains the same, and thus it is not difficult to find out the moral needs of human beings and reduce them to a system. This is an ambitious attempt but sometime or other this will have to be done. It will be necessary to *separate pure ethics from religion*. This is absolutely the prime necessity of the modern age.

This, however, is not the place to give details of an ethical system which may be acceptable to one and

all, whatever may be their faith, creed, religion, dogma, society, place or language. But nevertheless an humble attempt is worth making, looking to the immense importance of such a system, and if nothing else can be done, at least the system may be outlined in as few words as possible, without touching any problem that may be regarded as controversial.

How a child is born, and why it is born in different localities and different families, rich and poor, is beyond the scope of layman's ethics. We can see it coming to the earth and seeing the first light of the day in a helpless condition, in a particular environment and dependent entirely on the mercy of others. It receives the affection of the parents, care of the relatives and attention of the society in which it is born. It does nothing in return for the benefits it receives from others because it is incapable of doing anything in return. The child thus grows gradually and develops its faculties of sight, speech and comprehension by slow degrees, comes closer in contact with the manifold aspects of the life, the society and the state that environs it, and its mental horizon widens. The growing man comes in touch with his environments, goes on receiving benefits and returning benefits and discharging his duties to himself and to others in his own way. If fortunately his faculties are developed in the right way, he becomes an asset to the society, but if otherwise, he becomes a trouble to the society. Ethics takes into account the right and wrong in a man and shows the way in which right may get predominance over the wrong way.

But before right and wrong can be dilated on, man has to be analysed properly in order to find out what tools he commands and how he applies them. Viewing from this point, it can be easily seen that his three precious instruments are his body, his mind and his speech. His body is responsible for all his actions done through the five *Karmendriyas* or bodily organs. Through speech he gives vent to his feelings, and through his mind he thinks. Body, speech and mind are the lock, stock and barrel of his assets and with these he enjoys infinite possibilities of good and bad.

Out of these three instruments of the human being, the body is the weakest and coarsest weapon. The body is able to reach only a few. With the bodily actions only a few can be benefitted and only a few can be injured, because action has limited applicability. But the most unfortunate part is that most of the serious crimes are committed by the bodily actions. Murders are committed and lives and properties are desecrated. The State however, is able to take cognisance of such crimes as are done by gross bodily actions. Again, there is another aspect of the body which is frequently lost sight of. We should consider the body as a sacred trust, and it behoves us to keep it in a sound and healthy condition. But unfortunately we treat the body and use it so recklessly as if the body is our worst enemy. In fact, we do not trouble the enemy as much as we trouble our body.

The result is that the body is unable to withstand diseases, and it becomes a veritable storehouse of chronic complaints. Therefore, the first principle of the system of Uni-

versal Ethics is that we should preserve the body with care, and use it for good purposes.

The second weapon that humanity is fortunate to possess is the faculty of speech and its application is over a much wider field than that of the first—the body. By speech you can rouse human passions and control human actions. Speech is the light—the morning of the mind. It spreads the beautiful images abroad, which else lie furled and shrouded in the soul. Your speech can be reduced to writing, through which it can influence millions of men. Your speech can be transmitted through broadcasting station and reach all parts of the globe. The speech, therefore, is a much more powerful instrument than the body. By your speech you can cause pleasure or pain in the minds of your listeners. Thus the application of speech is of a very wide range. Offences by speech in only a few instances are taken cognisance of by the State, while others come under the moral law. Therefore, the second principle of Universal Ethics is that the speech of every human being should be pure and good.

Among the three instruments already mentioned, the mind is the most powerful. So great is the domain of the mind over the body, that it for a time can make flesh and nerve impregnable and strengthen the sinews like steel—so that the frail and weak become mighty. It is like the charioteer who keeps the ten horses of bodily organs under control. If the charioteer is weak and bad, all the ten horses are let loose and the result is disaster. If thoughts are bad there is seldom any harmony between the mind, speech and action. If you think in one way, speak in

another way and act in a third way, you are at once discovered as a dangerous person, while the person whose thought, speech and action are the same, is known to be a man of character, and a noble man in whatever sphere of life he may be active. It is only by controlling the mind that you can get infinite possibilities for doing good to others by speech and action. Therefore a good, pure and noble mind is the third principle of Universal Ethics.

Let us see now in what spheres the three instruments of man, namely, the body, speech and mind have their general applicability. Even in this, let us try to analyse a man according to his sphere of action.

For example as soon as a man is born we find him in the midst of a family and the family in a society. Throughout life the person is in one or another society. In other words man is a social animal. He goes on receiving his share of comforts from others. He receives his education from his parents, his superiors, his teachers in the school. He receives his food and clothing from his parents or superiors and these are again supplied to him by the supplier of food-stuff and clothing and other necessities. He, who thus receives benefits of all kinds from the society, it stands to reason, should pay his debt to the society. If, however, that be a high standard and he is unable to pay his debts, let him at least not show his ingratitude by injuring the society.

Then again when a person is born we find him in a geographical unit which is under the protection of some king or some form of government. The person requires protection for his body, his belongings, and property from some organised government.

This protection is given by the king or his government or some such organisation. For running a government there must be a body of laws which may be called the State Laws. No one living under the government can afford to violate these laws either with his body or speech or intentions. Any violation of State Laws are met with punishment or imprisonment or by the imposition of restrictions on his actions, speech and thought. At the same time every individual, living in the state, derives ample benefits from the protection of the State, such as security of his person and property as well as opportunities for carrying on daily avocations or for educating himself and so forth. As such he has a debt to pay to the State, but if that be not possible at least he is expected not to injure the State in return for the advantages received. Here man is shown as a political unit.

Thirdly we find man as an economic unit. Unless absolutely unfit by natural defects, such as blindness, lameness, deafness or dumbness, every man has to earn to maintain himself. He may either produce some goods which he may sell for money, or he may be engaged in some other independent profession, or if he is incapable of that he may work for others and be in service. In this economic field man experiences the greatest troubles. He encounters competitions, antagonisms and antipathies, whenever he begins his work of earning. At the same time, his earnings depend entirely on others from whom he derives his advantages and his profits. A trader cannot earn if he has no buyers, a professional man cannot earn unless he has clients, a servant cannot earn

unless he can get an employer. Thus man as an economic unit is entirely dependent on the good will of others. The conduct of man in this field is mostly guided by moral laws, though of course, many of his actions fall within the category of the State Laws. Here man is shown as an economic unit.

Fourthly, we find every man to be a cultural unit; he belongs to some form of culture whether it is primitive or advanced. He also belongs to some one or the other religion from the animistic type to the highest philosophical type. His actions, speech and thoughts are regulated by cultural traditions peculiar to the country and the people among whom he is born. These are guided mostly by traditional or customary laws which are both ethical and dogmatic or arbitrary in character. The man born as a cultural unit can contribute his share to the sublimation of his culture, or may behave in such a way to bring ridicule on that culture.

These are briefly the four aspects of man's life and provinces in which his body, mind and speech may be in action. Everywhere he has power to violate laws and follow them. In every field he has power to do unlimited harm or to do unlimited good. He, however, must choose well.

Now the question comes as to why man should obey laws, whether Divine or human, whether State or private, whether ethical or religious, whether customary or traditional. He has both the courses open, either to obey or to disobey. This leads us to the important aspect of Universal Ethics or the Law of Harmony. In the universe outside we find the law of harmony at work. The sun rises and sets according to a law,

and the moon does the same. The tides of the sea rise and fall according to the phases of the moon. Man is born, he grows, becomes old and dies according to a definite law of nature. In fact, everything in nature is in tune with certain laws, which in one word may be called Harmony. The reverse of harmony is discord. If one goes against the laws of nature he suffers at once. Over-exposure to the sun causes a headache, over-exposure to cold causes pain in the limbs, over-eating produces digestive troubles, fire causes burns, water drowns and so forth.

If natural laws are violated we see the results immediately. If State Laws are violated, punishment and imprisonment are the results. But with other laws, say, ethical, religious, traditional or social, results are more or less indirect and are not seen so soon as in other cases. The ultimate end of all laws is to produce harmony and avoid discord. If social harmony is broken by any reason he is ostracised. If state harmony is broken he is removed and punished. Similarly, with all laws, if they are broken discord is the result. All discord is unethical. Violent forms of unethical conduct are taken care of by Nature, while others do incalculable injury to the society, religion, the State, trade and culture. It is unethical conduct which makes life almost intolerable and the world almost unfit for all men.

The system of Universal Ethics seeks also to answer questions such as how the body, speech and mind can be regulated in such a way as to produce general harmony. The answer to this question leads us to the ethical standards, or in other words the ethical ideals, to which all actions,

speech and thought should conform. These ideals have been considered by the ancients and their number has been fixed at eight. These are known as the Atmaguna—qualities of the individual. These alone are said to be capable of leading an individual to perfection even if he does not formally conform to any human institutions.

In the Gautama Dharma-sutra they are enumerated as follows : 1. *Daya* ; wishing well to everyone even as you wish to yourself. 2. *Kshanti* ; patience in respect of internal and external injury. 3. *Anasuya* ; absence of hatred for others. 4. *Saucha* ; purity of body, mind, speech and objects. 5. *Anayasa* ; non-affliction by bodily privations. 6. *Mangalam* ; good deeds. 7. *Akarpanyam* ; absence of despair, and willingness to share with others. 8. *Aspriha* ; contentment and absence of desire for others' belongings.

Every individual should conform to these standards in the application of his three faculties of body, speech and mind. These standards are such that if any individual conforms to them, he will be able to produce the desired harmony in so far as his life is concerned. The individual has to see that none of his actions, words or thoughts are devoid of love, charity, patience and purity. There should be absence of bodily privations, goodness, absence of despair and contentment. These depend entirely on practice, and when he is able to put into practice all the qualities above mentioned, he not only produces harmony, but also leads a perfect life of full realisation of his ideals, which is the ethical conception of Moksha. These ethical ideals can be still condensed into three cardinal virtues,

namely, Ahimsa (non-injury) Samyama (restraint) and Seva (service).

Ahimsa or non-injury is stated to be the first ideal or standard to which all thoughts, words and actions should conform in order that they may be called good. Anything contrary to this standard will be bad, unwise and injurious. By our bad thoughts we can injure others, because these will subtly, slowly and surely express themselves through words and actions. Bad words can offend others, give pain to others, and bad actions can injure others both mentally and physically. Therefore, Ahimsa, though negative in character, can be stated to be the first and important of all the three principles.

Samyama or restraint is the second principal of Universal Ethics to which all thoughts, words and actions must conform. Restraint of the ten bodily organs will keep the body in perfect order. Samyama in speech will make the speech gentle, sweet and unoffending. Samyama in thought will keep the mind in a peaceful condition and control the ten bodily organs. This second principle is of positive

character, and continued practice enables an individual to develop it.

Seva or service is the third principle to which all thoughts, words and actions should conform in order to make them good, and all that is good is productive of harmony. This is also a positive principle, and shows the one great purpose for which man has been endowed with the three instruments of body, speech and mind. Every thought is meant to serve someone and serve well, and so with speech and action. If it cannot do anything else, at least it should please someone, benefit someone.

These three principles of Ahimsa, Samyama and Seva cover all the eight qualities of an individual and all the ethical principles enunciated in all religions and in every age. These three principles produce in the best manner the result desired by all, namely, Harmony. He is liberated, he is deemed to have attained perfection whose thoughts and words and actions are in perfect accord with the great Laws of Harmony enunciated in this system of Universal Ethics for the individual, whatever may be his caste, creed or country, or religion and profession.

SIVA IN MADURA TEMPLE

By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.

[The various strands of spiritual, mythological and artistic ideals that have supplied the most magnificent background of our temple architecture are a source of perennial delight. With the eye of a reverent critic Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History in Madura College, gives in the following article a delineation of the various Saiva images in the temple at Madura which attracts innumerable pilgrims throughout the year by the impelling power of its spiritual inspiration and sculptural perfection. His brief description of the historic and mythic environments of these living monuments of a dead past cannot fail to kindle interest in the heart of all who could appreciate their immense value.]

THE city of Madura has ever been a stronghold of Saivism. The huge temple measuring 750' by 850' dedicated to God Sundareswara and his consort Goddess Meenakshi is a standing monument to the extraordinary zeal that the ancient citizens of Madura had in the cause of Saiva cult. Several of the stories in the *Thiruvilayadal Puranam* narrate incidents relating to the easy victory of the Saivites over the other religionists. The paintings on the walls around the golden lily tank and inside the temple of Goddess Meenakshi indicate once again the severe persecution of the Sramanas at the hands of the Saivites.

A student of Indian Art has little or no interest in these stories of persecution. His interest on the other hand lies in the numerous sculptural representations of Siva inside the temple rivalling with one another in their magnitude, beauty and form. In this temple is seen almost all the forms of Siva carved with an attention to details, and an adherence to the principles of Agama Sastras rarely seen elsewhere. Though the temple goes after the name of Goddess Meenakshi, Sundareswara portion occupies an area at least twice as much as that occupied by Goddess Meenakshi and the sculptors have

made the portion designed for Siva far more picturesque and elegant. It is even possible that the temple itself was originally meant for Siva and later on was added the shrine of Meenakshi who is fundamentally a South Indian Goddess.

A sudden wave of enthusiasm might have sprung up in favour of the Goddess which might have eclipsed the position of the God. Such transformations are not strange to students of Indian sculpture and architecture. In fact, according to one tradition, the temple originally belonged to Perumal (Maha Vishnu who was later superseded by Siva). Though Siva has numerous forms, the chief form in which Siva is worshipped is that of a Linga. It is in this form Siva is worshipped in the Madura temple. All the other forms of Siva occupy a subordinate place. It is no wonder this is so, for Linga worship appears to have been an earliest form of worship in South India tracing its origin to the popular Phallic cult. It is easy to see in this form the symbols of *Linga* and *Yoni*. Thus inside the sanctum we see God Sundareswara in the form of Prajapati. The shrine in which the Linga is placed is a small but beautiful one. It has a Vimana above supported by the famous Ashta Dig Gajas. (The eight mythical ele-

phants supposed to support the earth at the eight points of the compass.) Inside the temple one can see numerous Lingas scattered here and there. It was the custom years back for pilgrims returning from Benares to bring with them such Lingas and offer them to these temples along with enough endowment to meet the cost of their daily worship. We have among these one Linga representing Kasi Viswanatha to which a separate shrine has been dedicated near the shrine of Goddess Meenakshi. Close by Kasi Viswanatha's shrine is the shrine of Javandeeswara, again another Linga, which is now in ruins. It is quite likely that in centuries gone by, when the temple was small, this was the principal shrine of Siva. No estimate of the sculptor's talents can be made by looking at the Lingas, for they are not only uniform but were too easy to require any special skill. We therefore pass on to the other anthropomorphic forms of Siva.

According to the Agama Sastras the anthropomorphic forms of Siva are too numerous to mention. The forms that are found in the Madura temple can be classified under the following heads:—Anugraha Murthi, Yoga Murthi, Santa Murthi, Nritta Murthi and Samhara Murthi (the poses of blessing, meditation, serenity, dancing and destruction). Besides these there are several other forms of Siva which will be noticed in due course.

As Anugraha Murthi, Siva is represented as conferring a boon upon his devotees in appreciation of their transparent sincerity in devotion and severe austerities. In the *Kambattadi Mandapam*, we have two remarkable examples of Anugraha Murthi. One is the figure of Siva conferring a boon to Mahavishnu carved on one of the

pillars at the western end of the *Kambattadi Mantapam* facing south. We see in this pillar Siva and Parvati seated on a Bhadrāsana. Siva has his right leg hanging down. He has four arms, the upper two as usual carry the axe and the deer; the right lower arm is in the act of presenting a *chakra* (wheel) to Mahavishnu who is standing at the feet of Siva with all devotion and submission. The left hand shows Abhaya (pose granting fearlessness). Seated to the left of Siva is Parvati with two hands, the left resting on the thigh and the right hand in the Vismaya (marvel) pose. Vishnu who is made to look like a boy to suit the motif of the sculpture is seen almost touching the left foot of Siva while Siva is just presenting the 'wheel'. The 'wheel' has almost left Siva's right hand. It is easy to discover different feelings in the faces of the three figures. To appreciate the skill of the sculptor one should know the story which is here translated in stone. Once upon a time, so goes the legend, Vishnu finding himself unable to conquer certain Asuras prayed to Siva for the grant of the all-powerful Chakra. To please the Lord of Kailasa, Vishnu performed Puja by offering one thousand lotus flowers every day. One day while Maha Vishnu was worshipping he found to his astonishment that one of the flowers was missing. Maha Vishnu, of course, did not know that this was only an experiment of Siva to test his devotion. Unable to face the disappointment he plucked one of his own eyes and offered the same at the feet of Siva. Siva who was mightily pleased offered the Chakra. The carvings on the pillar tell this beautiful story much better than words. The sculptor has enabled

the pilgrim to see suppressed smile in the face of Siva, devotion in the eyes of Vishnu and solemnity in that of Parvati. Another example of Anugraha Murthi is to be seen in the same *Mandap* where Siva is seen blessing his staunch devotee Chandikeswara.

Here we see Siva seated in Sukhasana posture on a raised pedestal. His left leg is hanging down and resting on a foot stool. The Goddess is seated to the left of Siva on the same pedestal, Her right leg being bent at the knee and placed on the pedestal while the left is hanging down to rest on another foot stool. Siva as usual is seen having four arms. In his back hands he holds the axe and the deer and with the front two arms he is seen decorating with a flower garland the locks of his servant, the devoted Chandesa, who is seen standing devotedly at his feet. In agreement with the rules of the Agama Sastras Chandesa is bedecked with the ornaments of children. According to *Kasyapa Silpa*, "Next to Dakshinamurthi the figure of Chandikeswara is the most famous." The story behind this sculpture is a most fascinating one. Vicharasarman was the original name of the now famous Chandikeswara. Though a Brahmin by birth he took to the profession of a cowherd, thanks to his extraordinary devotion to those animals which were often times subjected to cruel treatment by the ordinary cowherds. From the day of his assuming charge, the cows became happy and began to yield much more milk than their udders could hold. The extra milk began to flow out. The new cowherd unable to see this huge waste of that precious god-given milk collected together all the

milk and poured it on the heads of Lingas set up by him for that purpose. The old cowherds who lost their positions on account of Vicharasarman took advantage of this and began to fabricate all sorts of stories against this Brahmin boy. They said that he was wantonly milking the cows and pouring the same on mud. Yajnadatta, the father of Vicharasarman, on hearing the report proceeded to the grazing ground to examine the truth of the allegations. To his surprise he found his son was wasting the milk as represented by the wicked cowherds. He immediately kicked the Linga. The boy not knowing who exactly it was that kicked the Linga, in a fit of extreme devotion cut off the leg of the father. Siva was extremely pleased to note the strange devotion and appeared on the scene with his consort Parvati and offered him his grace. We see Chandesa with his hands folded in the *anjali* (palms folded erectly in front) pose standing on a *padmasana* (carved lotus used as a pedestal) in front of Siva. We have in Ravananugrahamurthi another type of Siva in his boon-giving form. It is impossible to exaggerate the beauty of this wonderful relief on the western pillar. Here we see Ravana with his ten heads and twenty arms under the Kailasa Mountain playing on his lute, the melodious Samaveda. Ravana, the king of Lanka in one of his fanciful moods took it into his head to carry the Mount Kailasa to his capital Lanka where he wanted to set it up as a pillar of victory. When the mountain was thus lifted a great confusion resulted among the dwellers of the mountain. The *Ganas* (Siva's hosts) were shocked and Parvati embraced Siva in fear. Parameswara

divined the situation and pressed the hill with his left toe and the audacious giant was caught under the weight. It was only after years of weary penance that Ravana was released. This most exquisite sculpture recalls to our mind in a manner at once graphic and familiar one of the most popular stories in Hindu Mythology. The natural proportions of each figure, the solemnity in the face of Siva and a great realism in the moulding of the figure of Ravana and the expressive eyes of this monarch of Ceylon cannot escape the attention of even a casual visitor. When the Kailasa mountain was shaken there was a thrill among all the dwellers on the lofty peaks of the mountain. The sculptor has even shown this in a most remarkable way. The kneeling posture given to Ravana

easily suggests the strength of this mighty ruler.

Siva in his Yogic attitude always goes by the name of Dakshinamurthi. Among the several images in the South Indian Temple, easily the most popular is Dakshinamurthi. In this temple we have more than three representations of this form. All these represent the God as a youthful boy engaged at once in meditating and teaching. The remarkable figures are seen almost opposite to each other in *Kambattadi Mandapam*. In one figure we see the God with his right leg bent at the knee vertically and placed on the demon Apasmara while the left is bent across so as to rest upon the right thigh. The right forearm of this image symbolises Gnana-mudra. The back left hand carries a bundle of manuscripts.

(To be continued)

THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[We give below the substance of two of the addresses delivered at Madras during the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations, a short report of which was published in the last issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The first part of the essay is a summary of the lecture of Mr. M. R. Jayakar, M.A., Bar-at-Law, Bombay, and the second, of Mr. A. R. Wadia, M.A., Bar-at-Law, Professor of Philosophy in the Mysore University.]

I

SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

IT was indeed a miracle that in spite of political subjection, Indian spirituality was not dead, and that she could give birth to a great world teacher in modern times. It was indeed a miracle that that saint was worshipped in spite of war, bloodshed and hatred, in far and distant lands. What was the secret of the message of Sri Ramakrishna? One who looked at the early life of the sage would find very little there to

indicate that he was developing into a great spiritual master. He displayed a spirit of 'rebelliousness' on the occasion of his *Moonja* ceremony, when he refused to go to the most illustrious Brahmin lady who was present and say, *Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi*, as was the custom, but sought the village blacksmith's wife and insisted on having his spiritual *bhiksha* from her.

It was surprising, the way Sri Ramakrishna looked at religion.

Religion, he considered, should be viewed from three aspects,—the conception of a human being, one's relation to one's fellowmen, and one's relation to God. In regard to these, Sri Ramakrishna made a great departure, not from the essence of Hindu religion, but certainly from the course followed by his predecessors. He put up a bold claim—the boldest ever put forward since the days of the Upanishads—for all human beings that every one of them had potential Divinity in him or her, that one's contact with that Divinity was inseparable, however, low, vile or depraved the individual might be, and that everyone of them was a sacred abode of God. Among his disciples were men and women of all kinds, and sometimes he was attacked for being "too partial to profligates and prostitutes"! The most degraded, when they entered his presence became different. His place was open to every one, people of all creeds and schools of thoughts. He left neither of the indicia of godliness so common with modern saints—a book of revelation and hierarchy with a mental livery, though not a physical one. But he left a great storehouse of spiritual energy; he left behind tremendous impulses. Sri Ramakrishna's conception of the relation of man to the rest of the world was simple. It was the establishment of a happy co-ordination between the physical impulses of human beings, their failings and even vices, with the spirituality latent in them, and bringing them into co-relation with the rest of the world.

Sri Ramakrishna's conception of religion did not consist in mere faith in the divinity, belief in certain *Apta Vakya* or *Pramana* where reason end-

ed, but in seeing and coming into contact with God. *Apta Vakya* and *Pramana* he threw aside saying "My religion is not that kind of religion; my religion is this: one must contact God in one's personal life. If the religion which you teach or which I am going to teach only produces faith in God, that is not religion at all. My religion is that which will make one see God." Swami Vivekananda went from sage to sage—Bengal was so full of these—asking if any of them had seen God and could show God to him. None was able to give him a satisfactory answer. He asked two questions and to neither he got a satisfactory answer. He listened to their discourses; he admired the phraseology of their dialectics; but his doubts were not cleared. Narendranath turned away from them saying, "What is the good of it unless you have seen God yourself?" One day he came to Sri Ramakrishna and got his answer. The Paramahansa touched young Narendranath's spiritual cord, and the latter went into Samadhi, and then descended into the world having sensed God. Miracles such as these were rare.

Sri Ramakrishna derived his inspiration from nature. He did not read books. He used to go to a *Smashana* (burial ground) for quite contemplation and spiritual experience. He made his body a machine responsive to the surrounding nature. Sri Ramakrishna was told that the love of Gopis for Sri Krishna was purely spiritual. Wishing to experience it, he went about dressing, living and feeling like a woman, and in course of time he realised the truth underlying the Krishna-Gopika story. Sri Ramakrishna heard of Christ and contemplated on the teachings of

Christ, and he had a vision of Christ living. In his aphorisms, one would find Christ placed on the same footing as Rama or Krishna or Sankaracharya. To complete his spiritual experiences, he got a teacher of Islam to initiate him into the mysteries of Islam, and in course of time Sri Ramakrishna sensed Islam also.

Sri Ramakrishna's conception of religion was very different indeed from the conception of many Sadhus who preceded him. His conception was to see and contact God, to sense Him every day and to see that He was our daily inspiration.

Sri Ramakrishna was the one saint of modern times who had sensed all the three great religions together—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. He might be taken to be typical of what the future Indian religion might be, if Indians were only alert. The experiment which they were beginning that year in the political field was a process of nation-welding and nation-building. Analogous to that, perhaps a counter part of that, process there would be one in the sphere of religion. In course of time, the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, in so far as they embodied a co-relation of these three great religions of India, would prevail if the votaries of the two militant Semitic religions—Semitic in their origin—Islam and Christianity, allowed the process of assimilation to go on uninterrupted. Conversions were an arresting of that process and an insult to that process. When people sat together in a legislature, a kind of fraternity would grow, notwithstanding "the arrogance of some political parties", and that fraternity would extend to spheres outside politics. It was their duty to help such a process and not to give

it a violent shock by any act of aggression. Sri Ramakrishna had taught them that conversions had no place in religion, for one religion was as good as any other; it was not the faith that mattered; it was the sensing of God that was the essence of religion.

We must all be willing instruments where one religion unconsciously and gradually influenced another. One who read the output of literature from year to year in Christianity and Islam would find that Sri Ramakrishna laid the foundations true when he said he realised God in all those religions. The wonderful part of it was that the experiences recorded by those Islamic and Christian students showed that they felt that in Sri Ramakrishna they found the greatest embodiment of the teachings of their particular religion. Who could know the purpose of God in bringing these three religions together in India? Was it not extraordinary that two militant religions throve side by side with Hinduism? It was God's plan to permeate Hinduism with the virile truths of the other two faiths, and in turn make them absorb the tolerance of the other. This process began with Sri Ramakrishna, and it was for us to complete it.

One of the greatest conceptions that Sri Ramakrishna left behind was that of God as the Mother. The conception had been there before him, but no one had brought it out so vividly as Sri Ramakrishna did. It was a conception which Christianity was gradually absorbing. Sri Ramakrishna sublimated his love for his wife into love for the Mother. He turned to his wife with the greatest kindness and asked her to appear before him in her best dress and

bedecked with all ornaments. He put her on a pedestal and fell at her feet and worshipped her. At the age of nineteen she then was in, it was difficult for divinity to illumine an individual. Sri Ramakrishna touched her, and his touch turned her into a saint and marital love into spiritual love.

When Sri Ramakrishna passed away, he left behind Swami Vivekananda—a host in himself—and the Ramakrishna Mission. There in Madras the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda had taken abode. Madras had conserved the spirit of India's ancient civilisation and culture. Madras gave India the great saint who reconciled the cravings of man for a personal God with the ideal of Brahman. Madras had kept that tradition pure. The speaker desired that the tradition should continue, pure and unadulterated. They might change anything—mental outfit, habits and apparel—but the inside should be truly Hindu; for what really mattered depended on the inside.

II

SANNYAS AS SERVICE

In Sri Ramakrishna we did not find a mere dreamer, not a mere visionary, not one who was sunk in his spiritual pride that he loathed any contact with this world of imperfections, but a genuine Karma Yogin, a man who was very sincerely touched to the very depths of his heart by human suffering and who felt he could do something to relieve that suffering and to guide man to the path of peace and good will.

In the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna there were three things most appealing. First was the

catholicity of his teachings. He had room for all, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Mohammedans, and he did not call upon any one of those to give up their spiritual heritage. He did not stand out as a new prophet or as a founder of a new religion. He only reaffirmed the old truths preached by the founders of the great religions of the world. Sri Ramakrishna believed that the essentials of all the great religions of the world needed reassertion so that their truths might not be lost to mankind. He gave a new form to the old truths found in the great religions, which would appeal to mankind in the 19th and 20th centuries. The second feature was the emphasis on activity and service. Ramakrishna Paramahansa did not look upon life as something contaminating. On the contrary he believed in contact with the world. While Indian sages of old shrank within themselves and avoided contact with the world, he literally hankered to serve mankind. He was a sage, who having attained the highest bliss and having realised God, still yearned for kinship with his fellow-beings, and it was that kinship that had made his name famous in the history of humanity. The continuation of this spirit was to be found in the Mission bearing his name.

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda happened to be a marvellous combination. It was difficult to conceive either doing what he did, without the other.

Sri Ramakrishna's message lives in his Mission, the Ramakrishna Mission, the new Order he created. The spirit of service was imbedded in the members of the Order, and it had found educational institutions where the education imparted was not of the

stereotyped old fashion, but an education in which there was something new, deep-based on the moral and religious foundations of life, and yet an education, vocational in character with culture as its basis, which suited the different sides of human life. In his Order there was a desire to develop mind and character, not for the selfish purpose of attaining salvation for one-self, but to fit them for the great ideal of service, which Rama-

krishna had laid down in his life and Vivekananda had made the central point of the organisation.

India had always abounded in sages, sages so great that they forgot life. But in the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, they found the spirit of service, of action and of catholicity, living in full bloom. So long as the spirit of the founder lived, so long was there hope for India and for them all.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Instruction in the Pupils' Own Tongue

The recent convocation address delivered by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore at the Calcutta University, in Bengali, for the first time diverting from the usual custom of delivering it in English, has attracted considerable attention in all quarters. In the course of the address, the poet criticised the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction in the following words:

"In no country in the world, except India, is to be seen this divorce of the language of instruction from the language of the pupil. We had allowed ourselves too complacently to become reconciled to be thus slighted by the dispensers of our fate, to acquiesce in this belittling of the masses of our people, consoled by the scanty helps of learning, parsimoniously served to the few occupying the front seats, called 'educating the people of India.' We had lost the courage even to imagine a broader system of education venturing beyond the bounds of such triviality, just as a Bedouin cannot dream that Providence will ever allow him to share in the expansive fruitfulness outside the few scattered cases of his desert home land. These universities of ours have touched no more than the outermost fringe of the great mass, and even that contact is of the

lightest, bereft as it is of all vitality in passing through its foreign covering. Wherefore far behind the other Eastern nation in which the call to awake has been heard, lags India in regard to self-respect awakened in the light of self-knowledge.

The difference between the uneducated and the educated sections of our countrymen is exactly like that between the Sahara and the tiny oases that dot its vast expanse, both in quantity and quality. For this reason though we are under one political domination, we are not governed by the same mentality. Of late in Japan, Persia, Arabia, Turkey, everywhere amongst the Eastern peoples, measures have been taken to get rid of this internal source of division leading to futility of national aspiration everywhere, save in this unfortunate land.

We know of parasite creatures in the animal world, which live and die in utter dependance on their hosts. They are able to eke out a bare living, but are for ever crippled in the development of their limbs and organs. Such has been the case with our modern university education. It has from its inception been parasitic on a foreign tongue, so that, though nourishment has not been altogether lacking, it has been obtained at the cost of all-round development—so much so that it has even ceased to be sensible of its own abortiveness. Accustomed to live by borrowing, it has come to measure attainment by largeness of debt; it has signed a bond of servitude to the

thinkers of other lands. Those who receive such education cannot produce what they consume. Brought up to absorb the thoughts of others, their academic success depends on their ability to repeat by rote, and their own faculty of thought, their courage of conviction, their creative inspiration, have all been enfeebled. It goes without saying that the only way of revival from such chronic debility is by the assimilation and application of the subject matter of education through one's own language, just as, in order to incorporate food-stuffs into the body, they have to be chewed with one's own teeth and saturated with one's own digestive juices."

We have yet to learn from the West

Dr. Tagore is not hesitant to recognise the great cultural gift we are to share gratefully with the West. For this English language will have to be given a place of honour in the future too. He continues :

"We cannot but admit that the present age is dominated by the civilisation of Europe. This age has presented a background of strenuous endeavour to all the world, on which the thoughts and deeds of men are appearing in ever-new variety of form, and are spreading as a unifying influence over the whole of the civilised world. It would not have been possible for the science and literature, history, economics and politics, the technique of research and of the testing of truth, born on the soil of Europe, thus to permeate the world, had they not stood the test of experimental application, had the mind of Europe not won universal recognition by reason of the honesty and earnestness of its striving, impelling all the newly awakened countries to adopt the same studies, the same methods, the same attitude of mind.

Europe has provided the world with the gifts of a great culture—had it not the power to do so, it would never have attained its supremacy. It has given the example of dauntless courage, ungrudging self-sacrifice, it has shown tireless energy in the acquisition and spread of knowledge, in the making of institutions for human welfare.

Even in these days of self-abasement there are still before us its true representatives who are ready to suffer punishment in

their fearless protest against its iniquities, in their chivalrous championship of its victims. They may be defeated again and again, for the time yet in them is to be seen the true ideal of their civilisation. The inspiration that holds them steadfast to their best instincts, through all the outrage and degeneracy around them—that inspiration is the truth dwelling in the heart of Western civilisation. It is from that we have to learn, not from the disastrous self-degradation of the modern Western nations.

Of course it will not do to forget that the English language cannot lose a place of honour in Indian Universities, not merely because of its practical usefulness as a means of livelihood, but because it is the vehicle of the Western science which to-day has earned the respect of all the world. To repudiate it out of a sense of false patriotism would only be to curtail our own opportunities. *This science is not only important in the field of world economics and politics as a means of self-preservation, but its influence is of immense value for freeing the mind from the inertia of stupidity. The mind which refuses to admit its message, which is unable to accept its implications, must needs be content with a narrow, dark and feeble life. From whatever horizon the light of knowledge may radiate, it is only a clouded, barbaric mind that rejects it because of its unfamiliarity. All races and peoples are equally entitled to avail themselves of Truth in any of its manifestations, for this is a right inherent in humanity itself."

Toleration—Our Greatest Contribution

Under the V. S. Srinivasa Sastri Endowment Scheme, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer delivered a brilliant series of lectures on "Indian Political Theories" from February 11th at the Madras University Examination Hall. He concluded the lectures with the following remarkable utterance on the Hindu ideal of toleration :

"The greatest contribution to posterity made by the Hindu tradition was the broad-mindedness of sympathy and the toleration of different view-points exhi-

bited almost alone in India amongst the civilised communities of the earlier days. When Egypt persecuted and hounded out the Jews, when racial and communal conflicts disfigured the history of Babylon and Nineveh, when, later on, we see that the slave States in Greece and Rome formed the basis of marvellous cultures and when, in the medieval ages the baiting of Jews alternated with the baiting of Roman Catholics by Protestants and *vice versa*, we had the spectacle in India of unfailing hospitality to foreign religion and foreign cultures. It would be unfair and inaccurate not to mention that the Buddhists and Jains suffered many pains and penalties especially in the south of India, but which country can show anything like the treatment of Parsis who, flying from oppression in their own country of Persia, asked for and obtained their succour of the wise West Coast King to whose protection and active encouragement of their faith and tradition, the Parsis ultimately owe their dominant position in India to-day? Which country can furnish a parallel to what happened in Travancore under the rule of an extremely conservative and religiously-minded monarch? From the days when Christian congregations were split into innumerable and warring factions, the Chera Kings of Travancore gave whole-hearted welcome to the followers of the Eastern Church whose Patriarch of Antioch now boasts of a larger following in Malabar than perhaps anywhere else in the world? Which king outside India has surpassed the monarchs of Travancore and Malabar who conferred sacerdotal honours, presents, lands and dignities on the monasteries, bishops and archbishops of the Christian Church, with the result that to-day the largest Christian population in India is found in the State of Travancore? Which ruler in the world's chequered history has mentioned, in more moving and powerful language than is found in the edicts of Asoka the Great, the principles of tolerance and comprehension of differing creeds and ideals co-existing with a spiritual urge towards the consolidation and regeneration of the ruler's own faith? Such have been the marks and characteristics of Indian civilisation, not only at its peak points, but through the centuries until recently. * * * Can this instinct for universality, this understanding of all points of view and the feel-

ing that the realisation of the Supreme must connote a sympathy with and a reconciliation of many forms of thought and beliefs, be better expressed than in the words of Thayumanavar in his hymn to Parvati, the meaning of which is this : "The light and bliss of supreme knowledge envelops and absorbs all forms of belief and thought as the ocean absorbs all rivers." May this spirit of concord animate our social and political life in the exacting years ahead of us."

Physical Culture and Physical Education

Professor D. S. Gordon of the Mysore University, in the course of a recent lecture, made the following distinction between gymnastics and physical culture on the one hand, and physical education on the other :

"The one cultivates the body, but the other looks beyond the body and aims at developing certain qualities of the head and heart. The latter has a wider implication and involves the inculcation of mental qualities such as team-spirit and fair play. Perhaps the modern English phrase 'to be a sport' contains the essence of the whole matter. To be a sport is to look upon life as an interesting adventure in which one has to do one's best, and take the good and bad as they come without being unduly cast down by misfortune. Moreover, one who is a 'good sport' regards his fellow men as partners in life's adventures and refuses to take a mean advantage over them. Physical education comprehends all these things; it means not merely the turning out of youths strong in body but the implanting of a new outlook upon life."

Adverting to the Greek and Hindu ideals he pointed out :

"To the ancient Greek body was a temple; he kept it clean and strong and beautiful. While Greeks admired courage and physical strength they never gloried in mere brute force. Behind bodily culture and beyond it they always held up ideals of nobility of mind and beauty of form.... the Hindu sages.... by not giving loose rein to unwholesome desires and keeping the body under strict control

they really found out the secret of good health."

We would safely assert that the Greek and Hindu ideals are complementary. The aesthetic pursuit of the one, without the self-controlled calmness of the other is aimless. Beauty without virtue is a curse.

Value of Myth and Folk-tale

Evelyn Sharp writes in the *Manchester Guardian* :

"Myth and folk-tale are at the very foundation of our human understanding of one another, and to grow up with no knowledge of either until habits of thought are formed and prejudices have begun to poison reason, is to lack a valuable weapon against the kind of cynical disillusionment that threatens modern youth when it has been nurtured solely on scientific facts. Parents who fear that truth will suffer in the mind of the child who is given fairy tales and nonsense verse to read appear to me to have little faith in the power of truth, or the faculty of the child for discerning eternal wisdom whenever he may chance upon it."

Even sophisticated modernists need not fight shy to put into the hands of their children properly written Puranic stories that are full of might magnificence and heroism.

Vicissitude in Reading Habit

The University Library of Madras has a collection of about 100,000 books to which an addition of 4,000 books are made yearly. Recently the library has been shifted to a palatial building with every one of the up-to-date conveniences for the readers. Observing the facts indicated by the statistics at the end of December last, the Librarian writes :

"The greatest increase in the use of books is in religion (50 per cent) and in psychology (40 per cent.). History came next in order with 30 per cent."

Although it is rash to generalise from this, since this data is changing and inadequate, we may venture to say that there is a wider interest noticeable in religion in India as evinced by such and other facts.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Mandukyopanishad : With the texts of the Upanishad and Gaudapada's Karika in Devanagari together with the English translation of these and of Sankara's commentary on them. Translated by Swami Nikhilananda of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Centre, New York. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. (Copies can be had at Vedanta Kesari Office, Brodies Road, Mylapore, Madras.) Price Rs. 2-8-0. Pp. XLIII + 361.

Students of Vedanta know very well of the Mandukya Upanishad which is considered the briefest as well as the profoundest of that class of literature. The Karika of Gaudapada on the Upanishad elaborates the doctrine set forth in an aphoristic form in the scriptural text, and Sankara's Commentary on both the Upani-

shad and the Karika gives a dialectical exposition of the subject.

The speciality of the Mandukya and the literature centering round it consists in the fact that they clearly enunciate one of the several methods of Vedantic approach to Reality, namely, the method of arriving at the ultimate Truth through an analysis of the three states of consciousness known as waking, dream and sleep. All other philosophies and theologies take only the waking consciousness of man into consideration, and neglect the other two states which in fact occupy more or less the same length of his short span of life as waking. This gives to the Mandukyopanishad a uniqueness that is all its own in the mystical and philosophical literature of the world.

The other special philosophical merit of the work is thus described by the learned translator in his Preface : "It is only Gaudapada that has successfully demonstrated in his Karika that the non-dual Atman declared in the Upanishad as the Ultimate Reality is not a theological dogma and that it does not depend upon the mystic experiences of the Yogis ; but that it is a metaphysical truth which satisfies the demands of universal tests and which is based upon reason independent of scriptural authority."

The value of the present volume is enhanced by profuse Notes and an elaborate Preface from the pen of the learned translator and by an interesting forward by Mr. V. Subramanya Iyer, the veteran Vedantist of Mysore. The printing and get-up of the book come to a very high standard of excellence. Every earnest student of Vedanta will find this volume useful both from the spiritual and intellectual points of view.

Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines (or Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path) according to the late Lama Kazi Dawa Sandup's English rendering. Arranged and edited with Introduction and Annotations to serve as a Commentary by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, M.A., D.Litt., D.Sc., Jesus College, Oxford. Oxford University Press. Price 16 sh. Pp. XXIV + 389.

This volume forms the third and last of a series of Tibetan Studies, the first two volumes being *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*. Although the seven books comprising this volume do not exhibit any uniformity in their authorship and age of production, they have been arranged in a definite order of sequence. All schools of spiritual discipline invariably insist upon the necessity of moral perfection as the first condition for entrance into the inner sanctuary of the Spiritual. Accordingly here too the first book named *The Supreme Path of Discipleship* (The Precepts of the Gurus) presents a rosary of moral and spiritual sayings that breathe the same spirit as that of the Dhammapada, Marcus Aurelius' Meditations and the Imitations of Christ. This compilation, arranged in twenty-eight categories came to existence in the 12th Century A.D. The insistent note of these

sayings is the ideal of world renunciation and selfless aeon-long labour looking to the ultimate enlightenment of every sentient being. "Unless the mind be trained to selflessness and infinite compassion", runs one of the precepts, "one is apt to fall into the error of seeking liberation for self alone." Among others the signs of a superior man are set forth in the following : "To have but few desires and satisfactions is the sign of a superior man : To be lacking in hypocrisy and deceit is the sign of a superior man. To be faithful to one's engagements and obligations is the sign of a superior man. To be able to keep alive friendship while one (at the same time) regardeth all beings with impartiality is the sign of a superior man. To allow unto others the victory, taking unto oneself the defeat, is the sign of a superior man. To observe faithfully and without pride one's vows of chastity and piety is the sign of a superior man." There is a great deal of truth in saying, as tradition would have for it, that these immaculate words of the Great Gurus endowed with Divine wisdom have the power to radiate it.

The second book entitled *The Yoga of the Great Symbol* contains the quintessence of some of the most profound doctrines handed down from the middle ages to our own century through an unbroken succession of initiates. This work, for the first time rendered into English completely, says the learned Editor, is a remarkable gift of the East to the West. The nature of mind and reality forms the central idea of this book. There are several helpful suggestions in it which the Yogi attempting to tranquillise the mind may advantageously adopt. There is much herein resembling Vedantic metaphysics and spiritual practices. The warning goes : "Regard not the Void as being Nothingness"—as the Southern Buddhists would hold it. The unenlightened alone regard it as being nothingness, since it cannot be described in terms of phenomenal experience. Realisation of the supermundane consciousness alone could give knowledge of reality. "Mind-made goals, however noble, end in disillusionment. And the mind-transcending Thatness cannot thus be called a goal ; for it is a realisation of what already is." The essence of the practice prescribed for the attainment of this state

of liberation is the art of recognising the thoughts, whereby one acquires understanding of the inseparable nature of mind and thought. A concomitant of this state of Liberation (which may be compared with the Hindu conception of Jivanmukti) is the uprush of great compassion for all those sentient beings who have not yet recognised the true nature of their own mind. In the words of Dr. Wentz, "The Yogi from the impartial, impersonal, disinterested standpoint of the cosmic mind, analyses mind in its human aspect. The macrocosmic measures the microcosmic. Then arises great compassion...." The microcosmic mind is but a reflex of that macrocosmic Mind in which all things are in at-one-ment. Although from our view-point the mind is a complex compound of various sensations, perceptions, reasonings and memories, from the view-point of the illuminated mind it is only the Void or the One Mind, called the Great Symbol. This Sunya or Void is not "a state of non-entity or nihilism nor a state of individualized being, but something apart from both states, a condition of existence indescribable in any known terms of language, for language is dependent upon concepts derived from experiences in a sensuous universe, and reality is non-sensuous." The text instructs: "By means of the simile of sleep and dreams, recognize all phenomena to be mind. By means of the simile of water and ice, recognise noumena and phenomena to be a unity. By means of the simile of water and ice, recognise noumena and phenomena to be a unity. By means of the simile of water and waves transmute all things to the one common state of at-one-ment."

Coming to the practical discipline, the emphasis on self-effort is always pronounced. Significant is the saying of Saraha, "Since all things are born of the mind, therefore is the mind itself the *Guru*." Each aspirant for Nirvanic Enlightenment must be a law unto himself; he himself, not the *Guru*, must tread the Path.... the Buddha taught, each pilgrim of the Great Pilgrimage must really be his own light and his own refuge. Nirvana is to be realized

not by proxy of a *Guru* but by the *Yogi* himself." This text advises to clear away the impediments arising from noumena by the knowledge of the Oneness of the noumena and phenomena. It also closes with the warning that all egotistical dogmatism is detrimental to the attainment of truth. It is a going astray and a sealing of the mind. It could be overcome only by meditating on the voidness as compassion, for that alone effectively cuts away feelings such as, "I shall never come back to earth again," etc.

The contents of the third and the fourth books are mostly Tantric in nature, particularly that part of it concerning visualisations and meditations. Books five and six deal with the yogic method of attaining the mental state of non-ego and the doctrine of the five wisdoms respectively. The seventh and the last book deals with meditation and realisation. These chapters are of great importance to the student of occultism especially. The book on the whole is a mine of information equally welcome to the student of Yoga as well as to the general reader interested in philosophy and anthropology. The Editor's comments are ample and illuminating. There is a very comprehensive introduction in the beginning elucidating various points of interest connected with Yoga. The literary and historical Introduction given at the beginning of each book is equally useful. Apart from the distinguished academic qualifications and long, patient, scholarly labour expended in the production of these volumes, Dr. Evans-Wentz has made it equally welcome to the layman as well as the exacting scholar by bringing to bear upon it the orally transmitted knowledge which he was able to acquire about Tibetan Yoga by placing himself under the guidance of Lama Kasi Dawa Sandup, a lenial representative of the hoary Kargyupta School of Mahayanism. We are impressed by the sympathetic approach, scientific spirit and scholarly outlook of this significant volume, and we hope the work will find a respectable place in every important library.

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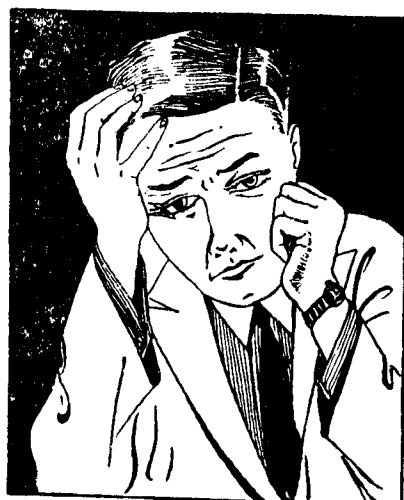
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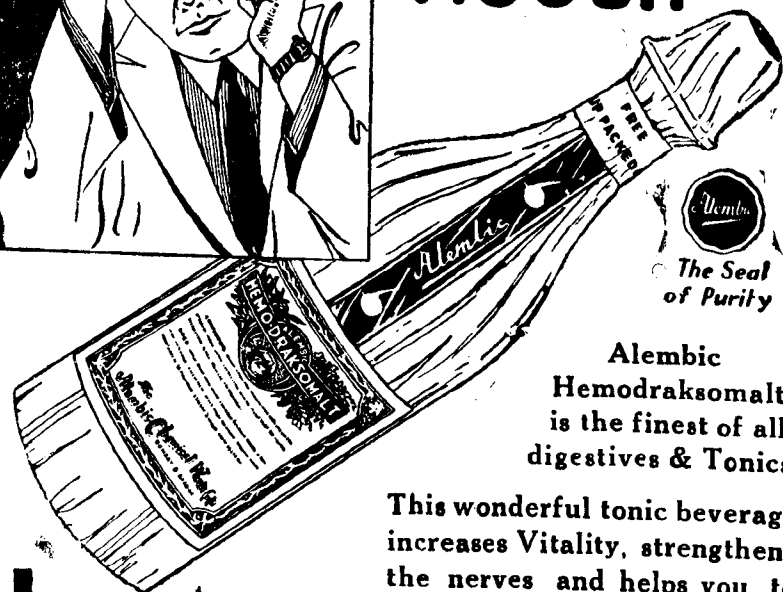
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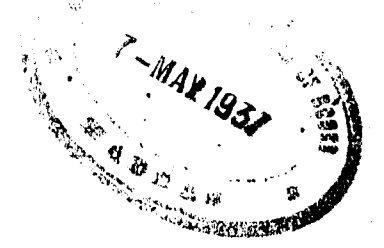
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"
—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXIV]

MAY, 1937

[No. 1

HINDU ETHICS

जपमावतेयन् नित्यं जपन् वै ब्रह्मचारिकं । तदर्थबुद्ध्या संयाति मनसा जापकः परम् ।
विषयेभ्यो नमस्कुर्यात् विषयान् न च भावयेत् । साम्यमुत्पाद्य मनसामनस्येव मनोदधत् ॥
तद्विद्या ध्यायति ब्रह्म जपन् वै संहितां हितां । सन्यस्यत्यथवा तां वै समाधौ पर्यवस्थितः ॥
यदन्यदुचितं शुद्धं वेदस्मृत्युपपादितं । एतत् सर्वमशेषेण यद्योक्तं परिवर्तयेत् ॥
यस्मिन्नेवाभिपतितं मनस्तत्र निवेशयेत् । शुद्धात्मा तपसा दान्तो निवृत्त द्वेषकामवान् ॥
सत्यमग्निपरीचारो विविक्षानां च सेवनं । ध्यानं तपो दमः क्षान्तिरनसूया मिताशनम् ॥

One should perform *Japa* (repetition of the Holy Text or Mantra), observing the vow of *Brahmacharya* (vow of purity and self-control in body and mind). The person who is thus engaged should also dwell carefully on the meaning of the Mantra. He should respectfully bow down to sense objects, and cease to think of them. By making the mind stay within itself, he should make it steady and peaceful. While repeating the auspicious Mantra (*Gayatri*), he should meditate on the Deity in his mind. These, however, may be given up when the mind gets absorbed in *Samadhi*. For *Japa*, even any other holy and suitable Mantra mentioned in the Vedas and Smritis would do, (not necessarily the *Gayatri*); but one should repeat them fully, as given. One should train the mind to get absorbed in the object of contemplation, and for this one has to be pure in heart, self-controlled by austerity, and freed from anger and worldly desires. (Among the disciplines helpful to meditation are) truthfulness, worship of the holy fire, withdrawing into solitude, contemplation, austerity, self-control, patience, absence of jealousy and moderation in food.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva Ch. 194.

BASES OF YOGA

[The following review is a brief summary of Sri Aurobindo's latest book, *Bases of Yoga*, published by the Arya Publishing House, 63, College Street, Calcutta. (Price Rs. 3. Pp. 251). The book is a compilation of extracts from letters written by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in answer to their queries. They have been put together and arranged so as to be of some help to aspirants for the understanding and practice of the Yoga.]

I

IN the first section entitled *Calm—Peace—Equality* is given a description of that attitude of mind which alone can form a secure foundation for spiritual life. The aspirant receives therein a warning against the all too frequent misconception that the essence of spiritual life consists in working up the emotions to a high pitch, in experiencing visions and voices, or in entering into trances that make one oblivious of things external. For the first thing needed in spiritual life is a firm *Adhara*, a secure foundation, into which the full downflow of Power and Ananda (Bliss) may take place. Only a mind established in equality, in a state of peace, calm, quiet and silence within, can become a receptacle capable of holding the higher experiences of the spirit. Without this peace and silence, spiritual experience, Knowledge, Power, Bliss and the like, even if they come, will not be permanent. They have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace of the Sat-Purusha are permanently there. Moreover the experiences occurring in an unpurified and troubled consciousness are usually full of disorder and are of a mixed nature.

This silent and peaceful mind, which forms the only sound basis of Yoga, is not a state without mental

movements but one in which these movements appear only on the surface. One who is established in it stands observing these movements but not carried away by them, being able to watch and judge them, and reject all that has to be rejected, and accept all that is true consciousness and experience. Thus the calm mind is not the same as the vacant mind. The difference is this: "... when the mind is vacant, there is no thought, no conception, no mental action of any kind, except an essential perception of things without the formed idea; but in the calm mind, it is the substance of the mental being that is still, so still that nothing disturbs it. If thoughts or activities come, they do not rise at all out of the mind, but they come from outside and cross the mind as a flight of birds crosses the sky in a windless air. It passes, disturbing nothing, leaving no trace. Even if a thousand images or the most violent events pass across it, the calm stillness remains as if the very texture of the mind were a substance of eternal and inscrutable peace. A mind that has achieved this calmness can begin to act, even intensely and powerfully, but it will keep its fundamental stillness—originating nothing from itself but receiving from Above and giving it a mental form without adding anything of its own, calmly, dispassionately, though with the joy of the Truth and

the happy power and light of its passage."

The test of this *samata* or equality has been described thus: "Whatever the unpleasantness of circumstances, however disagreeable the conduct of others, you must learn to receive them with a perfect calm and without any disturbing reaction. These things are the test of equality. It is easy to be calm and equal when things go well, and people and circumstances are pleasant; it is when they are the opposite that the completeness of the calm, peace, equality can be tested, reinforced, made perfect."

II

The second section deals with the three important aspects of spiritual life, *Faith, Aspiration and Surrender*. Yoga demands a total dedication of the life to the aspiration for the discovery and embodiment of the Divine Truth and to nothing else whatever. To divide one's life between the Divine and some outward aim and activity that has nothing to do with the search for the Truth is inadmissible. Therefore all must proceed from the Truth once discovered and not from the lower mental or vital motives—from the Divine Will and not from the personal choice or preferences of the ego.

Before experience comes, one has to grasp, through faith, the truth of the Divine and the ideal of realising the Divine life even here as the aim of Yoga. If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and Bhakti are at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender. Not to impose one's mind and vital will on the Divine but to receive His will and follow it, is

the true attitude of Sadhana. So faith, reliance upon the Divine, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable.

But the surrender to the Divine should not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desires and lower movements, or to one's ego, or to some force of ignorance and darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine. To guard oneself against this self-deception, there are several rules to be remembered and observed. In the first place self-dedication must be accompanied with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of the Divine Truth. Next, it has to be remembered that turning all actions automatically into worship cannot be done by thought control only; there must be a strong aspiration in the heart which will bring about some realisation or feeling of the presence of the One to whom worship is offered. Again, a complete surrender is not possible in a short time. For to do this the ego has to be cut in each part of the being, and the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness have one after another to surrender separately, to give up their own way and accept the way of the Divine. Hence personal effort cannot be given up at once—nor is it desirable as it may lead to stagnation and inertia. It becomes possible only in the ultimate stages of Yoga. What one ought to do in the earlier stages—and for this, one has power at all times—is to call in more and more the Divine Power for guiding one's personal endeavour, to put the mental will or vital push at the service of the

Divine, rejecting what has to be rejected, opening oneself to the true Light and the true Force, calling it down quietly, steadfastly, without tiring, without depression, impatience, until one feels the Divine Force at work and the obstacles beginning to give way. Thus until the transfer is complete, there must be a personal contribution, a constant consent to the true Force, a constant rejection of any lower mixture. This is how personal effort is to be gradually transformed into a movement of the Divine Force, and in so doing the steadiness of aspiration and alertness of the discriminative sense are the most important factors that contribute towards success.

There are two ways of practising the Yoga. In the first, personal effort is prominent, and it is done by the action of a vigilant mind and vital seeing, observing, thinking and deciding what is or is not to be done. The other is that of opening all the stratas of one's being, mental, vital and the physical, receiving the Light, feeling and seeing it done by the Divine Force itself and helping constantly by its own vigilant and conscious ascent to, and call for, the divine working. Usually there cannot but be a mixture of these two ways until consciousness is ready to be entirely open, entirely submitted to the Divine's origination of all action. Hardly any one is strong enough to overcome the forces of the lower nature by the unaided aspiration. Even these who do it get only a certain kind of control, but not a complete mastery. Will and aspiration are needed to bring down the aid of the Divine Force and to keep the being on its side in its deal-

ings with the lower powers. The Divine Force fulfilling the spiritual will and the heart's psychic aspiration can alone bring about this conquest.

The one condition for receiving this divine aid is sincerity which results in the opening of one's being to the Mother's influence. To be entirely sincere means to desire the Divine Truth only. The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust to the Divine Grace at every step, to direct the thought continually to the Divine and to offer oneself till the being opens, and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhara. This Divine influence, to which the aspirant should open himself, is there above us, and if we can once become conscious of it, we have then to call it down into us. It descends into the mind and into the body as Peace, as a Light, as a Force that works, as the presence of the Divine with or without form, as Ananda. Before one has this consciousness, one has to have faith, and one should aspire for the opening. Aspiration, call, prayer are forms of one and the same thing, and are all effective; one can take the form that comes to one or is easiest to one. The other way is concentration; we may concentrate our consciousness in the heart (some do it in the head or above the head) and meditate on the Mother in the heart and call Her in there. One can do either or both at different times—whatever comes naturally to one, or one is moved to do at the moment.

III

The third section entitled *In Difficulties* describes how an aspirant is

to face the difficulties that are incidental to spiritual life. While it is necessary to observe and reject the wrong movements in one, it is wrong for a spiritual aspirant to brood over sins and failures. The tendency to repine or fret at defects and failures springs from too much identification with lower nature. The Yogin should look on all the defects of the lower nature as movements of the lower Prakriti common to all, and reject them calmly, firmly and persistently with full confidence in the Divine Power—without weakness or depression or negligence, and without excitement, impatience or violence. By so detaching oneself from them, one finds these defects foreign to oneself, and more and more discovers one's inner being that is in contact with the Divine. Imperfection, even of a serious kind, is no bar to progress. The only bar that can be permanent is insincerity.

Even the action of hostile forces, which come as despondency, revolt, unbelief, difficulties, etc., have their due function in spiritual evolution. These are not merely tests to which the Divine puts us, but a compulsion on us to seek a greater strength, a more perfect self-knowledge, a more intense purity and force of aspiration, a faith that nothing can crush, a more powerful descent of the Divine grace. The Divine helps the aspirant, not tests him. The tests come from the forces of the lower plane; the Divine allows them, because they form a part of the soul's training.

Fruition of Yoga in its early stages is attended with great delay, because each part wants to go on with its old movement. Aspiration and patience have to be one's main sup-

port in this situation. Alternation of periods of dullness and brightness is the common experience of all spiritual aspirants. The chief reasons for the dullness of mind are that its basis is the physical mind having its support in Tamas or the principle of inertia, and that the vital is not actively supporting the Sadhana. Continuity of higher experiences cause a sense of exhaustion or reaction of uneasiness or dullness in the physical mind; for the human consciousness either cannot bear a constant descent of the Light or Power or Ananda, or cannot at once receive and absorb it. It needs periods of assimilation, but this assimilation goes on behind the veil of the surface consciousness; the experience or the realisation that has descended retires behind the veil and leaves this outer or surface consciousness to lie fallow and become ready for a new descent. When the fire of aspiration and inner Tapasya descends again and again with increasing force and magnitude into the darkness of human ignorance, it at first seems swallowed up and absorbed in the darkness, but more and more of the descent changes the darkness into light, the ignorance and unconsciousness of the human mind into spiritual consciousness. Another cause of depression is some strong habit formation of the mind or vital that is perhaps unwilling to change. When this occasional sinking of consciousness happens, the best thing to do is not to fret, not to despond, but to remain quiet, open oneself to the Mother, and call back the true conditions and aspire for a clear and undisturbed discrimination showing one from within oneself the cause of the thing that needs to be

set right. If one does so, the obstacle disappears quickly, and one finds a great progress has been made.

Three methods are suggested to overcome the difficulty of a wandering mind commonly experienced at the time of meditation. One is to observe the thoughts as they come in, without giving any sanction, until they run down and come to a standstill. Another is to stand back from thoughts as not one's own but things coming from outside, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space, with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest. By following this method the mind divides into two—a part which is the mental witness, watching and perfectly undisturbed and quiet, and a part which is the object of observation.

There is a third, an active method, by which one looks to see where the thoughts come from, and finds they come not from oneself, but from outside the head as it were; if one can detect their coming, then, before they enter, they have to be thrown away altogether.

IV

The fourth section deals with the important subjects of *Desire, Food, and Sex*. Desires belong to the universal Prakriti. They come from outside, enter the sub-conscious vital, and rise to the surface. Ordinarily man does not know this, but feels the presence of desires only when they find a habitual harborage in the mind, and he thinks they are his. What belongs to the vital, what makes it responsible, is the habit of responding to the waves of desire that come from outside.

The necessities of a *Sadhaka* should be as few as possible. The body should neither be neglected, nor made much of; it should be treated as a means of Sadhana. Fasting, except for brief periods and even that occasionally, is discouraged. In the case of the strong it may give an inner state of energy and receptivity, but in the weak it leads to delusion and loss of balance. In neither case it has sufficient spiritual utility, as the higher energy and receptivity should come not by artificial or physical means but by intensity of the consciousness and strong will for Sadhana. Asceticism for its own sake has no place in the ideal of Yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are very important. The Yogic attitude consists in detachment and equality with regard to objects of desire, and not in forceful suppression. For, in forceful suppression, as in indulgence, the desire remains—in the latter case, fed by indulgence, in the former, latent and exasperated by suppression. It is only when one stands back with unmoved detachment, separates oneself from the lower vital, refusing to regard its desires and clamours as one's own, and cultivates an entire equality and equanimity in the consciousness with respect to them that the lower vital itself becomes gradually purified and also calm and equal.

The *Sadhaka* has to turn away entirely from the invasion of the vital and the physical by the sex-impulse, for, if he does not conquer the sex-impulse there can be no settling in the body of the Divine consciousness and the Divine Ananda. Any form of love relation, or vital

interchange for mutual satisfaction of desire is prohibited for *Sadhakas*; this is especially bad when it takes the form of a sexual relation or a sexual enjoyment, even if kept free from any outward act. For the principle of Yoga is to turn one's love singly towards the Divine, to give oneself entirely to Him alone and nobody else. No error can be more perilous than to accept the intermixture of the sexual desire and some kind of subtle satisfaction of it, and look on this as a part of the Sadhana. The attempt to treat sex activity by detachment without complete excision breaks down; the attempt to sublimate it, favoured by many modern mystics of Europe, is a most rash and perilous experiment. The medical theory that sexual abstinence leads to serious disorders is based on the false assumption that sex is a natural part of the human vital physical whole, a necessity like food and sleep. What is really harmful is sex suppressed in outward action but indulged in a kind of subtle vital way by imagination or by an invisible vital interchange of an occult kind. Even many medical men in Europe to-day admit that *Retas* which serves the sexual act is by abstinence changed into other element (Indian *Ojas*) which feeds the energies of the system.

As for the method of gaining mastery over the sex-impulse, it cannot be done by physical abstinence alone, nor by regarding it as something sinful and horrible. It can be done only through a process of combined detachment and rejection. By repeatedly standing back from the sex-impulse, as something alien thrown on consciousness by Nature-

force, and refusing assent to, and identification with it, one gradually succeeds in eliminating it first from the mind, then from the vital being and finally from the physical consciousness. This process continues until even the sub-conscious can no longer rouse it up in dream. The total elimination of the sex-impulse is one of the most difficult things in *Sadhana*, and it takes time to accomplish it.

Sexual attack in sleep comes through a mechanical habit in the sub-conscious, and is a sign of sexual desire suppressed in the waking mind and vital without being eliminated from the stuff of physical nature. The remedy for this is (i) to get the higher consciousness, its light and the workings of its power, down into the obscurer parts of the nature; (ii) to become progressively more conscious in sleep, with an inner consciousness which is aware of the working of the Sadhana in sleep or in waking, and (iii) to bring to bear the waking will and aspiration on the body in sleep. One way to do the last is to give before sleeping a strong and conscious suggestion to the body, preferably to the sexual centres, that the thing should not happen. Though the effect of it may not be immediate, it will prevail in the end.

V

The fifth and the last section deals with a variety of interesting subjects—*Physical Consciousness, Sub-conscious, Sleep and Dream, and Illness*. It gives us a glimpse of the workings of man's psychological mechanism. For want of space, we shall note here only a few points. All attempts to unravel the lower nature

prematurely is discouraged, as it is likely to corrupt even the higher levels of being with its dirty stuff, for the sub-conscious in men is a diminished consciousness, and a refuge of all animal propensities denied expression at higher levels. The right method in spiritual life is to strengthen the higher regions, and then bring to bear its purity on the lower. Psycho-analysis is criticised on the ground that it does just the opposite of this; for it rakes up the lower levels of being and brings its contents to the light of consciousness, but it knows nothing of the higher light and force without which the low tendencies held up for change cannot be overcome and transformed. The basic fallacy of psycho-analysis and of new psychology in general is its way of explaining the higher lights by the lower obscurities, the significance of the lotus by analysing the secrets of the mind from which it grows.

Illness is described as a deformation of the physical nature, just as lust, anger, jealousy, etc., are of vital nature; and error etc., of mental nature. No doubt one must endure it with equanimity and patience when it comes, but it is not something to be accepted and enjoyed. Everything must be done to eliminate it, and even to secure complete immunity from it. All illness is described as entering the physical body only by passing through the subtle body, and it is suggested that an illness can therefore be prevented if one is conscious of the subtle body. By this method of self-defence a practical immunity from disease is envisaged. It is also hinted that even abso-

lute immunity is possible in what is described as supramentalised body.

VI

Before we conclude, we shall advert to two ideas contained in the book, which we could not quite well follow, and which appears to us to be somewhat different from generally accepted notions of spiritual life. On page 93 we find the following remark about Samadhi: "Trance or *Samadhi* is a way of escape—the body is made quiet, the physical mind is in a state of torpor, the inner consciousness is left free to go on with its experiences. The disadvantage is that trance becomes indispensable and the problem of the waking consciousness is not solved, it remains imperfect." There are of course trances and trances. Many of them are spurious and are absolutely of no spiritual value. But the genuine trance or Samadhi does leave a permanent mark on the individual who experiences it. Accordingly Swami Vivekananda is once reported to have drawn the following distinction between sleep and Samadhi: sleep is a state of consciousness from which an ignorant man returns an ignorant man; Samadhi is a state from which a person who entered into it ignorant, returns wise and illumined. Sri Ramakrishna's testimony also goes to show that it does transform the waking consciousness. He says: "To him alone who comes down from Samadhi to the plane of sense-consciousness is left a thin ego like a line (*Rekha*)—a length without breadth—just sufficient individuality to retain only the spiritual vision. This enables him to see Jiva and Jagat, as well as himself, as the One manifesting Himself

in these different forms. This vision of glory comes to the Vijnani who has realised the Nirakara Nirguna Brahman in Jada or Nirvikalpa Samadhi and also the Sakara Saguna Brahman in Chetana or Savikalpa Samadhi (Sayings Pp. 98, Madras Edition). Hindu theology speaks of the Divine as both transcendent and immanent. It would seem that God as the transcendent is the experience of the mystic in Samadhi, and that God as the immanent is his perception of Him when he regains relative consciousness.

The other point we want to comment upon is the idea of making the body absolutely immune from illness. There are two extreme views in this country regarding the place of the body in spiritual life—one holding that a conscious neglect of it leading to its gradual decay is a part of spiritual discipline, and the other maintaining that a perfected spiritual life implies also the perfection of the body, including its immortality and freedom from disease. Now the unhealthy influence of both these extremes is obvious. Body is a means for a higher purpose, and whenever people have forgotten this, either through minimising its importance, or through elevating it to the dignity of one of the ends sought, the consequences have been undesirable. The neglect of it results in ruined health and the frustration of one's spiritual aim through sheer physical disabilities. The exaltation of it, as in the case of the Hatha Yogis and some of the Tantrics, ends in side-tracking the aspirant from the true road of the Spirit to unhealthy forms of psychism and exaggerated body consciousness. For this reason Sri Ramakrishna used

to deprecate Hatha Yoga and other allied schools of thought. We do not however imply by this that the system of Yoga taught in the present book has even the slightest resemblance to Hatha Yoga, or that it advocates any cult of body worship. The summary we have given above would show that it gives a very remarkable synthesis of all the highest spiritual traditions of India regarding Gnana (knowledge), Karma (work) and Bhakti (devotion), and that it declares in no uncertain terms the absolute necessity of a healthy spirit of dispassion and self-surrender for success in one's spiritual endeavours. The point we want to make out is only this: In spite of the high ideals and wise restrictions of a system of discipline, it is in danger of being misunderstood and misapplied by the common man when he hears of such an attractive promise as of making the body perfectly immune from disease. No doubt one who is already established in the spiritual ideal may undertake, if he thinks it necessary, to experiment on the transformations that can be wrought on the physical body and earth consciousness, by bringing the power and purity of the spirit to bear on them. Many spiritually enlightened persons may not care to do even this, as, say, in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. When asked to cure his ailing body by the power of his spiritualised mind, he declared that he could never think of directing, towards the body, the mind that had wholly and unreservedly been surrendered to the Divine Mother. This, however, may be a matter of temperament, and bold experiments in the realm of the Spirit, without any selfish consideration,

have their own place and justification. But we feel that matters of experiment, especially when there is every possibility of their being misunderstood and misapplied, are better not held forth before spiritual aspirants in general, lest it should turn to be dangerous knowledge in their hands. For the average spiritual aspirant, the safer way will be to do everything to keep the body in normal health, as one of the chief instruments of Sadhana, but not to expect anything more of it than what Nature has meant it to be.

These remarks are not in any way intended to minimise the great

spiritual value of the book. With its practical outlook, its synthetic note, and its sublime tone and diction, the book can be relied upon as a constant companion by all spiritual aspirants, both for inspiration in times of doubt and depression, and for wise guidance in the regulation of their daily life and spiritual endeavours. Its place is undoubtedly very high in the religious literature of the world. Spiritual aspirants all the world over will feel deeply indebted to the disciples who have given them the benefit of these valuable instructions, originally imparted to them by their Master for their own personal guidance.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped like a veritable goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

SOME time after my acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna, I went to the temple-garden at Dakshineswar. I was in haste and therefore went without having taken my meal. On hearing this, Sri Ramakrishna said to me, "What a pity! You are starving; go to the Nahabat."* That was my first meeting with the Holy Mother. The mother of Ram† and a few other women had seen the Holy Mother only once or

twice. They were there at that time. They told the Mother about my coming without taking food. The Holy Mother hastily gave me rice, *dal* and vegetables to eat. From the very first meeting, I became very intimate with her. Afterwards, when she was about to start for Kamarpukur to attend the marriage of Ramlal Dada,‡ I went to see her at Dakshineswar. That I would not be able to see her for a long time made me extremely unhappy. She came to take leave of Sri Ramakrishna. The Master stood in the northern verandah of his room and the Mother

touched his feet with her forehead. Sri Ramakrishna said, "Be careful during the trip. Don't leave anything in the boat or on the train." This was the first time I saw the Master and the Holy Mother together. It had been my desire to see them like that. The country boat started on its journey with the Mother. I gazed at it as long as I could see it. When the boat was out of sight, I returned to the Nahabat and wept for a long while, sitting on the place where she used to meditate. She used to sit for meditation on the western verandah of the Nahabat, facing the south. Sri Ramakrishna heard me weep. Then, after returning to his room, he sent for me. I came to his room and said, "You are very unhappy because of her going away, aren't you?" Then to divert my attention, as it were, he narrated to me the various spiritual exercises he practised at Dakshineswar. Then he warned me not to divulge these things to anybody else. That was the first day I sat very near the Master and talked to him intimately. All these days I felt hesitation because I was a shy young wife in a Hindu family. After about a year and a half, the Holy Mother returned to Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna had written to her that he had been experiencing great difficulty about his food. When she came back, the Master said to her, "That girl with the big eyes, who frequents this place, loves you very much. The day you left Dakshineswar she wept bitterly for you at the Nahabat." The Mother said, "Yes, her name is Yogen." Whenever I would go to Dakshineswar, the Mother would talk to me very freely

and ask my advice. I used to dress her hair. She liked my way of braiding so much that even after three or four days, at the time of bath, she would not wet her hair. She would say to others, "No, Yogen has made that braid. I will open it when she comes here." I used to go to the Master about once a week. When returning from Dakshineswar, I would take with me the green *bel* leaves for the worship of Shiva. Even when those leaves dried up, I would perform the worship with them. One day the Mother asked, "Yogen, do you worship Shiva with the dry *bel* leaves?" "Yes, Mother," said I, "but how did you know about it?" The Mother said in reply, "This morning I was meditating when I saw in the course of meditation that you were worshipping Shiva with dry *bel* leaves."

One day the Mother was preparing betel leaves. I was by her side. I saw her putting ordinary nuts and lime in some of the leaves, whereas in others she put some fragrant spices, like cardamom seed. I said to her, "Why have you not put cardamom seed in those leaves? Who will take these without spice, and who will take the others?" The Mother said, "Yogen, these leaves with the spice are for the devotees. I must make them my own through my attention and love. And the ordinary leaves are for the Master. He is already my own."

The Mother knew how to sing well. One day she and Lakshmi-didi were singing together in soft voices. They were absorbed in their music. Sri Ramakrishna heard them. Next day he said to them, "Yesterday you were singing. That is good."

* A building in the garden compound where the orchestra played, and where the Holy mother lived, occupying a room there.

† A lay devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

‡ A nephew of Sri Ramakrishna.

At Dakshineswar the Mother had hardly any respite from work. She used to make bread from seven pounds of flour for the devotees, and prepare betel leaves without number. Then she used to boil milk for the Master for a long time, because he liked the thick cream. Further, she made curries for him. She used to take his food to his own room. As long as Sri Ramakrishna's mother was alive, he used to go to the Nahabat for his meals. After her passing away, he would eat in his own room. When the devotees were not around, the Holy Mother rubbed his body with oil before his bath. When Golap-Didi came to the Master, he asked her one day to bring the plate of rice. Since then, Golap-didi did it every day. The only time the Mother saw the Master daily was when she would take food for him to his room. But now that was all stopped. Golap-didi used to spend a long time in the evening with the Master. Sometimes she would return to the Nahabat at ten o'clock. The Mother would wait with Golap-didi's food in the Nahabat till late at night. That was very inconvenient. One day Sri Ramakrishna heard the Mother saying, "Let the dog or the cat spoil her food. I cannot guard it any more." Next day he said to Golap-didi, "You spend so much time here. That causes her inconvenience. She has to look after your food." Golap-didi said, "No, the Mother loves me really. She calls me by my first name, as if I were her own daughter." Golp-didi did not realise that the Mother was very sad because her intrusion took away the Mother's opportunity of seeing the

Master. But Sri Ramakrishna understood it clearly.

One day Golap-didi said to the Mother, "Mother, Monomohan's mother said, 'He is a man of such great renunciation, and the Holy Mother wears ear-rings and other gold ornaments. Does it look well?'" Next morning when I went to Dakshineswar, I saw the Mother with only two gold bracelets on her wrist. She had taken off all other ornaments. I was a little surprised and said to her, "What is this, Mother?" The Mother said in reply, "Why, did you not hear Golap saying yesterday...?" After my insistence, she put on the ear-rings and one or two ordinary ornaments. She did not put on all her ornaments any more, because immediately after, the Master became ill.

When the Mother first came to Dakshineswar, she was unfamiliar with worldly things, and she also had not experienced religious ecstasy. Though she practised meditation and Japam every day with utmost devotion, we did not hear of her going into Samadhi at that time. On the other hand, she would be frightened and worried to see Sri Ramakrishna's Samadhi. We heard from the Mother herself that when she had first come to Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna allowed her to stay with him.* At that time, the Master and the Holy Mother used to spend the night in

* At one time Tota Puri said to Sri Ramakrishna, "What is the proof that you have conquered your physical passion. I should be convinced of it if you allow your wife to stay with you." Sri Ramakrishna, in order to test his own purity, slept with the Holy Mother, when she first came to Dakshineswar, for eight months in the same bed.

the same room. Sri Ramakrishna slept on the big bed, and the Holy Mother on the smaller one. She used to say, "Sri Ramakrishna used to be in spiritual ecstasy for the whole night. On that account I could not sleep at all. I would be terror-stricken and anxiously wait for the dawn. One night he did not come down to the ordinary plane of consciousness for a long time. I became very anxious and sent for Hriday through the maid-servant. He came to the room and whispered the name of God into the ears of the Master. That brought him down to ordinary consciousness. Next day Sri Ramakrishna taught me different sacred words which should be repeated in his ears for different kinds of ecstasy."

After I had been acquainted with the Mother for some time, she said to me one day, "Please tell him (the Master) that through his grace I may have a little ecstasy. On account of the constant presence of the devotees I hardly get any opportunity to speak to him about it myself."

I thought it was quite right, and I should carry out her request.

Next morning Sri Ramakrishna was seated on the bed alone when I went to his room, and after saluting him in the usual way, I communicated the Mother's prayer to him. He listened to it, but did not give any reply. Suddenly he became very serious. When he would be in that mood, no one would dare to utter a word before him. I sat there silently for a few minutes and then after saluting him, left the room. At the Nahabat I found the Mother engaged in her daily worship. Opening the door a little, I peeped in. She was giggling,—and next

moment she was weeping. This went on alternately for some time. Tears were falling down her cheeks in an unceasing stream. Spending some time in that way, she gradually became very quiet. I knew she was in Samadhi. At this, I closed the door and came away. After a long while I returned again to her room. The Mother said, "Have you just returned from the Master's room?" I said to her, "How is it, Mother, that you say that you never feel spiritual ecstasy?" She was abashed and began to smile. After that event, I used sometimes to spend the nights with the Mother at Dakshineswar. Though I wanted to sleep in a separate bed, she would never listen to it. She would drag me to her side. One night someone was playing on the flute. At that sound, the Mother went into Samadhi. She was laughing now and then. With great hesitation, I sat at one corner of the bed. I thought that being a worldly person, I should not touch her at that time. After a long while her mind came down from that state.

One day she was seated in meditation on the roof of Balaram Babu's house, when she went into the state of Samadhi. After regaining her ordinary consciousness, she said to me, "I found in that state, that I have travelled into a distant country. Everybody there was very affectionate to me. My beauty was beyond description. Sri Ramakrishna also was there. With great tenderness they made me sit by his side. I cannot describe to you the nature of that ecstasy. When my mind came down a little from that exalted mood, I saw my body lying there. I thought, 'How could I possibly enter into this

ugly body.' I could not at all persuade my mind to go into that body. After a long while, my mind entered into the body, and the body became conscious again."

One evening we — the Mother, Golap-didi and I—were meditating together, sitting on the roof of the house of Nilambar Babu, at Belur. After my meditation was over I looked at the Mother and found her seated in the same manner, transfixed in

meditation. Not a limb of her body was moving, and evidently her mind was in the ecstasy of Samadhi. After a long time she became conscious of the world again and began to say, "Oh, Yogen, where are my hands, where are my feet?" I pressed those two limbs and said, "Why, Mother, here are your hands and here are your feet." Still for a long time she did not become conscious of her physical body.

BUDDHA THE LIGHT OF ASIA

By Swami Vividishananda

[Swami Vividishananda is the head of the Vedanta Centre of Washington, U.S.A. On the full moon of the month of May is the anniversary of the day which saw the birth, enlightenment and demise of the Buddha. The Swami's brief and impressive survey of the life and teachings of his is an appropriate tribute to the memory of the great one on this occasion.]

BUDDHA, rightly called the Light of Asia, was one of those blessed few who are born to bring peace and illumination to this suffering, benighted planet of ours. It was two thousand and five hundred years ago that Buddha saw the light of day, and it was Mother India who had the privilege of claiming him as one of her illustrious sons.

People in Europe and America knew very little of Buddha and his ethical religion. It was only lately, after the researches of the Oriental scholars and the writing of that monumental poem, "The Light of Asia" by Sir Edwin Arnold, depicting the life, character and teaching of Buddha, that the West became interested in the study of Buddhist literature. Yet we cannot deny the fact that the influence of Buddha and his gospel has been phenomenal.

To Buddha has been given a stupendous conquest of humanity, and

though he discountenanced ritual and declared himself to be only what every man might become, he has been accorded Divine worship. Four hundred and seventy millions of the human race are followers of Buddha, and his spiritual dominions extend from Nepal and Ceylon over the whole Asiatic eastern peninsula, to Tibet, China, Japan, Central Asia, Siberia and Swedish Lapland. Although India, the land of Buddha's birth, does not formally profess his religion, she has undoubtedly received the impress of his marvellous life and given him in her pantheon a place of supreme honour and adoration by recognising him as a divine incarnation.

The narrative of Buddha's life, so human and yet divine, has a fascination that is unequalled in religious history. Buddhist books, having many things which are beautiful and sublime, are not altogether free from

being discordant in details and contain exaggerations, interpolations and misconceptions, as all ancient books are. But they are unanimous in one point—in not writing anything—a single act or word, that would mar the purity and tenderness of the man.

Buddha, like all those great men who are worshipped as world teachers and saviours, was the embodiment of the time spirit. The peculiar degenerate condition of India in the sixth century before the Christian era necessitated badly a religious reformer of Buddha's type. The Hindu society, forgetting the lofty teachings of the Vedas, was ruled by priests who, without caring to live the life, were characterised by insincerity, hypocrisy, and tyranny. In the name of religion the people, following the footsteps of the leaders, practised meaningless rituals and cruel sacrifice, stained by the blood of innocent dumb animals. Chaos and confusion were rampant throughout the length and breadth of the country, calling for an immediate readjustment. At last the saving power of God manifested itself as Buddha—the reformer, the upholder of righteous living in place of the so-called social or scriptural authority, and the leveller of artificial distinctions. Apparently Buddha started his spiritual campaign as a rebel child of the mother Hindu church, but really speaking he came to fulfil and not to destroy.

Born in the year 620 B.C., at Kapilavastu on the borders of Nepal, India, in a royal family, Buddha was an unusual child, contemplative and serious, pondering on the deeper problems of life and showing an extraordinary compassion for all living

things. After his birth the astrologers and diviners came and predicted that the child reaching manhood would either renounce the world and bring deliverance to man by his wondrous wisdom, or, if he so chose, be a king of kings and rule this earth.

The parents, apprehending that they might lose their precious child, kept him in ignorance of the dark side of life, shutting from his view all that is sordid, ugly and painful. He was married and imprisoned in love's prison house—a walled place with palaces, gardens, fountains and natural scenery. Troops of charming women, besides his most loving wife, constantly waited upon him and tried to keep him cheerful.

In spite of all these attempts how could they hide from his eyes the thorns which grow upon the rose of life. Out to see this fair earth, he found nature in her naked form—a place seething with shameful and hideous conspiracy and warfare. He saw pleasure followed by pain, and death in the wake of life. Finally, it was the greatest shock of his life when he discovered that even man, supposed to be the crown and glory of creation, was not free from the ills of existence, being subject to old age, disease and death in addition to other weaknesses. The shock gave a decided turn to his life. Buddha, the prince, brought up in the lap of regal luxury and having all the promises of a reigning monarch, renounced the pleasures of life and his beloved ones, for the sake of truth.

The spiritual quest of Buddha, his wandering from place to place in search of teachers, his disappointment, his unaided effort to fathom the rid-

dle of existence, his hardship, privation and temptation, and his final illumination—is too long a story to be told here, but it is full of incidents which would serve as object lessons to humanity, encouraging, inspiring and comforting.

We shall narrate here an incident which marked the turning point of his life. Consumed by a burning desire for the realisation of Truth, Buddha gave himself up to ceaseless contemplation and meditation, denying himself even the bare physical necessities. In the enthusiasm of spiritual exercise sleep, food and rest were forgotten till his strong frame broke down under the pressure of exertion. Reduced to a skeleton, he was extremely weak and feeble, having not even the power to think. Not knowing what to do, he was almost ready to give up his attempt through depression and discouragement. A troupe of dancing girls was passing that way at the time, singing merrily as they played their guitar. Buddha listened. The song they sang perhaps did not mean much to them, but to Buddha it carried a message full of deep spiritual significance. The song was :

"Fair goes the dancing when the
sitar's tuned,

Tune us the *sitar* neither low nor
high,

And we will dance away the
hearts of men.

The string o'erstretched breaks,
and the music flies,

The string o'erslack is dumb,
and music dies,

Tune us the *sitar* neither low nor
high."

Buddha realised that he should not
overstrain his body in his spiritual

strivings, nor should he pamper it, for that would defeat its own purpose, and since then he adopted the golden mean or the middle path avoiding extremes.

He had his bath and was waiting for food, when Sujata, a woman of extreme piety and charm, came with a golden bowl of delicious pudding, made of the purest milk and honey and seasoned with spices, and fed him with great love and devotion. It brought strength and energy to Buddha's weak and emaciated body, and courage and determination to his drooping soul. He sat firm and determined under the famous Bo tree, and plunged himself into meditation, diving deep into his inner being, saying to himself : "Let my body dry up, my skin, bone and flesh go to rack and ruin ! Never shall I get up and move from this seat until I get the illumination I have been striving for all these years."

Buddha's determination is unique in spiritual history. He was tempted in many ways by Mara, the personification of one's lower nature, but heroically he faced him and resisted all the allurements that were placed on his path. The victory came and along with it the long-sought-for illumination—the glory of Nirvana which passeth all understanding. Buddha the seeker became the illumined saviour and deliverer. His face was suffused with a divine radiance and his personality surcharged with a supernal joy and blessedness. In the tumult of this ecstatic experience he got up from his seat and danced around the Bo tree for seven consecutive days and nights, oblivious of the rest of the world. As he was coming down to the normal

plane, his heart was filled with supreme love and compassion, and with a desire to share this experience with humanity.

Buddha travelled all over India, spreading his gospel and making disciples, lay and monastic. Those who renounced the world formed the nucleus of the holy Order of monks founded by him. Pressed by the eager importunities of his aged parents and devoted wife, who were pining and languishing because of his absence, Buddha visited his native place and gave them the blessing of his teachings. Many of his relatives, including his wife and son, took refuge in the Order. A beautiful story connected with Buddha and his son which is told in Buddhist books deserves mention.

On the seventh day, after Buddha's arrival in Kapilavastu, his son Rahula, now seven years old, dressed in all the splendour of a prince, came to meet him. After due obeisance to his father, Rahula asked for his patrimony. Buddha blessed him and said ; "My boy ! Gold and silver and jewels are not in my possession. But if you are willing to receive spiritual treasures, and are strong enough to carry them and to keep them, I shall give you the Four Truths which will teach you the eightfold path of righteousness. Do you desire to be admitted to the brotherhood of those who devote their life to the culture of the mind, seeking for the highest bliss attainable ?" Rahula replied with firmness, "Yes, father." And he was admitted into the Order.

Let us discuss briefly the Buddhist conception of Nirvana, which has

been wrongly identified with extinction or annihilation by many. Nirvana is not a negative state. On the contrary it is a positive experience—the fruit of a set form of spiritual exercise followed by desirelessness, freedom and illumination. It is similar to Samadhi—the mystic superconscious experience of the Vedantist, which has been described as beyond speech and thought. Buddha was silent on the existence of God and did not say much on what Nirvana meant. Asked by his foremost disciple Ananda, whether God existed or not, he evaded the issue. Buddha's rule was : "Live the life, and you will feel what God or Nirvana is. No use talking." Buddha was never an atheist or agnostic as has been mistakenly supposed.

In order to attain Nirvana, Buddha wanted his followers to be established in the four Noble Truths which are sorrow, sorrow's cause, sorrow's cessation, and the way to escape it. Buddha realised that the life we prize so much is one long-drawn sorrow. Only its pains abide. Its joys are as fleeting as drops of water on a lotus leaf. Who can ignore the pains of birth, youth, disease, old age and death ? They are too real. The desire of enjoyment and clinging to life is sorrow's cause. If we can get rid of desire, there will be an end of our pain, and we shall have ever-lasting peace. For the attainment of peace which is identical with Nirvana, Buddha prescribed a way, the Noble Eightfold Path, a course of mental and spiritual discipline like right doctrine, right purpose, right discourse and so on. Nirvana is the birthright of

every man. Until he attains Nirvana he cannot have any freedom and will be born again and again, reaping the fruits of his good and bad deeds.

To conclude let us repeat the sacred formula :

Let us take refuge in Buddha—
the Enlightened One.

Let us take refuge in Dharma—
the Sacred Law.

Let us take refuge in Sangha—
the Holy Order.

THE BUDDHA

By Prof. Dr. Henrich Zimmer

[Dr. Zimmer is one of the well-known orientalists of Germany. The present article is a translation from the original German. We are indebted to Dr. V. N. Sharma, Ph.D., (Heidel) for the translation.]

THE Buddhist monks of Ceylon tell us how according to their tradition the Order of the Buddha, the Awakened, originated. In His loneliness, sitting under the tree, night and morning, the princely Yogin had the great Awakening, after which He is known as the Buddha, the Awakened. His former being, the being of all creation—Gods and animals—lies now behind Him, like dream and night. Deeply fallen (merged) in Himself, He is bathing in the stream of His own Awakening. Thus the Lord remains seven days and nights, unmoved and untouched “expressing the bliss of the Awakening.” Then He rises so as to depart from this place, but he cannot : again He sits down under another tree, again for seven days and nights, penetrated into this stream of bliss of the Awakening. And likewise goes on into the same experience for a third time again for seven days. Then only He comes back to Himself slowly and the world He beholds now. His glorious glance falls on it, and turns back to His Awakening. He understands : What He experienced—one cannot teach it. All endeavours to talk about it, would be in

vain From above, from the zenith of the Brahma—His eternal abode—Brahma, the Universal Spirit, beholds the Awakened, and watches His decision—a decision which is the outcome of His Awakening, and which, if seen with the eyes of the world is the Nirvana, the total extinction from all fleeting things of this side—the decision, to hide His Awakening before all creation. The Universal Spirit Brahma Himself is the highest creature ; He is the source of Time and Space, of all Becoming. With the swiftness of the mind, He appears before the Awakened and implores Him to become the Teacher of Gods and men, yes, of the whole creation, which lies in the womb of the deep sleep, the dream of all dreams, otherwise known as Life. He asks the Awakened thus to unveil to all, the path of the Awakening. . . . In the midst of innumerable beings there might be some, whose eyes might not be so closed through the veil of passion of Life. . . . these might be capable of understanding His world. Yes, there might be beings that might be matured enough to behold the rays of His glorious teaching, like lotus-flowers arising

from the depth of the lake, some having their buds still in the depth, others being nearer to the surface, some alone, unfolded and fully opened, moving and swimming in the presence of the sun unhindered. Thus, the Awakened takes His decision to unveil the path to the Awakening Then disciples came, the Order and Tradition followed. Thus, He the Buddha, became the Teacher of the world. From the beginning the teaching of the Lord was meant only for the few. His message is never intended either to interfere, or change, or rule the destinies of the humanity. It might disappear in the throes of time and space, as we see in the Buddhistic tradition, unrealisable to the latter generations.

In contrast to the great preachers of the world—Homer in his sphere of the visible characteristic scenes, Zarathustra as the founder of the religious laws, Confucius who ordered and commented on the heredity of the decaying of the olden times, Jesus as the Harbinger of the happy message—the Indian prince of the Sakhyia family, generally known as Sakhyia Muni, is the embodiment of the highest silence, of taciturnity. Through the whole rich traditions of the Buddha, there is no word that can be doubtlessly said to be Buddha's. However, through the well-arranged speeches attributed to the Buddha, we get only a glance of the enlightened shade of a unique personality ; nevertheless, we are brought to the surface of an atmosphere, which is unique in itself, and a similar of which one finds neither in India nor anywhere abroad. The path of the Buddha unveils no vision either of this world or of the other,

it starts no organisation for all. It is only meant for the few, to them only is the path unveiled. So the formulas, which can be understood, and by which one can stand firmly, are for the few.

However, there is one formula, which according to the Western conceptions is a creed, or a dogma. This compasses in itself four Noble Truths, and in them the last one unveils to us the Eight-folded Path of the Buddha. One has to understand this if one wants to behold the dynamic paradox of the living Buddhism, in spite of the great silence of the Buddha. Through the centuries in Asia, the message of the Buddha echoes in this. This creed and its dogmas remind us in Europe of some of our philosophical and religious experiences, and it is something new and unique to India, too, where these were presented five hundred years before Christ. There enters into this land, which was hitherto the treasure house of immemorial magical-religious riches, and which also appears as if it is a forest of metaphysical-speculative systems, a new path, the path of the Buddha, which has presented a new process of healing ; a therapy now enters the arena by the side of the traditional wisdom which bestowed on men the glory of the divinity, and by the side of the traditional knowledge which unveiled the magical powers, and teaches all why one is in this world, and what one can be in the future worlds.

Unlike Spinoza, who in his contemplative thought follows a geometrical system, Buddha speaks in a practical manner like a medical man. He makes men transcend from this world where they live. As an Indian

physician, the Buddha puts forth four significant Truths (Dharma)—the first of which is that men are not healthy because they are carrying heavy burdens of sorrow on their shoulders. The Buddha diagnoses these prudently without any question of guilt, without any pathos of metaphysical sources. What is this suffering of man?—this does not teach us any speculation, does not entangle us into any excavation of thought, but makes one to penetrate into that glance of life which transcends our conditioned being. Through this glance one can know that the cause and the symptoms of the suffering are the same, even though one suffers now or suffered in the past. These alone form his nature, and create the atmosphere around him. The second Truth is that the nature of his suffering state is surmounted with a chain, which is full of causes and symptoms of suffering. This alone forms the quintessence of our earthly life, our conventionally lived life, whether we acknowledge them as sufferings or not. The Buddha looks at many in this respect, somewhat like a psycho-therapist that looks at his patient who thinks that he is healthy, though the physician recognises all the symptoms of his sorrows and embarrassments from within and without, and thus recognises the critical case of the patient.

The origin of this life, diagnosed as a painful one, is nothing but ignorance; it is non-knowledge. Not-knowing—better is this; it is somewhat like looking at oneself with the eyes of the child. Ignorance is therefore a natural function, but not

necessarily an indispensable one. Hence we do not know that we move in a world of conventions in which we feel, in which we think and act. Nevertheless the conventions are there, but they are not the highest reality, for, they are human creations, conventions between the world and the I. Conventions might change in their conceptions from time to time, their aspects might undergo many a change in the course of history. Hence they are conventions that are universal, touching only the surface of the creation, from the animals to the Gods in their heavens. So ignorance accepts them as such, with all their contents as real existing ones.

On this ignorance depends all other symptoms, all the incidents and situations of life. The timeless Becoming of nature in which we live, is beyond birth and death. All the happenings in which we live, grow and act depend on this spontaneous push of our innermost Being to the outer world with all our senses and perceptions. The contact of the soul with that domain of form and name is the outcome of this. All our unconscious desires and wishes which emanate from us, move around us in the shape of choice and deed, and in which life transcends the limitations of the present, form the fundamental background of our being, of our heredity. This alone expresses itself in preconceptions and inclinations, in our dreams in very often repeated pictures of our destiny. Therefore, the whole content of our spontaneous life is according to the Buddhist diagnosis pathological. It is a state of suffering which can be perhaps cured.

(To be continued)

BUDDHA THE SOCIAL REFORMER

By Bhikshu Gnyanapriya

[Bhikshu Gnyanapriya is a Buddhist monk of German nationality. In the following article he clears the common misapprehension that the Buddha's message had no reference to the life of man in this world. He points out how the Buddha had a deep psychological insight into the needs of men and societies, and how his message is the source of gospels of social amelioration.]



OUR subject brings us to the question as to whether Buddhism as a religion can be said to have been essentially swayed by monastic ideals, and if it is so, whether we can say that its ethics is anti-social? There are many who feel, nevertheless, that the spontaneous renunciation and right overcoming of the world by those who take to the life of asceticism are perfectly justifiable, provided the vocation be real. It is further positively advantageous to the community, socially and morally, that a number of its finest minds should lead a life that may be called in a certain sense 'sheltered.' It would neither be fair nor plausible to characterise the true Buddhist morality as a thoroughgoing monasticism or as a doctrine of self-salvation. The Holy Order of the early Bhikshus was formed by fostering cosmic sympathy "for the sake of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good and the gain of gods and men."

The noble Buddhist path is the middle path between asceticism and laxity, also between the extremes of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva ideals. It is integration into a single ideal of highest spiritual perfection. The noble Sakyamuni, who was never and by no means a 'monkish' seclusionist, generally deprecates, and in cases even forbids, penance on the one

hand and indulgence in sensuous pleasures on the other, and recommends "the fasting of the heart" as conducive to illumination. Like the Hellen Aristotle, Bhagavan Buddha has enjoined the golden Middle Path, combining harmoniously a dynamic sort of moderate asceticism as a preparation to the luminous and unique experience of perfect Self-realisation and salvation. The sublime example of wise asceticism in the life of innumerable monks must have provided in the society a useful corrective to luxury and haughty selfishness.

The typical Yogi and Sadhu who has renounced the world and established universal harmony is saved from the torment of separateness which is the basis of the illusory life; he has already done his work, and is ahead of the times. The real hermit and the saint, the Buddhas, Christs and Ramakrishnas of this world, are the brilliant pillars of strength and good hope on which this unsaved world stands. The mere fact of their breathing the same atmosphere in which we breath is a benediction and an inestimable benefit unto us.

Some years ago, Mr. K. J. Saunders in his Message of Gotama Buddha, published in the Heritage of India Series, observed: "Gotama was not a social reformer except in the secondary, subordinate sense which is true of all religious and moral

teachers ; he is said, in fact, to have warned some of his monks to avoid the example of certain heretics who acted also as physicians. Their task was to administer a moral tonic : let them see to it." You will recall in this context the beautiful episode of Kish-gotami whose baby had just died. This is just an outline of it. The villagers tell Gotami that only the Great Sage on the hill can do anything for her child, and she goes to the Compassionate One. He does not tell her that He cannot restore the child to life ; that would have been too much a heavy blow to the poor, afflicted lady who had fixed her last hope on Him. But He sympathises with her, and puts her in the way of learning that death and evanescence of the little, conscious self is the common lot of all, and that by establishing universal harmony and intuitive unity one could attain direct experience and knowledge of the voidness of all transcient things, and thereby get enlightenment and everlasting Bliss. This unique knowledge of enlightenment and deliverance would not be accepted by the English poet who wrote : "That loss is common does not make mine own less severe, rather more." But the mind and the deeper wisdom of the eastern man, especially of the Indian, is cast in a different mould ; it goes right into and penetrates the very bottom of Ultimate Reality.

If by "social reformer" is meant one who puts forward a programme, forms an association, collects funds, prints treatises, delivers lectures, discusses and employs agents to carry on a propaganda, Gotama, the Sakya-muni was not certainly a social reformer. As I take it, however, the

person who does all this, is "the social reformer" in the secondary sense. He is a very necessary person in the social economy ; but his utility and value entirely depends upon the "social reformer" in the primary and proper sense, that is, the man who diagnoses the social diseases and troubles correctly, and prescribes the true specific for the malady. With an only symptomatic manner of treatment he is dissatisfied. The former kind of "social reformer" is to this latter kind, what the chemist who makes and distributes medicines is to the doctor who examines thoroughly the patient and writes out the prescription. The modern notion favours institutional methods—that is to say, whenever there is an evil to be cured, society gets together a number of people and starts an organisation to combat it through the working of a programme. In the case of the more serious ills, the State is expected to take up the work. Social philosophers like Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill objected to State legislation and intervention in social matters on the ground that it weakened individual responsibility. But they did not oppose voluntary organisations.

The constant tendency in all social organisations and associations, for machine methods and mechanisation, the tendency to eliminate altogether the human touch, the living, responsible man, nay, to violate him, has often enough called forth strong protests from the masses as well as the best persons in the society. To take one instance, Madame Montessori in her book on education severely criticises modern orphanages as utterly useless for the ideal which they are

intended to fulfil. Great Teachers like Christ, Buddha and Ramakrishna were not against organisations as such, but they attached greater importance to the fundamental human factor. To them organisation was strictly subservient to the human heart in all matters. It will be wrong to deny on that account alone the title of "social reformer" to the great luminaries, from whom all other reformers, innovators, and theorists who have worked for the people's happiness have lit their little lamps.

The fully Enlightened One differed from the Hindu philosophers and teachers of His time only in the intensely practical spirit in which he conceived His high mission. Having tried all the traditional methods and systems and failed to attain the highest goal, He discovered a practical method of His own, and at once set about to proclaim and demonstrate it to all mankind in a simple way. His way and experience went far beyond the limited intellect, its fruitless controversies and its snobbish knowledge of the superficial purely practical aspect of life. He was sure that by following earnestly His way, every one could attain the highest peace of mind and the great silence of the Eternal Bliss which He Himself had attained by straining every nerve. He did not overlook the need of organisations. In fact, He was perhaps the first great organiser in history. He formed His organisation, but showed how the fabric of society was based on morality and inner purity. He took care that every one who formed it had qualified himself for the task and mission of human regeneration by a strict course of study and discipline. Man is not

purely a social being but a psychological being as well ; complete self-realisation of Noble Wisdom and Love requires increased self-responsibility and dynamic spiritual energy. For life is in wholeness, while pure analysis is death. The true, whole man, with his inmost cosmic tendencies, is more and greater than an 'unrelated atom' in terms of which the sterile pedantry and individualistic, false monasticism of some Theravada Buddhists would conceive him to be. The living man is man-in-the-universe, microcosm and macrocosm, Man and God and Destiny together as one and the same.

If the Tathagata prohibited His disciples from curing diseases or working miracles, it was because their doing so would have distracted public attention from His central teaching, which consisted in self-reliance and self-aid as the sole efficient way to final salvation. This teaching lay wholly in the power of man. That the Buddha's message of light and freedom did not prohibit the cure of disease is seen by the fact that the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka built hospitals for men and even for animals throughout his vast empire. The central idea of the Lord Buddha's teaching is that really all evil is of moral and mental origin, and that the remedy of it has to be sought in a complete renovation and harmonising of the mind and heart. Modern doctors and scientists have demonstrated that germs of disease are born of evil passions and unwholesome states of mind. However that may be, mind-cures which were once laughed at are now accepted not only as possible but as actual facts. The Blessed One was a reformer, religi-

ous, social and even political, but His peculiar manner was that of appeal to the human mind and heart, to the whole living man.

Frontal attacks are now recognised as ineffective and detrimental in dealing with bad habits and social evils. "The expansive power of a new and living affection" and a positive attitude are the most potent agents in removing an old unhealthy habit, and they are the essential elements in every successful life. If you want to cure a drunkard of his vicious craving, open attractive temperance hotels and homesteads in the neighbourhood. We need must love the highest when we see it, as George Elliot wrote; but people to whom the opportunity of higher pleasures and noble beauty are denied, perforce will sink back into lower ones. If you want to get rid of a bad thought, the best way to do it is to hold steadfastly before your mind a pure idea. The highest impulse of the subjective self is to express itself in consciousness. It will express itself intuitively to its full capacity if freedom of action is allowed. The perfectly Awakened One systematically acted upon these very modern maxims during His life-time.

Take His way of dealing with the elegant courtesan, Ambapali. Jesus Christ, in a similar situation, reprimanded the men who accused the woman taken in adultery, and bade her go and sin no more. We feel, as we would if we had known her subsequent life personally, that the young woman turned over a new leaf of life after that meeting with the Master. But I venture to think that the Lord Buddha was a greater psychologist, and that His manner of treatment,

while equally effective, was even better. He received the worldly-minded Ambapali just as courteously and trustfully as the Licchavi who called upon Him immediately after. He made no reference whatever to her moral conduct, and for the moment, made her forget all about it. He accepted her invitation to meals with the same gracious politeness as He would accept that of a King or Emperor. Yet He knew everything about her; but His object was merely to put His trust in her and make her cast the past out of her mind and soul completely. And when we read that at the end of the repast He accepted Ambapali's gift of the house for His community, He felt, and we feel sure, that Ambapali had renounced her manner of living for ever. The same master touch is seen in the treatment of the returned prodigal son in Buddha's parable. In Christ's parable, the father is so immoderate in his touching instances of the love and joy as to make his dutiful elder son justly jealous of the treatment accorded to the returned squanderer. But the Blessed One is ever sensitive to, and careful of, moral values and emotions. The father in His parable does not betray his feelings, but with true regard for his son's permanent well-being, little by little prepares and disposes him for the final reunion. The moral is drawn: "By steps must the minds of men be trained for higher truths and states and brought to maturity".

That was the Buddha's unique method of social reform. He created for the human society and its conditions of life a new fertile and vigorous foundation, and threw open the gates of Immortality. Everybody

can show what evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who really finds a way out of the difficulty. The first duty is to train and educate the people on national lines through national manner, as far as practicable, and to lead them to the eternal sources of power which lies in their own infinite and inmost nature. The peerless Master did not refuse to have intercourse with any person or institution, however erring in its ways. He probed to its root, found the evil principle and put a good principle in its place, firmly confident that the power of the good and positive must ever overcome evil.

His method is a priceless heritage to humanity. It is one which seeks to harmonise the inner life with outer life, one which tries to combine knowledge (Arhat) with love and compassion (Bodhisattva). But it requires time and patience to master. It is a way of spiritual dynamism which gives lasting results, and what is more, it is entirely free from untoward reactions of any kind. There is a rich store of helpful examples in the glorious life of the Enlightened One and in his lucid teachings which are of infinite use to us in solving our modern problems.

But India and the Buddhist countries of the East, too,—I think in particular of Ceylon—have to be aware of, and to remember vividly, their

precious treasure of the Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. They should also be aware of "Nobless oblige" and "Example is better than bare theory and doctrine." Are we able to say with confidence to the world: "Look at us. See what the eternal Dharma, the universal message of Light and Freedom has done for us. Accept it, and your people will be the same". If a gift should be fully and frankly appreciated, it must obviously have proved itself to be a benediction to the giver.

The glorious lotus, bathed in golden sunlight that adorns itself, adorns the shining pond. People from afar in the West will come to see that attractive fragrant water-lily, to beg for slips and seeds, that their lakes and countries too may be adorned. Let us then trim our divine flower of Dharma and Truth, and the world enthralled by its sweetness will appreciate it enough. Yielding to the sweet, contagious influence of the Dharma, cherishing its true Oneness, All-inclusive Beauty and Perfectness, we will be radiant with its brilliant Light, Spirit and Love. For only the Sangha, the Community of fervent followers who realise the universal Dharma, Truth and Compassion will move their own nation and make even other nations follow its noble steps.

THE INDIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN'S LAST END

By Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy

[Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy points out herein that there is no fundamental difference between Hinduism and Christianity in regard to the conception of man's Last End (Moksha).]

THE religion of India is known as Hinduism or Brahmanism. Of this religion, Buddhism was a variant, related to Hinduism in the same way that Protestantism was related to Catholicism.

When the religion of India was first examined by Europeans, and mainly by Christian missionaries, nothing but a difference between Christianity and Hinduism could be seen; because no one wished to recognise anything but difference. We know now that the parallels between Christianity and Hinduism are so many, so close, and often so verbally exact, that we can only consider that both are dialects of one and the same spiritual language; only this distinction remaining, that in Christianity the major emphasis is devotional and ethical, in Hinduism metaphysical and intellectual. If we consider only mediæval Christianity, or Catholic doctrine, even this distinction partly disappears.

Very many misconceptions of Indian religion still persist, even in scholarly circles. Hinduism, for example, is described as a polytheism, but is no more polytheistic than Christianity, in which connection one may be surprised to learn that no less an authority than St. Thomas Aquinas affirms that "We cannot say *the only God*, for deity is common to several" (S. Th. 1:31:2). And just as the Muhammadans have mistakenly

regarded Christianity as a polytheism, so Christians have been mistaken in calling Hinduism a polytheism, the fact being that neither Christianity nor Hinduism are polytheistic, though both are polynominal; an infinity of designations of the First Principle being in fact inevitable, precisely because of Its infinite variety and omnimodality when regarded from our point of view, however perfectly simple and one and the same It may be in Itself.

In the same way Hinduism has often been called a pantheistic faith; pantheism being the doctrine that everything is God, and God identical with all things and *not* at the same time infinitely more than all things. In fact, however, this doctrine is constantly and emphatically repudiated in Hinduism by repeated affirmations both of immanence and of transcendence, and by a repeated distinction of the finite and intelligible from the infinite and unintelligible aspects of Deity. The Hindu and Christian traditions, indeed, both alike employ the complementary ways "of affirmation" and "of negation" side by side: on the one hand describing the Deity according to His powers or acts, or manifestations of omnipresence, and on the other declaring that "Nothing true can be said of God", that whatever can be said is inadequate, or even a distortion, and hence the famous phrase of the Upanishads, "No! No!"

At the same time we meet with repeated assertions of the identity, not indeed of the empirical ego, but of the real and innermost self of man with the Divine Essence, in equally famous *logoi* such as "That art thou", and "It is only by becoming God that one can truly worship Him." That brings us directly face to face with the problem to be discussed here, of what is really meant by the Hindu doctrine of "deification", and the question, whether or not the Indian "deification" differs from the Christian "deification", as understood for example by St. Bernard or by Meister Eckhart.

There can be no question but that from the Hindu point of view, man's last end and beatitude are only realised when he no longer knows of any distinction between "himself" and the Spirit of God; just as, to employ a simile common to Ruysbroeck and the Upanishads, when rivers reach the sea, their individuality is confused with that of the sea, and we can only speak of "sea".

If Christianity seems on the other hand to maintain an eternal distinction of the creature from the Creator, we shall have to ask whether or not this apparent contradiction is a real one, or whether the Hindu "deification" and that of the Christian mystics (who have also been accused of pantheism) do not by their insistence on a total abandonment of self as an indispensable condition imply precisely that very distinction of creature from Creator, and of finite from Infinite, which is not merely an orthodox Christian doctrine, but one that is metaphysically unimpeachable and universally valid. It is with the immortality of the soul

that we are concerned with; whether such an immortality is possible, and what is more important, whether or not an immortality of the soul, if such a thing be possible, can be regarded as in any way compatible with man's last end of deification and perfect beatitude.

Hindu and Christian doctrine agree in making the Messiah and Avatar, the universal Man and Son of Man, the only doorway through which one can be enlarged from this created world of birth and death, change and decay, into that uncreated world of light and immortality, from our present experience of past and future into that eternal now without duration. It is with reference to that great transition that Christ says, "He that would save his life, let him lose it": and indeed as Eckhart exclaims, "The soul must put itself to death. . . . All scripture cries aloud for freedom from self". This "freedom from the self" means very much more than our ethical "unselfishness"; it means a liberation from the whole idea of "I and mine", from all attachment to the notion of an independent private essence, whether of soul or body; and a liberation from all attachment to any such "survival of personality" as spiritualists have confused with immortality in the orthodox and strictly spiritual sense of the word.

That messianic and solar door by which one passes out of this imperfect world into that state of glory which, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, "is not under the sun", is a strait gate, and even a closed door for those who are not qualified to pass through it; that is, the way is impassable for those in whom there

remains the smallest trace of selfhood, whether physical or psychic. To "win beyond the Sun" one must have abandoned all possessions, whether of body or soul; those who are qualified to enter in are described as "unified," in distinction from all that remains without, in multiplicity. The gates of Paradise are guarded by the Angel with the Flaming Sword, and it is precisely in the same way that in the Indian texts the way in is described as covered over, concealed, and defended by rays of light, by which external manifestations the way is barred against all who are agnostic of God. It is only for one transformed by the Gnosis of God that the rays are withdrawn, and an open road is seen, coincident with what is called in Hinduism the "Pre-eminent Ray", and in Christianity the "Dark Ray", because it is not outwardly visible, but strikes into the Divine Darkness, where no sun shines, but only the Spirit that is called alike in Hinduism and Christianity the "Light of lights", and alternatively a "Darkness" or "Lightning" as being "blinding by excess of light".

In Indian scriptures the qualification of one who is enabled to pass through the Sun and enter into the Godhead "as milk might be poured into milk" are primarily those of Truth and Anonymity. It is as "one whose nature is the Truth" that one approaches the Sun, who "is the Truth"; and being of the same quality, cannot be denied. Or it is as one who in answer to the question "Who art thou?" can say "Who I am, that is the Light, Thyself," and is then bidden "Enter thou; for what I am, thou art, and what thou art, I

am." But if he should answer either by his own or by a family name, the would-be entrant is dragged away by the factors of Time. For as another text expresses it, "God has not come from anywhere, nor has He become anyone": and the conclusion inevitably follows that no one can return to God as like to like who still is anyone.

In the same way one who reaches the end of the road and enters into God must leave behind him the whole burden of his deeds, whether good or evil. For these are the basis of "character", and nothing characteristic can enter into the uncharacterised Deity, "Whose only idiosyncrasy is being." There, as Meister Eckhart says, "Neither vice nor virtue ever entered in," or, as the Upanishad expresses it, "Neither vice nor virtue can pass over that Bridge of the Spirit which is the only link between this world and that." In the words of Damascene, "He Who Is, is the principle of the names applied to God;" and the Upanishad, "He is, by that alone can He be apprehended." It is not then by works or merit that a man is qualified to attain to the perfection of happiness, but only by an absolute Knowledge and Love of God; an absolute Knowledge or love of anything implying, of course, a perfect sameness of knower and known, lover and beloved.

We are now in a position to reconcile the Christian mystic and Indian metaphysical concepts of "deification" with the admittedly true doctrine that nothing finite can enter into the Infinite as like to like. Equally from the Christian and the Hindu standpoint the constitution of man is triple, a constitution, *viz.*, of body,

soul, and spirit; Sanskrit *rupa, nama, atman*; Arabic, *badan, nafs, rich*. The Christian soul (anima, psyche) is no less than the body a created and mutable thing, and hence, in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, "To say that the soul is of the Divine Substance involves a manifest improbability" (STh. 1:90:1). If then the soul, although begun in time, and being one amongst others, is nevertheless sometimes spoken of as becoming immortal, we must not overlook that this transformation is only accomplished by its own "last death," nor overlook that it is only as "no thing" and "no one" that it can enter into God, who is assuredly no thing, nor any one amongst others.

The consciousness of a man can be centred in his body, and this is the animal man; or in the soul, and this is the psychic man; or in the spirit, which is the spiritual or pneumatic man. It is the latter alone that can "return" to God in likeness of nature. Nor is this last end of man merely a matter of *post mortem* destiny: for "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," or as the Upanishad expresses it, "The inconceivable form of Deity, farther than far away, and also here within you, though It cannot be seen by the eye's intrinsic faculty, can be apprehended by Truth, and can be seen by the illuminated Gnostic, where It indwells the secret chamber of the heart." And just as Indian teachings acknowledge the possibility of a liberation realised here and now, so as Augustine puts it, "Insofar as we are thinking of eternal things, we are participating in eternity," and we must confess with Behmen that at death "The

soul goes nowhere where it is not already."

Thus neither Indian nor Christian "deification," man's last end, implies any such doctrine as that the finite and variable individuality of man can assume the infinite and immutable being of God. Deification is a reunion, often described as a marriage, of the immanent with the transcendent Spirit. Not that these two have ever been divided, otherwise than in terms of the human logic by which our own limited individualities are sustained; for the Spirit is impartible. To be deified is "werden was du bist"; it is only when the Identity is thought as a condition to be "some day" realised, and speaking in an all-too-human language, that we call the Gnosis a re-union and speak of those who realise it as "Perfections," as though they had been somewhere or had been any less than perfect. Actually, as Eckhart says, "When I enter there, no one will ask me whence I came or whither I went." For the individual principle is only "not yet" risen, only "not yet" at home, insofar as it conceives itself in time and as a prodigal son; as it is in God, it has never fallen, never been estranged. Because in God there can be no distinction of ideas from the intellect that entertains them; it is only "as if" that one can speak of the *imago imaginata* as "returning to" or "becoming" the *imago imaginans*, in which it already exists "more eminently."

The Hindu "deification," then, is precisely what is meant when we are commanded "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" and meant by St. Paul when

he says that "Whoever is joined unto the Lord is One Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). A fundamental distinction of Hinduism from Christianity is thus impossible; to draw a distinction is to divide the Truth against itself.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

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

[As the author of the Primer of Hinduism and other popular and thoughtful works, and as one of the most successful translators of the Bhagavad Gita, the name of Mr. D. S. Sarma, Principal of Rajahmundry College, is well known to modern students of Hinduism. In the following article, which forms the substance of a lecture delivered at the Hindu Samaj, he gives a critical appreciation of the Ramakrishna Movement, bringing out its significance and possibilities for modern India and the world at large.

With reference to the writer's remark towards the end of the article regarding the relative importance of social service and spiritual practice in the Ramakrishna Math, we wish to make one point clear. To the followers of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda work and worship are only two forms in Sadhana. So it may be said that the Ramakrishna Maths are devoted wholly to spiritual practice, and the work they undertake only forms one aspect of spiritual discipline.]

IT can never be too often repeated that Sri Ramakrishna is the starting point of the present Indian Renaissance. The movement that goes by his name is more representative of the Hindu religious spirit than any other movement of modern times. It has successfully avoided the pitfalls that lie in the path of the religious movements started by a subject nation. India has been conquered by nations who profess, and profess with great zeal and intolerance, theistical religions of an aggressive type. And so our tendency as a subject nation has been, especially in the last century, to exalt an imitative and alien type of theism at the expense of other, and what we generally regard as higher elements in our religion. All our theistical movements of modern times may be regarded, therefore, as the tribute we have paid to our conquerors. Hinduism at its highest has, however, looked upon theism as only a half way house. The highest passages in the Upanishads,

which are the authoritative sources of Hinduism, go beyond theism. At the same time theism was never absent from the minds of even the greatest of our Upanishadic Rishis. For Yajnavalkya, in whom we have the highest pinnacle of Hindu religious thought, cries in one place like a Hebrew prophet: "Verily, at the command of the Imperishable, O Gargi, the sun and the moon stand apart. Verily, at the command of the imperishable, O Gargi, the heaven and the earth stand apart Verily, O Gargi, if one offers oblations, performs sacrifices and undergoes austerities for thousands of years in this world, but does not know the Imperishable, one finds that perishable are all those acts."

But he concludes this very passage by saying: "Verily, O Gargi, this Imperishable is the unseen seer, the unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker, the unknown Knower. There is no other seer but this, no other Hearer but this, no other thinker

but this, and no other Knower but this. Across this Imperishable, O Gargi, is space woven and interwoven.' The founder of the Ramakrishna Movement, illiterate as he was, knew this distinction between Theism and Absolutism much more thoroughly than any scholar, and expressed it in his own inimitable way by saying that he regarded the former as the staircase and the latter as the terrace, and that he himself rested sometimes on the staircase and sometimes on the terrace. Accordingly, the Swamis of this movement are neither exclusively theists nor exclusively absolutists. They are Hindus recognising the validity of both types of experience. Another pitfall which lies in the path of a subject nation is the desire to nationalise its religion. A national religion is really a contradiction in terms. Every religion worth the name should be universal in character. Its rites and ceremonies and its forms of worship may be determined by time and place. But its doctrines and interpretations of life should have a universal appeal. Religions that are brought into existence for the purpose of promoting national solidarity or racial unity have in them the seeds of decay. They may appear as vigorous growths for a time. But they can never strike root. Success is fatal to them. They can thrive only on failure. It is a mistake to suppose that Hinduism in its best days was only a national religion like Judaism. The Rishis of the Upanishadic age had no national consciousness. Their minds were not caught up in any national apocalypse like that of Jesus Christ. It was a universal religion that they founded.

To them other nations were not like the dogs at the table. At the same time they recognised human limitations and prescribed graded forms of discipline that lead one from communalism to universalism. In this respect Sri Ramakrishna's own life is a perfect example of religious progress. For he began his life like every orthodox Brahman with a strict observance of caste rules in the matter of food, choosing to cook his own food rather than eat the *prasadam* given in the temple, but he ended it like a teacher of universal religion by making his disciples cosmopolitan and permitting them to receive food from all irrespective of caste or creed. I may sound a note of warning here to the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order. They are quite right in making Vedanta or mystical Hinduism a universal religion and preaching it in other lands. But in the homeland they should scrupulously preserve its Hindu shell and maintain the national character of its form. Their zeal for a universal religion should not result in a bloodless cosmopolitanism. We cannot afford to make Sri Ramakrishna go the way of Buddha.

A third pitfall in the way of the religion of a subject nation is mere stagnation. This is the worst of the dangers. Paying intellectual tribute to the political masters as well as trying to make political capital out of religious beliefs shows at least some signs of life. But to refuse to move and always to look backward and to perpetuate and worship forms from which all life has departed is to court death itself. And yet that was the position of three-fourths of our people in the latter part of the last century.

Between the theists and the nationalists, each class kicking in its own way to ward off death, there lay a huge mass of stagnant orthodoxy scarcely showing any signs of life. The Ramakrishna Movement transcends all these groups by the dynamic character of its religion as well as its comprehensive and universal character. In short, it may be looked upon as a modern edition of the Gita.

But the Ramakrishna Movement is not only faithful to the entire orbit of the Hinduism of the age of the Upanishads, but also thoroughly in accord with the tendencies of the religious movements of the present time all the world over. It is a well-known fact that within the last twenty or twenty-five years in Europe and America there has been a great revival of interest in the literature of mysticism. Students of religion have come to see that behind all religions there is a common mystic way with its well-marked stages of purification, illumination and union. They have come to realise that all the great mystics of the world, no matter to what religion they belonged, trod the same path, passed through the same stages and reached the same goal. As a result of this renaissance of mystic literature there is now everywhere a greater emphasis on experimental religion than on institutional religion. The Ramakrishna Movement is quite in accord with this tendency; for the founder himself was a great mystic, who had a first hand knowledge of religious experience.

Another result of this renewed interest in mystic literature is, of course, religious toleration. Religious

toleration is no longer a matter of political policy, but, what it has always been in India, a matter of faith and conviction. Even Christian missionaries are now coming to see that the great religions of the world are not enemies, but allies engaged in a common cause. The real enemy, which all of them have to face, is atheism or scepticism or materialism. It is well known that in the matter of religious toleration the Ramakrishna Movement easily takes the first place. For the founder was not only a Hindu with whom religious toleration was an axiom but a mystic who demonstrated in his own life the truth of other religions than his own. He practised the Christian and Mohamadan *Sadhanas* as well as the Hindu Yoga, and realised for himself the identity of the goal of all the three.

And, lastly, the common tendency of all religious revivals of the present day is a quickened sensibility to social injustice along with an enthusiasm for social service. The individual good and the social good are the two wings of religion. That religion is the best which maintains a perfect balance between them. Speaking generally, we may say that in the contemplative East there has been a greater emphasis on the individual good than on the social good, whereas in the practical West there has been a greater emphasis on the social good than on the individual good. And everywhere religion becomes a byword for iniquity when it allies itself with power, privilege and wealth. Russia has become avowedly godless, for the people now believe that religion has been an insidious ally of monstrous social injustice.

Well, it must be frankly confessed that Hinduism has latterly been very weak on the side of social service. We have now in our midst innumerable institutions run by Christian missionaries. We have educational institutions of various kinds, we have hospitals, leper asylums, tuberculosis institutes, etc., etc.,—all manned with enthusiastic workers who have come from distant countries to labour amidst an alien population whose language, religion, customs and habits are so entirely different from their own. All honour to them—and shame to us! But it is a matter for some consolation that the Ramakrishna Movement is everywhere trying its best to remove this blot on modern Hinduism. Its *Maths* are not only centres of religious teaching, but also of social service. Its Swamis are doing creditable work during famines, floods and earthquakes; and in normal times they are running educational institutions and free dispensaries. They are unable to do more because their resources in men and money are limited in comparison with what the Christian missionaries have at their disposal. Here is a great duty that the Hindu

society has to discharge. The best way of raising a memorial to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa during this centenary year is to strengthen the Ramakrishna Movement by opening *Maths* in places where there are none and making them effective nuclei for religious teaching and social service by means of liberal donations and steady subscriptions. And the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order have also a duty to discharge. They should see that their *Maths* are not merely centres of social service coupled with a vague kind of universal religion, but places where religious contemplation, Yogic Sadhana and sound Sanskrit scholarship are given the first place and social service, the second place. From this point of view I am glad to say that the recent publications of the Order—Swami Madhavananda's translation of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad with Sankara's famous commentary and Swami Nikhilananda's translation of the Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada's *Karika* and Swami Viresvarananda's edition of the Brahma Sutras—are very reassuring.

SIVA IN MADURA TEMPLE

By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.

(Continued from last issue)

[The various strands of spiritual, mythological and artistic ideals that have supplied the most magnificent background of our temple architecture are a source of perennial delight. With the eye of a reverent critic Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History in Madura College, gives in the following article a delineation of the various Saiva images in the temple of Madura which attracts innumerable pilgrims throughout the year by the impelling power of its spiritual inspiration and sculptural perfection. His brief account of the historic and mythic environments of these living monuments of the past cannot fail to kindle interest in the heart of all who could appreciate their immense value.]

AMONG the Samhara Moortis carved in this temple, at once the most realistic and terrible is the image of Gajasuramoorti, seen in one of the pillars in the Kambattadi Mantap. Siva is here seen killing an elephant and dancing with its skin as a Prabhamandala. This Moorti is more beautiful than similar Moortis represented in other temples. Again we do not find here the figures of Devi and Skanda usually associated with Gajasuramoorti. At the foot of Siva we see the head of the elephant monster. At the top we see the tail of the elephant and on either side the legs are most graphically chiselled. A very large number of nicely worked out ornaments are seen on the image of Siva. Siva has eight hands. In the three right hands are seen the trident, the kettle drum and the noose. Two of the three left hands hold the shield and the skull, while the third left hand is held in Vismaya pose. One cannot but be struck by the solemnity of the face. Several are the versions about the reason for Siva killing this giant. No doubt all versions agree in the fact that Siva killed an elephant and made use of its skin as a garment. The Kurma Purana while describing the Linga in

Benares observes that Siva came out suddenly from this Linga to kill an Asura who had assumed the shape of an elephant to kill all the Brahmins who were sitting round the Linga absorbed in meditation. A village in the Tanjore district, called Valuvur, is associated in the Tamil country with this destructive act of Siva, and this is perhaps the only place which has a beautiful metal image of Gajaharamoorti.

Kalahara Moorti is another type of Samharamoorti. Here we see Siva killing Yama, god of death, who came to take away the life of Markandeya, a staunch devotee of Siva. Rishi Mrikandu, it is said, was long without a son. He prayed to God for a long time. In answer to his prayers Siva appeared and asked him whether he would have many useless sons or one remarkably intelligent son who would live for only sixteen years. Mrikandu chose the latter and so very soon his wife bore him a son who was named Markandeya. No doubt as indicated by the Lord, Markandeya exhibited rare talents. But his parents were becoming more and more anxious as years advanced. The boy who got scent of this impending disaster to the family began

to offer worship to Siva and thus became a great devotee of Siva. The God of Death appeared exactly on the due date to take away Markandeya, little realising that Markandeya was now under the protection of Siva. We see in this sculpture Markandeya hugging as it were the Siva Linga. The God of Death is under the left foot of Siva who is seen dancing on the back of his body. The pointed left toe of Siva is seen piercing through the neck of Kala (Yama) while the right leg is on his hip. The twist that has been given to the body of Yama has only to be seen to be admired. It is at once natural and wonderful. The shield is still held by Yama in one hand and in the other we are able to see clearly the rope binding Markandeya. We see the God of Death look up to God Siva for his grace. The entire sculpture is very neatly executed and the sculptor has enabled us to see the anatomical details of the human body perfectly. Among the Samhara Moortis in the South Indian temples, this seems to be a type by itself.

Tripurantaka Moorti is another important aspect of Siva. We see this sculpture both in the Pudumantapam and Kambattadi Mantap. The one in the Kambattadi is far superior and better polished and carved. Here we see Siva just about to start on a military expedition in his delicately decorated chariot drawn by four horses. The right leg of Siva is kept a little in front and the left slightly bent to indicate motion. Siva is seen almost standing on his toes. The right hand is held in the Simhakarna pose and is holding the bow string in which the arrow is set. The chariot itself is being driven by Brahma whose figure

is seen just above the horses. Just opposite to this pillar we have the carved figures of the three Asuras against whom Siva was proceeding. The calm in the placid face of the figure of Siva in this terrible encounter with evil forces personified in the form of the demon crushed under his foot is a telling suggestion of the mighty glory of the Lord to whom no achievement is so great as to cause the slightest ruffle perceptible in his countenance.

The three Asuras represented in the pillar just opposite were the sons of one Tarakasura. After performing severe penance these three Asuras obtained from Brahma the boons by which each one got a castle of his liking—one was of gold and was located in heaven; another of silver located in the air and the third was of iron and located in the earth. These three castles were to become one after one thousand years and could be destroyed only by a single arrow. The atrocities committed by the Asuras were intolerable to the gods and goddesses; they therefore resorted to Brahma for advice. He suggested that they could go to Mahadeva who alone wielded such a wonderful weapon. When they approached, God Siva yielded to their prayer and started on his adventure. In their gratitude the gods served Mahadeva in several capacities. Vishnu became his arrow, Agni its barb and Yama its feather. Mahadeva made the Vedas his bow and Savitri his bow-string. Brahma became his charioteer. This is the composition which we see executed in this pillar. Though Siva is out on an expedition, his facial expression is remarkably serene. It is telling sug-

gestion of the mighty glory of the Lord to whom no adventure is too great to cause the slightest ruffle in the mind. The nails and the veins are most realistically indicated. The chariot itself by its superb decorations well deserves its worthy occupant.

Under Samhara Moortis must be mentioned the figure of Siva as Vira Bhadra located just to the east of the Kambattadi Mantap. The figure itself exceeds the size of an ordinary man and is one of the most superb in this temple. The proportions of the limbs cannot escape the notice of any. This form was assumed by Siva, as already pointed out, to destroy the Yajna of Daksha. In this sculpture we see Vecrabhadra with ten arms; three out of the five right hands carry the arrow, the axe, and the sword; of the remaining two hands, one holds a long sword which is thrust into the neck of Daksha and the other pulls out an arrow from the quiver. The left hands keep in them the bow, the *musala* and the rope. In the matted locks we see flames on either side. Vecrabhadra is seen standing on the prostrate body of Daksha Prajapati. The way in which the sculptor has indicated the thrusting of the sword through the neck of Daksha is particularly noteworthy.

We may now pass on to consider the various Santamoortis of Siva. Among these the figure that has received the maximum appreciation is that of Kalyana Sundara Moorti. This is also the most popular, as the marriage is the central theme of many a local legend. Here the sculptor has given a realistic description of Sundareswara's marriage with God-

dess Meenakshi. We see Mahavishnu pouring the sacred water on the joined hands of Sundareswara and his consort. Below are seen Brahma tending the sacred Agni and numerous other figures exhibiting a rare sense of joy. This figure is carved in many places in and around Madura. The two outstanding among these are the one found in Kambattadi Mantap and the other in Pudu Mantap. The uniformity maintained on the depiction of these figures shows that the Indian artists were experts in the art of imitation too. "When these artists were able to carve one image exactly like another, will it be impossible for them to carve an image exactly like a human being if ever they cared to do so?" The figure found in Pudu Mantapam belongs to the time of Tirumala Nayaka while the other found in Kambattadi Mantap is a recent carving. The figure of Kalyana Sundara Moorti is artistically perfect. The admirable modesty expressed in the slightly bent face of Parvati cannot escape the notice of any pilgrim. In the words of Mr. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, "In these the principal figures are Parvati, who is being given to Siva in marriage by Vishnu pouring water in the hands of Siva; and Siva standing on the left with his right hand stretched out to receive the gift; in front of and between him Vishnu is seen, with the head bent down in shyness, Parvati keeping her right hand lifted up so as to be taken hold of by Siva; and on the left is Vishnu pouring water from a vessel on the hand of Siva. Below and in a countersunk panel is seen Brahma making fire-offering. The whole subject is treated with great cleverness and the effect is very

striking. There is not the elaborateness which one meets with in the cave temples of Northern and Western India, but the very simplicity of the sculpture carries a great charm with it. The shyness depicted on the countenance of the bride is very noteworthy."

(To be continued)

THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS

By P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.

[Mr. Nagaraja Rao gives the various reasons that justify the belief in the transmigration of souls.]

THE one great and fundamental tenet of most schools of Indian Philosophy (with the exception of the Carvaka, i.e., the Materialist) is the belief in the immortality of the soul. The soul passes through a number of lives, and this is technically called in philosophic parlance "transmigration of souls." The plurality of lives through which the soul has to pass through is a dire necessity "in the art of soul making." Certain critics of Indian philosophy have suggested that the Hindu mind has never questioned the doctrine of transmigration of souls and has merely taken it as granted. The great professor Max Muller writes "that to a Hindu the idea that souls of men migrate after death into new bodies of living beings seems so self-evident that he does not trouble to assign any reason in support of it."

Further the doctrine of transmigration of souls is being objected to on the following two grounds: (1) that most of us do not recollect anything about our previous lives is enough evidence for the non-existence of any prior life. The rationalist cries out

Vrishabaruda Moorti or Siva on his bull is another very interesting representation of Siva seen in this temple. There are two pillars in the Kambattadi Mantapam having Siva in this form. This form of Siva is held in high veneration, because it is on this form that Siva appeared to his devotees.

"that God is a force, that the soul is a gas and that the next world is the coffin." The belief in the immortality of the soul, according to the psycho-analysis of the modern day, is a case of the sublimation of the fear complex of the self when it faces death. Secondly we do not find the presence of the soul anywhere without the body. The body and the soul are reciprocally dependent and inseparable. The body is essential to the soul's moral or mental life. At death we perceive the destruction of the body, and with it the soul also perishes. Hence the impossibility of the transmigration of the souls.

Our failure to remember the past is no argument for its non-existence. We should not confound the existence of a thing with its consciousness. As the experiences of our boyhood influence our adult life though we do not remember them, so also our past lives' influence our present in spite of our not remembering it. The doctrine that we are not the playthings of any capricious fate dispensing justice like a despot, and that we are what we are as a result of

our past is asserted by the grand moral law of Karma. The fact that individuals are themselves responsible for their well-being or otherwise is, no doubt, not the final explanation but still the only explanation the Hindu mind could offer for the existing diversity in individual characters. It is the law of Karma that makes Stoics of us in the presence of "this incomprehensible world full of the savage and the stupid and the suffering with monstrous contrast and queer happenings". Whatever the defects of this doctrine might be, it makes us bear patiently the never-ending trouble to which "flesh is heir unto".

All the schools of Indian philosophy postulate a "sukshma sarira" i.e., (a psychical vesture for the self subtler than the visible body). This body is destroyed only when the soul attains release. So there is no question of fear of the soul perishing with the body when it becomes defunct. The impressions, i.e., Vasanas are carried in the "sukshma sarira."

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is an integral part of the moral machinery of the cosmos, i.e.,

the law of Karma. The very fact of the different predilections of the different children at their births, and inequalities of human lives cannot be better accounted for than by the assumption of the law of Karma. The law of Karma affords liberty and gives freedom to individuals to grow to his full stature.

The Hindu doctrine of the transmigration of souls is essentially different in its outlook from that of others. The purpose of the cycle of life for the souls is not merely to suffer pain for past sins or to enjoy the fruits of a past goodness but to prepare themselves for the ultimate realisation wherein the cycle of births cease. There is no return from there. The concept of Moksha in most of the systems of Indian philosophy is the realisation of the true nature of the self, i.e., Eternal Freedom. It is not possible to achieve this Eternal Freedom without a plurality of lives. In the words of the learned Professor Hiriyanna "it is the poverty of man's present spiritual equipment taken along with the greatness of his final destiny that explains the belief in the plurality of lives."

NEWS AND REPORTS

General Report of the Ramakrishna Mission for 1936

Swami Virajananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has issued the following Report on the working of the Ramakrishna Mission for 1936 :—

Progress of Work for 1936 : The 28th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held on Good Friday evening at the premises of the Headquarters of the Mission with Srimat Swami Vignananandaji, the President of the Mission, in the chair. A large number of monastic and lay members were present.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. The report for 1936 was then presented by Srimat Swami Virajananda, the Secretary. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of work in 1936.

Centres : The total number of centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Strait Settlements including the centres in N. and S. America, England and Europe, was 93 at the end of the year under review. The

number of centres in India, Burma, Ceylon and Strait Settlements exclusive of the Ramakrishna Math and its branches, was 47.

Temporary Relief Work : Temporary Relief Work was done in times of distress caused by floods, famine, cyclone or epidemics in Bankura, Hooghly, Burdwan, Khulna, Maldah, Birbhum, Guntur, Cawnpore, and Midnapore districts, as well as in Burma.

Medical and General Service : In the 7 Indoor Hospitals of the Mission including the Maternity Hospital at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, more than 7,700 cases were treated in 1936 as against 6,839 in 1935. In the 31 Outdoor Dispensaries including the Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi were treated 10,29,349 cases in the year as against nearly 9,00,000 in 1935. The proportion of the new and repeated cases was 3:5.

The Sevashrama at Benares continues to be the largest philanthropic institution of the Mission. The Hospital at Rangoon holds the highest record for both indoor and outdoor service. It treated more than 2,27,000 cases during the year under review.

Philanthropic work is also done by such rural centres as Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Sargachhi in Murshidabad and Jayarambati in Bankura.

There are large Hospitals and Dispensaries also at Hardwar, Brindaban and Allahabad, as well as Bombay, Madras, Lucknow, Cawnpore and other cities and towns.

Educational : The Educational institutions of the Mission fall mainly into two divisions, viz., (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, and (2) Students' Homes and Orphanages.

Mass education through day and night schools was continued as usual for the benefit of juveniles and adults.

In India there were 15 Students' Homes, 3 Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools and 4 High Schools, 2 M. E. Schools, 35 Primary Schools a Sanskrit *tol*, 10 Night Schools and 3 Industrial Schools, and in Ceylon and Strait Settlements 14 High schools and Vernacular Schools.

Some of the schools and students' homes are situated in or around the University centres of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, as well as in Cawnpore, Coimbatore, Jamshedpore, Deoghar and Barisal. Physical, cultural, moral and religious training were imparted to the students.

Rural education work was done by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contai in Midnapore and Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha had nearly 500 boys and girls at its schools and spent over Rs. 12,000 during the year as in the previous years. The Sister Nivedita (High) School for girls had 490 students and is the largest High School for girls in the Mission. The Vidyapith at Deoghar and the Students' Home at Dum Dum are also important institutions. The centre at Madras had the highest number of pupils, the total strength in the Students' Home at Mylapore and the Mambalam Branch School at Mambalam, Madras being 1317 in 1936, and the total annual expenditure being over Rs. 50,000.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the crafts, arts and industries which may be grouped as follows : (1) mechanical and auto-mobile engineering, (2) spinning, weaving, dyeing, calico-printing and tailoring, (3) cane work and (4) shoe making. In the Industrial School at Madras the mechanical and auto-mobile engineering course covers a period of five years, and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habiganj conducts two shoe factories to provide better training ground for the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of the cobblers.

In all there were 7,390 students in all the centres in 1936 as against 6,034 in 1935, and of these more than 1,600 were girls.

Expenditure : The total expenditure of the Mission for permanent educational and philanthropic work in India, Burma, Ceylon and Strait Settlements may be roughly computed to be over 6½ lakhs of rupees.

Libraries and Reading Rooms : There were 60 Libraries and Reading Rooms in all the centres together. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent work and had a daily average attendance of nearly 100 in its reading rooms. The Students'

Home at Madras had more than 19,000 volumes in its libraries.

Missionary: The monastic members of the Mission went on propaganda tours in India and abroad. The universal teachings of the Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were disseminated chiefly through the publications of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in English and some principal Indian and European languages; through the periodicals named the *Prabuddha Bharata*, the *Vedanta Kesari* and the *Message of the East*—all in English—and the *Udbodhan* in Bengali and *Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil, and similar other works. Classes were held and lectures and often radio talks given at or near the various centres, Universities and other associations.

There are colonies for Harijans and other backward classes in some centres, those at Trichur in Cochin State and Shella in Khassia Hills being two important ones. At these colonies the monks of the Mission have been conducting for over a dozen years past, educational and other work for the uplift of the neglected communities.

The ideal of service: Swami Vivekananda who founded the Mission in 1897 sounded the clarion call of *tyaga* and *seva* (self-dedication and service) and it is to be hoped that the youth of the country will respond to it in ever increasing measure.

Swami Avinashananda's Cultural Mission in Fiji

In response to a long-standing and pressing invitation from the South Indian Association of Fiji to send a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order to Fiji, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math have now selected and deputed Swami Avinashananda for the purpose. It was not an easy matter to select a proper person as the conditions demanded by the Association were that the Swami who went should be able to speak Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English. Swami Avinashananda can speak well Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam as well as Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati, besides English.

The Swami had much experience in the field of education and journalism before he joined the Ramakrishna Order in 1922,

and since then he has been filling many responsible positions in the different centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In the beginning of 1923 he went to Bombay and did some spade work for the starting of an Ashrama in the city. In 1924 he went to Mayavati and was connected with the Editorial work of the *Prabuddha Bharata* for nearly two years. In 1926 he was sent to Ceylon to assist Swami Vipulananda who had started many educational centres there. While in Ceylon he was for some years the General Manager of the Schools of the Mission, and was also responsible for preparing and piloting through the Ceylon Legislative Council an Ordinance incorporating the branch of the Mission in the Island. From Ceylon he returned about the end of the year 1930, and in 1931 made an extensive propaganda tour in South Canara, Malabar and Andhradesa. From 1932 he was solely engaged in the work connected with Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration and had been responsible for collection, collaboration and preparation of the manuscripts for the Cultural Heritage of India, which has been published just now in three volumes. These volumes form one of the most remarkable books published in India, both from the point of view of scholarship and artistic value.

In the year 1916, when Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, the first President of the Math and Mission, came to Madras, Swami Avinashananda had the good fortune to come in contact with him and receive his grace and blessings. He was also privileged to meet and receive the blessings of the Holy Mother, Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, Swami Turiyanandaji, Swami Saradanandaji and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Deva.

The South Indian Association of Fiji will have the good fortune to have the Swami in their midst, and we hope that by the grace of God he will be able to do great service to the people of Fiji, especially to the children of India who are living far away from their motherland in a country where they have little opportunity to draw inspiration from the cultural and religious tradition of India.

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HINDU ETHICS

भैषज्यमेतद् दुःखस्य यदेतन्नानुचिन्तेयत् । चिन्त्यमानं हि चाभ्येति भुयश्चापि प्रवर्तते ।
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न जानपदिकं दुःखमेकः शोचितुमर्हति । अशोचन् प्रतिकुर्वीत यदि पश्येदुपक्रमम् ॥
सुखाद् बहुतरं दुःखं जीविते नास्ति संशयः । स्निग्धस्य चेन्द्रियाण्येषु मोहान्मरणमप्रियम् ।
परित्यजति यो दुःखं सुखं वाप्युभयं नरः । अभ्येति ब्रह्म सोऽत्यन्तं न ते शोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥

The remedy for sorrow is to stop brooding over it. If the mind dwells on sorrow it freshens and multiplies. One should eradicate mental suffering by wisdom, and physical ailments with medicines. That is the power of intelligence, and no intelligent man should behave in a childish way. No one gifted with knowledge and understanding should ever show any inordinate desire for youth or physical charm or accumulated possessions or unbroken company of friends or even health and life; for they are by their very nature impermanent. It does not befit one to sorrow long and loud for a national misfortune. With an undepressed mind one should actively remedy it if one could find a way to it. There is no doubt that sufferings outweigh the pleasures of life. Death is unpleasant because it cuts short the sense enjoyments which the deluded man fondly longs for. The courageous one gives up either grief or pleasure, or both, and takes his stand absolutely on the Supreme. Such a wise one has no room for sadness.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva. Ch. 203.

THE CASE FOR RELIGION

[In the following paragraphs some of the important arguments generally urged against religion are considered, and suggestions are made as to what can form the basis of a true philosophy of religion.]

I

IT will hardly be disputed by any one that in these days the influence of religion on the lives of individuals and societies has considerably diminished in comparison with its position in this respect during the past. The growth of individualism, the increasing absorption of men in political and economic struggle, the belief in establishing a paradise on earth through the application of science—these are some of the important circumstances that have diverted the attention of men from religion to other pre-occupations of life. But the effects of modern critical study of religion in bringing about this result is also not to be underestimated. It is not that atheistic and anti-religious thought is a special feature of our age. Able thinkers of this persuasion have existed in the past and have in a large measure anticipated the ideas of our modern prophets of ungodliness. But the latter have got advantages which the former did not possess, and this accounts for the difference in the extent of their influence on the mind of common men. In the past educational institutions and whatever methods of publicity that might have existed were all under the control of religious leaders. But to-day due to the secularisation of education, the transfer of the custody of learning from the priests of religion to the priests of science and the tremendous educative influence exerted by cheap literature on the popular mind, have

all reversed the situation completely, and the swing of the pendulum of mass thought has definitely turned in favour of anti-religious forces.

It would be interesting to recount here some of those convenient slogans into which anti-religious thought has crystallised itself and which are administered commonly as universal cures for the cultural and mental maladjustments of human societies just like their physical counter-parts, the popular pills and potions advertised widely as the common remedy against all the diseases that flesh is heir to. Religion is decried by Marxists as the opiate of the people, because it is supposed to dull their sense of the hard realities of this world with the narcotic of other-worldliness. Freudians fling against it a formidable pile of epithets—a universal neurosis, a wish fulfilment, a child-fixation, an illusion and what not. To minds steeped in psycho-analytic lore, these words are supposed to shed a flood of light on the origin and nature of religion, but laymen had better be wary of this jargon although it has by now gained the dignity of scientific technicality. There is again the clique of anthropologists and psychologists, which propagates the theory that religion has no foundation in objective reality nor any natural basis in human nature, either in its individual or collective aspect. They attribute its origin and growth entirely to priestcraft that worked on the imaginative fears of men and opine that even if it

had done some good in the past, it is suited only to the pre-scientific age and is therefore bound to pass away with the growth of scientific thinking among the masses. There are still others who agree completely with these scientific thinkers in denying any objective validity to the religious idea, but yet believe that the world may never outgrow the need for it as the inner experiences it gives have a toning effect on the psychic life of man.

It is not possible here to consider the answer of the religious mind to all these challenges coming from different quarters. People pre-occupied with this or that aspect of life—say, with economic and political struggle as in the case of Marxists, or the treatment of mental diseases as in that of Psychoanalysis—may criticise the religious world-view from their own points of view, but the religious mind is only concerned with the question whether religion is only a concoction of clever men, and whether the religious object is merely an illusory idea. Our concern here is only with these aspects of the question.

Before we proceed with this enquiry we must state in brief what we mean by religion, although a clear definition of the term is very difficult and has defied the attempts of even the best thinkers of the world. For our purpose here, we may take it to mean man's attempt to find an ultimate meaning for the universe, and for his own existence in it, through the conception of a Supreme Intelligence who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe, and the ultimate determiner of the individual's destiny—a being in whom are conserved all that we consider to be the

highest values in life. Religion stands or falls with the truth or otherwise of this idea of the Deity. To call Him an illusion and yet plead for the service of religion in the psychological life of man may appear quite a natural and sound procedure to some thinkers, but to a religious man such a theory appears to be mere opportunism in thought and as unsubstantial as a sky-scraper without a foundation. The case for religion therefore rests entirely on how far we are able to justify the idea of God as true, and it shall be our attempt here to consider this question.

II

In doing so it is first of all necessary to see why scientific thought is so hostile to the idea of God. This prejudice of many a modern thinker against the idea of God is due to the evolutionary interpretation of it. The doctrine of evolution, originally propounded in the field of biology as an explanation of the origin of species, has been extended to every branch of thought, and as a consequence the exacting traditions of modern scholarship require every cultural conception to be traced to its supposed origins until it is dissipated in the nebulous clouds of primitive barbarism. The idea of God also must be treated in the same way and traced to some primitive superstitions; for the doctrine of evolution, the infallible dictum of the scientist's scripture, declares that it cannot but be so. So the scientific thinker must cook up evidence in favour of an age when there was no notion of God, and of the gradual growth and clarification of that notion from a mass of primitive superstitions; otherwise the doctrine of evolution may not be proved to

be of universal application. Modern scholars, who are ever loud in their professions of dispassionateness and disinterestedness in everything save truth, have therefore been busy sifting the facts provided by travellers and explorers about primitive societies with a view to find a superstitious and ridiculously absurd origin for the idea of God. According to these thinkers the most primitive societies known to man have no religion or religious sense. Religion is a later growth in cultural evolution and has its origin in primitive animism. Animism consists of belief in spirits or souls residing in bodies. The savages derived such a notion from the experience of dreams in which they felt their selves or doubles going out of their bodies even to distant places on errands familiar to them in waking life. "How absurd is the theory of the soul resting on such flimsy foundations!" say the modern thinkers.

The absurdity however does not end with this. These doubles were supposed to survive physical death, and the doubles, especially of chiefs and powerful men, were conceived as retaining their might and influence over the lives and welfare of their fellow-beings. From this belief grew the cult of ghost worship and propitiation, both for warding off the wrath of these powerful tribal ancestors as well as to secure their good offices in every-day life. In course of time some of the more powerful and famous among the ghosts alone survived. Their ghostly character was gradually forgotten and they were elevated into tribal gods of which one came to be regarded as supreme by a tribe. As the tribes amalgamated into nations, the gods of the dominant tribe were raised

into national gods, and some of these nations among whom thinkers and prophet-poets arose, the national god was transformed by them into the God of the universe. Thus, say the non-religious thinkers, anthropology demonstrates conclusively that God, the fundamental postulate of religion, is the product of puerile superstition, venerated later on with poetic fancies; when men come to realise this fact that the study of social evolution reveals, they will refuse to put faith any longer in the pretentious claims of religion.

Before we proceed further, the case for religion in regard to this point has to be considered. If there are many scholars—Spencer, Tylor, Durkheim, etc., are some among them—who find the verdict of anthropology as favouring a superstitious origin for religion, there is at least one scholar, namely, Andrew Lang who extracts quite a different moral from anthropology regarding the origin of religion. He points out that the other group of thinkers have sedulously suppressed facts that go against their pre-conceived notion regarding the applicability of the doctrine of evolution to everything in this world. With a wealth of examples from the writings of travellers and explorers he shows conclusively that prior to the origin of ghost cult, primitive people had belief in a Supreme Creator God, who was ethical in character and whose worship consisted not in propitiation but in prayer and moral observances. Darumulun of the Australians, Cagan of the Bushmen, Puluga of the Andamanese, Vin of the Black Islanders, Ndengi of the Fijians, Unkulenkulu of the Zulus, and Okeus, Ti-ra-wa and Na-pi of American tribes are examples of such creator

Gods who, in the words of Lang, soften the heart, who know the heart's secrets, who inculcate chastity, respect of age, unselfishness, etc., and who receive no blood of slaughtered man or beast. According to his theory, which has got the support of innumerable facts from primitive life, the ghost gods arose in a more advanced stage of material culture when men began to feel the need of more useful and easily bribable supernatural agencies for the satisfaction of their material needs. In most societies the tradition of the creator God, however, survived, although He was relegated to the back-ground by the jostling crowd of venal, blood-thirsty spirits and rapacious gods. The God of higher religion, according to Lang, is traceable not to these spirits and godlings as other thinkers would hold, but to the original tradition of creator God which came to be revived and re-charged with meaning by later generations of prophets and inspired men.

III

The layman may be a little puzzled as to which of these conflicting theories about the origin of religion he is to adopt. He need, however, accept neither, but only understand that the so-called non-religious thinkers are not so dispassionate and disinterested as they claim, and that anthropology is like a double-edged sword which may be used with fatal effect against the spiritual interpretation of religious origin or against the evolutionary interpretation of it, according to the predilection of the theorising scholar. Whatever his view on the question, the scholar must realise the serious consequences of releasing his dubious theories,

based on uncertain data, on the mind of the unsuspecting and credulous crowd of half-educated persons.

Besides this, both the religious man and the anthropologist have to bear in mind that by tracing the history of an idea to its supposed origin nothing is proved either for or against the truth of that idea. That astronomy had its origin in astrology, or chemistry in alchemy does not in any way show that these sciences are absurd. It is however curious that men have never raised such points as arguments against these sciences, but do not often feel the absurdity of doing so in the case of religion. In religion, more than in any other branch of human culture, the progressive refinement of thought and emotions would lead to higher and higher expressions of the religious truth. Each progressive step is not a negation of the cruder stage but a more accurate and more refined formulation of the truth. When Newton propounded his theories, what he did was not to negate the previous theories *in toto* but to give a more correct statement of the truth involved in them. So also higher development of religious concepts does not prove that religion is a wild-goose chase any more than it does with regard to physics, chemistry and other sciences.

Religion claims the allegiance of man on quite different grounds. It maintains that the life prescribed by it opens to man vistas of soul-stirring experiences that go to enrich the personality—experiences which he cannot gain by following the methods of the secular sciences and arts. According to the evaluation of the great men of religion, who are also among the greatest men of the world, religious experience gives one an assur-

ance of God which in point of convincingness is in no way inferior to the experience of the brute realities of the world. This experience of God is not, according to the authority of mystics and founders of religions, a mere momentary feeling, but a part and parcel of the experiencing consciousness throughout life; and what is more its effect is manifested in every aspect of a person's life as strength of character, purity, fearlessness, love and other moral virtues in a degree unseen in the life of others. Religion, as the only branch of culture leading to this supreme experience of life, namely the verification of Divine existence, deserves the highest respect and attention of man. This has all along been the unanimous and unflinching claim put on behalf of religion by its great prophets and apostles.

IV

To an impartial mind this justification of religion, especially when viewed in relation to the great personalities who have advanced it, will appear sufficiently satisfying. But there have been hard-headed scientists who, while accepting the fact of religious experience, look upon its object, namely the Divine, as an unsubstantial illusion, because the object, being only a private experience, belongs to the category of mere feeling and therefore fails to fulfil the scientific test of being measureable by pointer-reading instruments. Thus God is not true in spite of religious experience, as He fails to make any impression on the scientists' scale and balances.

To this it may be replied that the scientists suffer from too crude a notion of reality. It is a dogma of

science, unacceptable to those who do not share its prejudices, that the accounts given by pointer-reading instruments alone constitute the test of valid facts. There are other spheres of reality which are inaccessible to mechanical contrivances but are none the less real for all that, as testified by universal experience. Colour and sound are, for example, unknown to any pointer-reading instrument of the scientist, but for this reason to deny their existence will be a hazardous step, as beyond our experience there is nothing to testify to the reality of even the pointer-readings of science. If the rich experience of colour, sound, touch, etc., through which alone we understand the world, and from which alone the world receives the significance we attach to it—if all that is to be brushed aside as illusory, why should we not put the experience derived from the pointer-readings of science also in the same category. At least the plain man cannot understand the scientist's logic in this respect.

Then again we must not forget that, even from the common sense point of view, we know of vistas of rich, life-giving experiences gained by contacts that cannot be called sensuous. For example, the great poet, painter or composer, starting it may be from suggestions thrown into him by stimuli coming from sensuous contacts, takes a flight into sublime heights on the wings of imagination, and there his personality, by contact with the ideal realm of Beauty, draws an inspiration which he expresses through words and colour. The hard-headed scientist may like to disregard all those experiences of higher value as mere fancies, but then it has to be explained how it is that

mere fancies can be so life-enhancing and permanent in their effect both on the experiencer and on those who share his experience through his creations? how these so-called fancies are open only to a few and that not the stray and sundry but the best of our species? and more than all, how in a world conceived merely as a play of mechanical forces, a cosmic environment devoid of the fact of beauty, such a faculty as aesthetic experience could ever have grown in the human being? The philosopher who denies an existence to the higher values will be faced with the same difficulty with regard to moral experience too. If we deny a moral element in the universe of which we are a part, how could man, a product of that universe, have felt the ethical sense of right and wrong, of good and bad, even at low levels of evolution? To reply that the sense is merely a product of social life is no explanation; for the question really is how society could at all have become so constituted as to engender and develop the moral sense in man. To deny entry to the aesthetic and moral ideals on the ground that we do not experience them with our senses is as idle as denying the existence of colour, sound, etc., because the pointer-readings of the scientists' instruments do not record them.

The application of this argument to the question of spiritual experience will be sufficiently obvious from what we have said before. Aesthetic and moral experiences are familiar facts, and from these familiar facts it may be easier to pass to the more unfamiliar but parallel case of spiritual experience. In this decade of the 20th century no sane man can possibly denounce experiences of the

latter class as mere myth, fable or concoction of interested parties. When the fact of such experience is admitted, to deny for it any reference in the universe which has facilitated its growth is as difficult to understand by common sense as the theory of moral and aesthetic experience being based upon illusion. The validity of this experience cannot also be questioned on the ground that it is a product of passions and prejudices; for, the men in whom it is found in a pre-eminent degree have always been persons of great moral integrity, purity of life, control of senses and passions, and equanimity and balance of mind. In fact except on a foundation of mental equilibrium and sublimation of animal passions, no spiritual edifice culminating in the pinnacle of realisation has ever been built.

V

Spiritual experience, the basis of all genuine religion, derives support also when we consider the nature of the impulse leading to it. This impulse consists in yearning for God, and as we find it manifested in the best type of men, it is organic with their whole being, proceeding as it seems to do from every fibre of their mind and every cell of their body. In the case of every organic craving, we find a correspondence between the inner need and the environment. In other words, our organic cravings are fundamentally rooted in our cosmic environment and depend upon the very affinity of our being with that environment. Hence the craving of man for food, water, air, etc., is only indicative of the fact that our body is derived from these objects, and that for the satisfaction of these cravings there are corresponding objects in

nature, *i.e.*, our physical environment. Thus from our common experience, therefore, we find that an organic craving is never based upon illusion; as the craving is real, so is its object too. Our contention therefore is this: if we recognise the demand for God as organic with the personality of man—and this is what we are inevitably led to when we study the life of the greatest men of the world, the sages, saints and incarnations—then it is but common sense to admit that the object of this craving, *viz.*, God too is real. For the lives of saints not only reveal the organic nature of this craving but convince us also of the possibility of its satisfaction by the realisation of God.

As a possible objection to this argument it may be said that most of us do not feel any such craving for God. Why should we then accept the organic nature of this craving simply because a few mad saints experience it. To this we reply that there are organic cravings in man which, unlike the demand for water, air, food, etc., manifest only at a certain stage of maturity, but yet have none the less to be called organic because of their deep-seated springs in our nature and their profound influence on the development of our personality. Sex is one such craving which comes into prominence only at the maturity of the organism. Craving for God is also similar, because it appears only in men who have attained a certain stage of mental maturity, and these are the saints and sages of the world. Other men may appear mature physically, but they are really babies, moustached though they be, as long as they are satisfied with the playthings of the world—wealth, power, pleasures, name, fame, etc. It is

when man reaches the true inner maturity that he cultivates comparative non-attachment for the things of the world and begins to experience a yearning for God rising from the roots of his personality, as if he is being starved of a substance which is the basic constituent of his being. These are the real adults—men in whom the latent powers of humanity have all come to their fullest development. To call these unique specimens of humanity as degenerates, as some ultra-modern thinkers are disposed to do, is only idle prattle that results either from the ignorance or prejudice of the critics. The spiritual experiences of these god-men charge their will and vivify their personality with such powers that the impression they leave on the world continues to mould the character of men even hundreds of years after they have passed away. Not only in point of power but in the sublimity of character, in selfless love, in purity of life and other qualities that vitalise and ennoble human personality, these men have set the standard for the world. If degeneration and floundering in illusory fancies can make men into gods, then blessed is that degeneration, and blessed too that illusion. To any impartial and unprejudiced student of their life and teachings, these men who occasionally illumine the dark ignorance and bestiality of our social life, would appear as veritable sign-posts of human destiny guiding us at the cross-roads of life to our true goal, and inspiring us with the assurance that the paths of life lead us not to an El Dorado but to a real, glorious and divine end.

To conclude, therefore, has religion got a case on its side? We may give an emphatic 'yes' in reply, as long

as we can show the case of a single true saint who exemplifies in himself this organic craving for God and its satisfaction in God-realisation.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple.

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped like a veritable goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

ANOTHER day at Brindavan, in the garden of Kala Babu, she was immersed in Samadhi. Nothing could bring her down from that state of ecstasy. For a long time I whispered the sacred name of God into her ear, but that also did not produce any effect. At last, Swami Yogananda whispered some sacred words into her ear, and that brought her mind back somewhat to the consciousness of this world. She said, as Sri Ramakrishna would do on similar occasions, "I will eat something". Some sweets, water and betel leaf were put before her. She partook of a little of each as Sri Ramakrishna would do in the state of Samadhi. She even ate betel leaf just after the manner of the Master, throwing away its point. All her physical manifestations at that time, eating, talking, etc., were just like those of Sri Ramakrishna. We were totally amazed at it. After she came down to the physical plane of consciousness, she said to us that Sri Ramakrishna had entered into her consciousness at that time. Swami Yogananda put several questions to her during the time of her Samadhi, and received replies from her as if Sri Ramakrishna were answering

him. A few days after Sri Ramakrishna passed away, Ram Babu and a few other householder devotees settled the rent of the Cossipore garden house, where Sri Ramakrishna had passed the last days of his life. It was not their intention to rent a place after the Master's death for any of the young men who had renounced the world during the lifetime of the Master, to lead a life of intense spirituality. Therefore the Holy Mother removed to the house of Balaram Babu. After some time, she came to Benares on a pilgrimage with Swami Yogananda, Swami Abhedananda, Swami Adbhutananda, Lakshmi Didi and others. After staying in holy Benares for eight or ten days, they came to Brindaban and stayed for about a year in the garden house of Kala Babu. I had left for Brindaban about a fortnight before the passing away of the Master. No sooner did the Mother meet me at Brindaban than she cried out through an excess of grief, "Oh, Yogen dear!" and clutching me to her heart, began to weep like a helpless child. That was my first meeting with her after the Master's death. At Brindaban the Mother at first would weep much for

the Master. One day Sri Ramakrishna came to me in a vision and said, "Hallo! Why do you weep? Here I am. Where do you think I have gone? It is just like this: this room and the other room." One day while at Brindaban, we saw a dead body decorated with flowers, being carried to the cremation ground, to the accompaniment of devotional music. The Mother pointed it out to me and said, "Look there! How fortunate is the man to meet his holy end at this sacred Brindaban. I also came here expecting the last moment of my life, but how curious it is that I have not gotten so much as a little fever even. And I am no longer young. Look at my age! I have seen in my life such elderly people as my own father and husband's elder brother." I began to laugh and said, "What are you saying, Mother? You have seen your father? But tell me, who does not meet his father?" She was so childlike in her talk and behaviour. Though at first she was overwhelmed with grief for Sri Ramakrishna and cried for him excessively, in the end the Master filled her heart with ineffable joy. At that time she looked just like a small girl. Every day she would go round the temples and visit the images therein. One day she went to the temple of Radha and Krishna and saw that the wife of Navagopal* was, as it were, fanning the gods on their throne. The Mother came back and said to me, "Yogen, Navagopal's wife is very pure. I saw her in that fashion in the temple."

At Brindaban, the Mother had a vision one day of Sri Ramakrishna, who said to her, "Please initiate Jogen (Swami Yogananda) with this

*A lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mantram....". The first day Holy Mother took it to be a delusion of her mind. The vision appeared to her on the second day, with the same request, but she did not listen to it. The third day, when Sri Ramakrishna appeared to her in vision again, she said to the Master, "I never talk to Jogen. How can I initiate him?" The Master said, "You ask Jogen (the woman devotee and narrator of the story) and she will be there!"

The Mother asked Swami Yogananda through me whether he had received any Mantra from the Master during his lifetime. Swami Yogananda said, "No, Mother, he did not ask me to repeat any particular Mantra. I have selected a holy word myself and repeat it." Thereupon the Holy Mother gave him the sacred word as directed by the Master. It happened in this wise: one day the Mother was worshipping in her room; a picture of the Master and a small box containing his bones were before her. She sent for Swami Yogananda and asked him to sit near her. While performing the worship, she entered into Samadhi and in that state of ecstasy she initiated Swami Yogananda. She uttered the holy word so loudly that I could hear it from the next room.

From Brindaban we all accompanied the Mother to Hardwar. Swami Yogananda also was in our party. While travelling, Swami Yogananda was laid down in the railway train with a terrible attack of fever. I was feeding him with a pomegranate. The Mother saw this as if I were feeding Sri Ramakrishna himself. Swami Yogananda was unconscious due to the fever. He saw a horrible figure coming to him. That figure said, "I was about to snatch thee

away, but what can I do? I must leave the place at once by the command of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I cannot stay here for a second. Then the figure pointed out a woman wearing a red-bordered cloth, and said, "Offer some sweets to this woman." To the amazement of all, after this vision the fever left him altogether. From Hardwar we all came to Jeypur. After visiting the celebrated temple of Govindaji, we were visiting other images, when Swami Yogananda saw a figure in a temple and cried out, "I was asked to give the offering of sweets to this image." We also discovered a store in front of the temple selling the particular kind of sweets which were to be offered before the image. We at once purchased some of these sweets and offered them as directed. On inquiry we came to know that it was the image of Mother Shitala*.

Afterwards, the Mother returned to Calcutta and stayed at the house of Balaram Babu for a few days. Then she came back to Kamarpukur. After spending about a year there, she came to Belur, where the devotees rented a house for her belonging to Nilambar Babu. This happened in 1888. During the autumn season, the Mother left that rented house and again came to Calcutta to the house of Balaram Babu. Having spent a day or two there, she set out for Puri. She travelled from Calcutta to Chandvali in a big steamer, and from Chandvali to Cuttack in the canal boat, and lastly she took a bullock cart to Puri. Swami Saradananda, Swami Brahmananda and Swami Yogananda and others accompanied the Holy Mother to Puri. She spent about four months

*A female deity associated by the Hindus with small-pox.

there. As Sri Ramakrishna did not visit the temple of Jagannath at Puri during his lifetime, the Mother carried a picture of him with her to the temple, and showed the image to the picture. After visiting the image of Jagannath, the Mother said, "I saw the Lord of the Universe as a lion among men, seated on a golden altar, and I was serving Him as His handmaiden." After returning from Puri, she spent about a month at the house of the master* and then went to Antpur, the native place of Swami Premananda. Swami Premananda, Swami Vivekananda, M. and a few other devotees accompanied her. A week later, she went by bullock cart to Tarakeswar and thence to Kamarpukur. M. and others were in the party. She lived there for about a year and during the next spring returned to Calcutta.

At that time, the Holy Mother spent about a month in the house of M. Then she removed to the home of Balaram Babu, during the time of his fatal illness, and stayed there till his passing away. Subsequently she came to live at Belur, during the rainy season of 1890. As she suffered from an attack of blood dysentery there, the Mother was removed to the house rented of Sourindra Mohan Tagore, at Baranagar. After spending a few days there, she again came to Balaram Babu's house, and after the Durga Puja she returned to her native place, Mayrambati, by way of Kamarpukur.

In the rainy season of 1893, the Holy Mother again came to the rented house of Nilambar Babu, and during the next spring she spent a couple of months at Kailwar, in northern India. From there she went again to

*The recorder of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, also known as 'M.'

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Benares and Brindaban with her mother and brothers. After returning from northern India she spent about a month in Calcutta in the house of M., and then returned to her native village. When she returned again to Calcutta, she spent about five or six months at Baghbazar, in a rented house near the Ganges, where Nag Mahashaya, the famous householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, visited her. Again the Mother went back to her native place and stayed there for a year and a half. This time when the Holy Mother came to Calcutta, she took up her quarters at a house in front of Girish Babu's. There Sister Nivedita spent three weeks with the Mother. Again she removed to a house at 16 Bosepara Lane, where Sister Nivedita first started her girls' school. Thence she came to the house in Baghbazar Street, in front of Ramakrishna Lane. Swami Saradananda was there with her. Then the Mother went back to her native place, and returned to Calcutta on the occasion of the Durga Puja at Girish Babu's house. During the festival she lived with Balaram Babu's family. While staying at her

native village she suffered very much from malaria, and became emaciated because of it. Then she again returned to Jayrambati. By this time the new building of the Udbodhan Office was constructed, and as soon as she came back to Calcutta, she lived there. Next, the Holy Mother went on a pilgrimage to Madras, Bangalore and Rameswar. After spending some time in these places, she came back to the Udbodhan Office, and a few days later went to Jayrambati to attend the marriage ceremony of Radhu. After a year, she again returned to the Udbodhan Office. In the autumn of 1912, the Mother visited Benares, and after spending three months there, she came back to Calcutta.

During her childhood, the Holy Mother had to cook very often. She was substituted as cook in place of her own mother, when for some unavoidable reasons the latter could not attend to it. The Mother used to say, "I cooked and my father helped me to take down the big rice pot from the oven." During the latter part of her life, she spent most of her time in the service of her relatives and devotees.

HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL ASPIRANTS

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, the author of 'Universal Prayers' and 'The Divine Life,' is the representative of the Ramakrishna Order preaching the gospel of Vedanta in the continent of Europe. The Swami was formerly the Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras and the Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*. In this article the Swami gives many practical suggestions to spiritual aspirants.]

CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

WITHOUT previously having attained to a certain amount of sublimation and purification of our feelings and desires, concentra-

tion becomes very dangerous in the case of persons who have not prepared themselves properly for the higher life. It may lead to very bad effects. In a way, we all make the mind concentrated, but then we do not

know how to manipulate it. This concentrated mind will run after sensual enjoyments and all kinds of worldly distractions and objects with a greater intensity for having become concentrated. So, if we do not know how to handle it in the right way, it becomes a great danger. It is far better not to have concentration if one does not attain sublimation at the same time. Therefore the necessity of purity, of non-injury, truthfulness, continence etc., in thought, word and deed, has to be stressed very much. Without sublimation of all our desires and feelings we cannot progress in the spiritual path. It is after we have followed a strict code of ethics and morals that we should attempt concentration and meditation. The concentrated mind, if it is not purified, becomes a veritable demon and creates untold troubles for the spiritual aspirant.

The concentration of a worldly man on his gross material gain, profit and enjoyment; the concentration of the scientist on his experiments, for instance on the structure of the atom or the constitution of the planet; the concentration of the psychologist on the movement and laws of thought; the concentration of the Yogi with his analysis of the ego and the non-ego,—all these are but different forms of concentration, judged from the objective standpoint. But considered from the subjective point of view their contents differ very widely, and they lead to altogether different experiences and results.

The Yogic seeker after Truth, having no faith in God as ordinarily understood, may begin with the concentration and meditation on gross elements associated with time and space, and then take the elements

beyond the limitations of time and space. He may next take up the subtle elements as the objects of his concentration and meditation, at first within time and space, and later on beyond their limits. Proceeding further, he may first make the mind—the 'inner organ'—and afterwards the ego, the object of this concentration and meditation. And knowing the true nature of these objects he ceases to identify himself with these limiting adjuncts, and having come nearer to his Self he enjoys a wonderful state of bliss and illumination.

The Vedantic aspirant who believes in the existence of the Divine, may at the beginning meditate on the physical form of some great holy personality, image or picture or symbolic representation of the Divine, first associated with time and space, and then without these limitations. Advancing further, he may meditate on the 'heart' of the holy personality or on the Divine Mind, and gradually imbibe the noble attributes associated with it. Later, he may pass on to Pure Consciousness, individual or cosmic, and thereby succeed in purifying and expanding his impure, limited consciousness, come in touch with the Infinite Being within his self, and even proceed to the highest Divine Realisation in which the meditator, like a salt-doll coming in contact with the ocean, gets merged into the Absolute Divine Principle. Thus, beginning with different forms of concentration and meditation associated with individualised consciousness, he may reach the highest Super-consciousness—the Absolute Reality, the One Undivided Principle—in which all subject-object relationship, nay, all relativity, is completely transcended.

By themselves concentration and meditation may not have any spiritual value. As already said, they may even be dangerous if the person who practises them has not already attained a certain amount of mental purification and does not continue the process of sublimation at the time. Concentration and meditation become spiritually effective to the extent to which the mind is purified of its dross, of all the dirt and filth and bad impressions and tendencies it has allowed to accumulate through successive evil thoughts and actions. With the attainment of great dispassion and purity alone can the aspirant take up successfully the higher forms of concentration and meditation, ultimately leading to the highest divine experience and freedom.

THE GODWARD TURN

Every average person has the capacity to practise concentration and meditation, although these are usually directed towards persons or objects of gain and enjoyment presented to us by the world. In order to follow the spiritual life, no new faculties need be created all of a sudden. The old capacities and tendencies are to be given a Godward turn without diminishing their intensity, and then the worldly man is transformed into a spiritual man. So the true devotee prays, "Lord, may I think of Thee with that strong love which the ignorant cherish for the things of the world, and may that love never cease to abide in my heart."

The ego asserts itself again and again. So, says Sri Ramakrishna, make it the servant of the Lord. Desires and passions refuse to be controlled. Give a Godward turn to them, maintaining their intensity—so advises the spiritual teacher. In-

stead of yearning for the company of men and women, yearn for union with the Divine. See Him in all, but take care that you do not cheat yourself. He alone can satisfy the hunger of the soul. He alone can fill its void and give it permanent peace and joy.

Instead of being angry with those standing in the way of your sense-enjoyment, gross or subtle, be angry with all the obstacles lying in the path to the Divine. Learn to be angry with your lower desires, with your turbulent passions, with your very anger, and avoid them all as your great and relentless enemies. Instead of wishing to possess another 'human doll' or fleeting worldly wealth, covet the Divine and His inexhaustible wealth which can never be lost and is alone able to give abiding peace. So says the Bhagavatam: "Lust, anger, fear, affections, fellowship and friendship, when directed towards the Divine Being, lead to union with the Divine."

At the touch of the philosopher's stone all the base metals of desires and passions, of greed and anger, lose their evil nature and are transmuted into pure devotion bringing Bliss and Immortality to the soul. "Even if the very wicked worships Me,—the Divine—he has rightly resolved. Soon does he become righteous and obtain eternal peace. Boldly canst thou proclaim that My devotee never comes to grief," says the Bhagavad Gita.

Time and again says Sri Ramakrishna, "Give a Godward turn to all your tendencies." Especially in the path of devotion all desires and passions should be consciously given a higher direction without allowing them to decrease in intensity.

THE PROCESS OF SELF-PURIFICATION

Let us take for example the question of anger. Why are we angry? Only because someone or something is standing in the way of what we think to be the object of our enjoyment. This is the only reason for all our anger. Always we find that anger is closely connected with the overstressed ego or a strong sense of personality, and without this strong sense of the ego and an inordinate desire for enjoyment, physical and mental, anger could never even rise in our hearts. So this ego, this desire for enjoyment, is the only cause of our becoming angry. If we do not desire any enjoyment, if we do not expect anything from anybody, but just give and act without ever expecting any return, giving up all expectations, there can never be any rise of anger. So we should get angry with our anger and not with others. We should get terribly angry with our desires for sense enjoyment and not with the objects as such. This is the only practical way to uproot anger and eventually eliminate it. And without eliminating anger and other associated evils to a great extent, we can never make any progress in spiritual life. Lust and anger are the two greatest enemies in the spiritual path. So they should be carefully avoided by all aspirants.

Thus, whenever there is anger there is some attachment or other, some inordinate desire or affection, for, truly speaking, without attachment to some person or thing there can never rise any form of anger. It is only our thwarted will to enjoyment that brings about anger. But this should be understood more in a subtle sense than in a gross one. It need not necessarily be any craving for the

grosser forms of enjoyment that lies as the root-cause of anger.

It may happen that a person is fully convinced of the evil effects of desires, but still is not able to rid himself completely of them. What is such a person to do? How can he rise above them? He should connect them all, directly or indirectly, with the Divine, give every desire, every sensual impulse, every passion a Godward turn, consciously and knowingly, with an effort of the will. If he cannot rid himself of the inordinate desire for music, let him listen to devotional or holy music, and all the time he is so doing, let him think of the Divine. If his artistic sense and his desire to enjoy art are very strong, he should take up some holy form of art and make that a stepping stone for rising to the plane of the Divine. If he is very fond of the sweet fragrance and beauty of flowers and wishes to enjoy them, let him pluck the flowers, offer them to the Divine and decorate the holy altar artistically with them. If he desires to love somebody, feel greatly attracted towards somebody, let him love the Divine in that person and be thereby directly drawn towards the Divine. If done consciously and knowingly, all this acts as a great controlling factor, as a great regulating agency, helping us in sublimating our desires and in giving them a higher and higher turn and attaining a greater and greater purity. But even here the ultimate goal to be attained by the aspirant is perfect control and divine realisation of God. Everything else serves only as a stepping-stone to that. Following the graduated steps, we must be able to rise to the highest sooner or later.

Unless all the filth and foulness which have gathered in the mind are removed from it, from all nooks and corners, our problem is not really solved. If some light just enters a room through a chink in the door and the rest of the room remains shrouded in darkness and continues to be dirty, nothing is achieved. There is no real spiritual illumination if just a tiny bit of light enters our mind, and all the dirt and filth lying there is pushed away for the time being into some far-off dark corner. In such a case the man remains just what he was before he had this kind of 'glimpse.' Mere theories and philosophies do not help us in any way, however wonderful they may be. What is essential is the practical application, the sublimation, the removal of all the dirt lying hidden in the dark corners of the mind, not the so-called perfect control of all the mental modifications (*vruttis*) as some people would have it, which only leads to self-induced sleep in the beginner, but not to any form of real illumination. People talking of the complete stopping of all the mental modifications (*Vruttis*) at the very beginning of their spiritual life do not know what they mean.

Very often there is in us only a certain amount of external control, but as distinct from this there should be real internal control. If we are outwardly controlled, but are not able to stop the activity in the sense-organ or in the mind, we can attain to higher forms of control. If the senses have been controlled, but are still eager to come in touch with the sense-objects, real control has not been achieved, but only its outward form. Even then a step has been taken in the right direction.

One form of control is to draw oneself away completely from the objects of the senses. Another form is to allow the senses to come in touch with things that are pure and not likely to harm the aspirant by rousing fresh desires in him. This is the better and easier method for most people..

"O my mind, worship the Mother and repeat day and night the great Mantra (the mystic word) that you have received from your Guru. When you lie down, think you are making prostrations to the Mother. When you sleep, think you are meditating on Her. When you eat, think you are offering food to Her. With great joy Ramprasad proclaims, 'Mother dwells in all bodies. When you walk in the city, think you are going round the Divine Mother.'"

The idea of this beautiful song is this: We must connect consciously every thought and every single act of our life either directly or indirectly with the Divine, and practise the presence of God at all times.

RECOGNITION OF THE ALL-PERVADING DIVINE PRINCIPLE

The Divine is everywhere and in everything, but we should learn to discriminate and act accordingly. We should learn to become more wide-awake and conscious. We should be more reflective and act less on the impulse of the senses and our instincts, be they good or bad. We are so careless and easy-going at all this, that we follow the opposite course and bring no end of troubles on ourselves.

We should fully recognise this idea of Unity but in the right way. At present we recognise it so half-

heartedly. And properly speaking, without acquiring true dispassion and detachment we cannot recognise it whole-heartedly and act up to it. If we were convinced that the One Undivided Principle exists in all, we could not have any strong hatred or any strong animal love for anybody, separating him from the rest, but would only turn our eyes towards the Principle at the back of him. This does not mean that we are to behave like fools. No. We still should know the tiger to be a tiger, in spite of its being a manifestation of this One Undivided Principle. So we should not go and shake hands with it. We should know the Principle to be present both in man and woman, but this knowledge should not prevent us from discriminating and being careful so long as we are on this phenomenal plane. We should see the One Principle at the back of the worldly person leading an impure and immoral life, but we should not go and have intimate talks with him. This is very very essential. And if we do not act up to this rule, our feet will slip one day, and we shall seriously come to grief. The aspirant can never be too careful in this. To the extent we recognise the One Undivided Principle in all, our hatred, our so-called human love, our attachment, would be diminished and lose all strength and influence. Wherever we find in an aspirant the desire to mix indiscriminately with worldly minded people and with members of the opposite sex, there is something seriously wrong. His desires for worldly things and enjoyment have not yet lost their tenacity and no purification has been attained. So

spiritual progress and realisation are altogether out of question.

Ordinarily our attachment clouds our whole understanding. We must be able to stress the spirit more than the form, more than the personalities and sense-objects, but so long as our craving for sense-enjoyment, our clinging to this little personality of ours, continues to cloud our understanding, we can never really think of this One Undivided Principle, and thus we go on committing the same old mistakes over and over again. So dispassion should be cultivated as much as possible by all aspirants. Without it nothing positive can be achieved.

Christ says, "He who loves father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." And that is perfectly true. Not only that, but he who allows another to love him more than the Divine is not worthy of God. He who allows another to be more attracted by him than by the Divine is not worthy of God and cannot attain Him. When we make another person love us in such a way by not being sufficiently reserved, we are not worthy of God. So, in this, too, we should be very careful and wide awake. We feel delighted at being flattered, no doubt; we like to be attractive to others; we like being loved by others as objects of enjoyment. But we are too impulsive and too unreflective to know that from the spiritual standpoint we create troubles both for ourselves and for others, and prevent our progress. We should be dignified and well guarded. We should take such an attitude that others do not dare to approach us in a wrong way. In short, we should try to possess greater and greater discrimination.

Dispassion has both its negative and its positive aspect. We should try to disconnect ourselves from others as much as possible and then connect ourselves with the Divine, so that later on all connection with others can be done only through the Divine, but never again in a direct way. Human love connected with the Divine can be gradually transmuted, but if it is not so connected, it degenerates and always ends in disaster and misery, whatever we may think to the contrary. All our relationships, if they be direct relationships, are only born with the body and associated with others through connections of the body only. There is nothing lasting in them that could ever bring peace and real blessedness to any of us.

It is really very strange that people suffer so much, and still they are not brought to their senses, but cling to all these false identifications. Very often we forget the goal and take the means to be the goal. The whole world is bound by the desire for wealth and by the desire for sex. But we should learn to develop a new attitude towards both. We make money the highest goal of our life, and then we come to grief. We make the love of a man or a woman the ultimate aim of our life, and end our life in misery. We should become introspective and know what is the real goal of life, and then try to realise it.

Ordinarily there is in us such an awful identification with our body and our senses and passions that we just brush aside God. Wherever there is scepticism with reference to the Divine, there is some inordinate clinging to the self and to the senses and their objects, because of which

God is pushed out. So long as the individual is full of desire for sense-enjoyment and for possession, of egoism and vanity, God has no place in his life. The Divine is pushed away by our creature-consciousness. If the mind becomes perfectly free from desires and passions, one realises the Divine then and there. So if we do not realise God, if we do not even get a glimpse of the Truth, we need not ask why it is so. We should know that in the conscious and in the sub-conscious mind there are still strong desires in us, and we should first rid ourselves of these obstructions. So long as we allow them to remain, the question of realisation does not even arise.

We should break the sway of our impulses over us. The very moment the impulses rise in us, we should try to expand ourselves, for then these impulses at once disappear just as the waves disappear in the ocean. The man who knows how to expand his consciousness, how to attain a higher form of consciousness, is not affected by such impulses that rise in the mind. One of the most effective means to rise above one's impulses is to come in touch with the Divine Consciousness, with that Infinite presence which is always in us. And without knowing how to rise above our instincts, without knowing how to control and curb our passions and to cultivate true renunciation and dispassion, without having tried to attain to the purity of mind and of body, there can be no spiritual life for any one. So we should become more reflective and more discriminating. We are not consistent enough in our thinking and in our actions. There should never be any haziness in the Vedantic aspirant.

Vagueness and indefiniteness have no place in true spiritual life. Everything should be clear. We must have definite and right thoughts, definite and right emotions and feelings, definite and right actions. Then alone can we proceed to the Divine Goal and realise it.

PARADOX

By E. E. Speight

You may buy gold too dear,
Far off may be too near,
Things you long for be too strong
for
Words to make them clear.

Water can mould a rock,
A thought can kill with shock,
A sudden light conceal as night
The shepherd from the flock.

Things can be said unsaid,
Alive can yet be dead,
Lovers of home the first to roam,
And leaders best when led.

Truth may be untruth too,
Yourself be more than you,
To bring to birth the greatest worth
The easiest to do.

Deny yourself, and power
Is with you every hour,
And in a trance our spirits
chance
On truth in perfect flower.

There is no going hence
Without a coming thence ;
The restless sea can somehow be
A tranquil permanence.

Croesus will grudge a crumb,
Christ toils in a slum ;

Young hearts and fair we least can
spare
Go forth to martyrdom.

A hurricane says naught,
A whisper can be fraught
With mighty things ; a robin sings
The happiest of thought.

Who fears the dark fears light,
Our day is ringed with night,
From innocence we struggle hence
In ignorance to fight.

No outer, then no inner,
No loss in life, no winner ;
Through pine and pain our souls we
gain ;
A good-man loves a sinner.

The world, though wealth is grow-
ing,
May perish by not knowing ;
What love should do to lead us
through,
To guide our undergoing.

Lovers of solitude
Long most for brotherhood ;
Who seeks a song amid the throng
Wanders a lonely wood.

The mind has made the whole
We call the world ; the Soul
Builds the walls of heaven's halls,
And takes the sternest toll.

THE BUDDHA

By Prof. Dr. Heinrich Zimmer

(Continued from previous issue)

[Dr. Zimmer is one of the well-known orientalists of Germany. The present article is a translation from German. We are indebted to Dr. V. N. Sharma, Ph.D., (Heidel) for the translation.]

ONE ought not to belittle the radical significance of the second truth of Buddhism, otherwise one sees in the third and fourth truths nothing but mere definitions and values of estimations; moreover, when we put the four truths together for our test, we would find that they are nothing but historical appearance. To put forward the bold assumption, to take life as it expresses itself as an exceptional unwished biological condition, rather than valuing its essence and its regulating process as other religious founders and teachers did, this assumption is for India neither an absurdity nor an arrogance. This second truth follows the traditional path of medical diagnosis, and as such, it stands absolutely behind the shadows of the third truth. This diagnosis might appear to some of us, as if it is touching the domains of insanity. However, it loses its acuteness, for the third truth says that the suffering is curable. And he who expressed this, is he, who was cured, and it is he who points out the way of healing. And this way is just as real as the suffering and as the therapy of curable illnesses.

This way joins the path of the fourth of the supreme realities in which are embodied the foundations of the oldest Buddhism, and around which flow the rich streams of the later teachings of the Buddhist

school. It is a way of the innermost experiences, not of a world-construction which one could own by mere thinking and believing. It is not an all-embracing social organisation, yet, a diet, a regime of the whole man as it corresponds to the medical condition. This can be chosen either by the few or by the many. Here we find the positive aspect of Buddhism. Here one beholds the rule of the monk or the life's form of the Bodhisatva—of the Becoming Buddha—amidst the world. What one reads in the voluminous literature and philosophical thought is nothing but only a gleam of this spiritual essence; it is only a foreground, a portal, yes a portal, which leads to the other portal; it is only a sign that points out the way, yet, it is not the name, not the root.

The star of Buddhism appears over the horizon of the old India, after her immemorial, pre-Aryan archaic, highest culture of great achievements. In the excavations that have been undertaken in the Indus valley, one sees the marvellous cities of three thousand years old. In these one finds a clay plate which depicts the figure of an ascetic, adorned both by men and gods, sitting in the position of Buddha. One can behold in this mythical and yet symbolical figure, that Sakhyamuni is not the first and the only Buddha. He is one of the youngest ones, yet

not the last. For India Buddha gives a new life, a new light to the pre-Aryan conception of an ascetic and of a teacher.

The time of Buddha has a great significance in the political and philosophical life of India. The supremacy of the Aryan Brahmanism, which has ruled the land for one and a half thousand years, has abdicated itself, and the heritage of the pre-Aryan spiritual culture expresses itself in different voices. Its cosmology and its understanding of the human personality are more rich and complex than the Aryan theology, and the ritual and magic of the Brahmanism. The process of assimilation between the two greatest cultures takes now a new shape; the two streams of mythical, magical thoughts find now their confluence in this new stadium. The atmosphere is filled everywhere with speculations, ecstasies, and with great visions. On this horizon of metaphysical thought, appears the therapy of the Buddha.

Buddhism, in other words, means to India the critical stage for the furtherance of the dogmatic thought, both in the sphere of the metaphysics as well as in the field of materialism. On one side metaphysics ruled the mind of the land with its philosophy that in all passing things there exists one being, which is divine and immortal. The domain of theology had its foundation on this. On the other side the materialism broadcasted, laying special emphasis on the outer form, that all living beings and forms might vanish. The Buddha shows us through his "middle path" the possibility of bringing together the two extreme thoughts of metaphysics and materialism that fought against

one another and that could not be overwhelmed by each other. In this apodictical sphere Buddha's contribution is the hypothetical judgment that nothing is, or is not, but everything is relative. However, this relativity lies in our own self. Our "Not Knowing It Better" stipulates a specific reality; it is a sphere of World and I, in which we are quite at home. This world is not an indispensable reality, for, it is a function of our own naivety. Hence it is curable.

To be Awakened means, most probably, to be aware that everything is absolutely conditioned. Thus it is a function of our own self. Having attained this knowledge we are indeed masters of all the functions; therefore we are free from all disturbances, we are sovereigns and healthy.

An outsider, might see only an absolute dynamical psychology in this, but Buddha's contribution is the rejection of all aspects of substantial psychology, and of all metaphors within time and space in the world of the soul. This is the historical message of Buddhism to Asia.

The reality in which we live is a mere convention of the "Not Knowers It Otherwise." Behind this there is another reality, in which the first one dissolves itself. This is undefinable; it is without a form; it is free from all limitations and contradictions. It cannot be expressed, yet it can be experienced in its function. Therefore you cannot express it with your language. Even the word "Nirvana" is a mere picture so as to point out a process of dissolution. It is like a bridge, of which the column of this side is still to be seen, but not that

of the other side. Therefore it is a mere metaphor, nothing more than this.

Both language and spirit can bring home this secret only by means of paradoxes. So did the Buddhists. They used paradoxes as the finest and clearest way of their instruction. A paradox can lead one to something which is behind form and name. The Awakened calls his method of instruction, a path or a vehicle, a ship that brings the people unhurt over the bridgeless streams of India to the shore beyond. The Buddha once used a parable of a man who is standing on a shore full of horror and dangers. On the other side lies the land of everlasting peace and harmony. With many a difficulty he succeeds in building a float of wood and weed that carries him safely to the other side. Now the Buddha asked his disciples :

"Would that man be clever if he would keep this float, because it saved him ; and take it on his back and carry it through the land ?"

"O Master," answered the disciples, "he should leave it on the stream, which lies behind him."

"So shall the teaching be considered," concluded the Buddha. "It is helpful so as to enable one escape, but not to keep it for oneself."

To him who can perfect himself, can reach the goal, no more teaching is needed. Formulas which have now lost their significance are mere milestones that lie behind him who reached the goal. Everything that can be

expressed of this process is therapy. The cured does not need it any longer.

He who wanders understands that the teaching is something which changes itself. It is indeed a path that traverses through many a landscape. In other words it is a function in itself. What one considers so essential in the beginning, will not be so important at the end. As such one will have to consider also the moral aspect only as a guiding principle that changes itself along with one's own change in the path of healing.

The teaching is considered as the vehicle. All other spiritual worlds must be left on this side of the shore. From here begins the pilgrimage. There is no necessity to discuss them, but to leave them behind. On this lies their uniqueness and their passing significance. Therefore Buddhism takes, as its basis, the tradition, faith and morals of the races. This spiritual shore of the stream from which one leaves is called in Asia religion. Looked at from this angle of vision, Buddhism seems to be religion too, as it assimilated the essence of Hinduism of India, as well as Shintoism of Japan, even though it ought to be considered as a therapeutical process of healing of the whole personality. Buddhism, through its readiness to welcome the spiritual riches from all sides, understood always the ways of the world, but it used them only as mere steps on its forward path.

(To be continued)

THE GLORY OF MOTHERHOOD

By Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M.A.

[Mr. Sen Gupta is a Professor of English. He presents his ideal of womanhood in a very striking form and with much literary beauty.]

HERE is no one on earth who convinces me more of the goodness and wisdom of God than does a mother. Philosophers have advanced arguments and proofs, some for, and some against, the existence of God. Those who believe in Him point to Nature and her holy plan. The starry heavens impressed Kant with God's infinity and glory. The beauty of a flower spoke to Wordsworth's ears its message of an indwelling spirit that gives life and hue to all that lives. But those who do not believe in God or His goodness will refer to the nebulous masses in the heavens as still pointing to a chaos which is evolving itself, more by accident and fortuitous concurrence of blind atoms, than by any divine law or intelligence. They will point to Nature "red in tooth and claw", and to instances of what appear to them as meaningless and heartless. Not being a philosopher, I may not enter into a discussion of the matter. But yet I would, with humility, ask the philosophers to turn to a mother's ways, beginning from the animal world and ascending to the world of man. How could they explain her love and affection, her sacrifice and suffering for her child ? Does not a mother's love for her child serve as the best reminder of the existence, behind and in creation, of a Power who is at once infinitely wise and good ? Rightly did the English novelist Bulwer Lytton say, and that so aptly and beautifully, "Nature's

loving proxy, the watchful Mother". Look at another wonderful saying—it was a Jewish saying—"God could not be everywhere, therefore He made mothers".

In a country where a mother's love has been enshrined in society and religion as the most sacred thing on earth, one need not be at pains to prove the glory of motherhood. What could have heightened that glory more than the belief in the Motherhood of God ? Some have worshipped God as a Ruler, some as a Father. But the Mother cult is the sweetest that it so easily overpowers the heart. Even the keen and austere Kesab Chandra, we know, was enchanted by this creed which the Sage of Dakshineswar had realised and imparted to him. Do we not know the thrill of joy and devotion that passes through us, when the benign Mother is worshipped in autumn ? Nature then appears so mellow and kind, so bright and pure, looking and staring at us with the love of a mother that has come, after a long spell of absence, to see her children !

One need only look within to feel the truth of this—the mighty influence of the Mother cult in religion.

It is often said that we do not know in this country how to honour our womanfolk.. No slander was more unfair than this. To see the mother in a woman is the highest honour that could be bestowed on her, and do we not submit ourselves

to our mothers most willingly and loyally and show them the homage which is their due? Does not a mother still rule us all our lives? To honour a woman does not necessarily mean to help her to shine in society. Would it be honouring her less, when we instal her as the ruling goddess of the family life, as the Deity in the Temple, whom we do not want to be sullied by the rough touch of the work-a-day world? It sounds perhaps medieval to speak in this strain to-day. But, it is better to be medieval with the glory of the mother preserved in all its halo than to be modern to see that halo lost in the light of common day, better far to see the race of mothers glorying in thier ancient reign over us than to see them scrambling for bread and other rights in an unseemly fight with their sons! I am told in new Germany Hitler does not offer employment to a girl but asks her to marry and be a mother. If this is true, it is a move in the right direction.

I certainly do not want—let me not be misunderstood—our women to relapse into a state of isolation from the world currents of thought and progress. Nor am I blind to the facts that their powers and potentialities are such as may work miracles and that human civilisation must be a harmony of the joint efforts of both men and women. The ancient idea that a woman's sphere of work was within the four walls of domestic life and that of man, outside, will no longer hold good. Those walls have happily been pulled down and men and women are now both out, shoulder to shoulder, in the common theatre and arena of activity, in the fulfilment of God's

design. All this is true. But we must not, at the same time, ignore the fact that a woman is above all a mother and her glory and power are best seen to shine in that capacity. She may of course shine in the different spheres of public or social life—she may be a prosperous lawyer or a sound statesman. She may excel in all these but do these put the right label on her true self? She must show the best in her as a mother—her tenderness, her purity, her sacrifice, her forgiveness, must be there to help man. She must be above man's selfishness and cruelty, his hypocrisy and cunning. If the race of mothers, which women *par excellence* are, die out before a race of mere intellectualists and fighters, the world would ere long come to be reduced to a vast orphanage where our souls would pine and be famished and we would all hurry on to our ruin. With all her mental vigour or acquisitions, a woman must also show that she is our mother and so is able to put down the brute in man. She is to bless our endeavours and to protect us from the pit-falls of life. While we are out fighting for our rights busy killing and destroying our neighbours, let her stand out in her true glory and save us, teaching us how to realise our fraternity and unity. The world, with all its apparent progress, is still as bad as it was in days, when "everyman's hand was on his neighbour". We are still busy multiplying weapons of war inspite of the League of Nations, inspite of a Maeterlinck or a Romain Rolland, or a Rabindranath. This is because the mothers of the human race have been asleep. An American merchant once said, "If you would

reform the world from its errors and vices, begin by enlisting the mothers".

I say, "Let the mothers wake up and form themselves into a League, then will the endeavours of the League of Nations be truly blessed and man be assured of his prosperity".

Let us learn to see and honour the motherhood of a woman and so glorify her and society.

A quotation from Martin Luther, will not be found out of place:—

"When Eve was brought unto Adam, he became filled with the Holy Spirit, gave her the most sanctified, the most glorious of appellations. He called her Eva, that is to say, the Mother of All. He did not style her wife, but simply mother—mother of all living creatures. In this consists the glory and the most precious ornament of woman".

SAINT RAMAVALLABHA DAS

By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.

[Mr. Chandavarkar gives some account of the life and teachings of a saint of Maharashtra.]

THE history of the eternal struggle of the finite to become one with the Infinite presents many interesting, informative and instructive chapters. To keep the human soul in tune with Infinite, the seers or the Rishis of the Aryan race have formulated certain postulates. For the guidance of the various aspirants they have recommended the practice of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga or the Bhakti Yoga, according to the qualification of the aspirants. The mere awakening of a desire to know the Infinite (*Brahma Jijnasa*) leads one to follow any one of these three paths leading to that goal.

Of the followers of the Bhakti Yoga there has been a remarkable line of outstanding saints in the medieval period of Indian History. In that eventful period there has been a glorious revival of the Bhakti cult. We call it a revival because the roots of the Bhakti movement can be traced to such early times as of Prahlada and Sri Krishna. From those hoary days to the time of Sri

Ramakrishna, there has been a galaxy of saints in different parts of India. From their life and teaching it becomes amply evident that the path of knowledge could be tread only by aspirants who are specially competent, the path of devotion or the *Bhakti Marga* is ever the easiest and the safest for one and all. These saints therefore worked a wonderful revolution among the masses. That awakening of the masses, be it spiritual or moral, was, doubtless, the result of the indefatigable labours of these benefactors of humanity. In this essay we propose to deal with the life of one such saint, incidentally dealing with his work also.

Saint Ramavallabha Das was born in the Maratha country, but worked in the Kanarese districts on the west coast of India. He was destined to be 'a servant of Lord Krishna' who preached the Bhakti Marga to the world through the Gita, a book that is rightly called the Bible of humanity.

Near Aurangabad, there is the historic fort of Devagiri or Daulatabad. In the sixteenth century of the Shalivahan Era, it was held by a Muslim king, who had a minister by name Ambar Khan. The manager of his office was one Ambajipant Raleraskar. Although he was fairly happy in his domestic life he had no issue. This fact made him seek the blessings of his family deity Jagadamba. It is said that owing to the special favour of the Goddess, late in life was born to him a son who was destined to be a great Sadhu. The child was given the happy name of Tukopant. In his seventh year, according to the custom, he was invested with the sacred thread and in the twelfth year he was prematurely ushered into the Grihastashrama (the life of the householder). The marriage however did not, and could not, prove a hindrance to the spiritual progress of the boy. In his eighteenth year he succeeded to his father's post. Just after sometime, it is recorded that the fort of Devagiri was besieged by a huge army of the Northern Muslims. The chief of the fort was bewildered by that unexpected invasion. His army consisted only of 1500 Infantry and 700 Cavalry, and it could not face 12,000 cavalry and 13,000 Infantry. In that unhappy situation he consulted the Vizier, who, being a brave soldier, himself organised a small army of loyal and desperate fighters, among whom Tukopant was one, and went to meet the formidable foe. The result was that the enemy was completely routed and they fled from the field. The next day the victorious army returned with the booty. While others brought silver and gold, our Tukopant picked up a copy of

Shrimad Bhagavata. With great reverence he began to study it. This made a mighty revolution in his mental outlook; gradually a new light dawned upon him. Tuko may thus be called a soldier-saint.

The profound study of the Bhagavata filled our Tukopant with Vairagya dispassion. Service as another's employee had no attraction for him. For pelf and power, or for name and fame he cared not. If Prahlad gave up his father, if Vibhishna abandoned the cause of Ravana, if Bharata disobeyed his mother, it was for the sake of the ideal. Tukopant too felt the keen necessity of bidding farewell to his fond parents for the sake of Bhakti or divine love. One fine morning he left his home in search of a Guru who would initiate him into the mysteries of the Unknown. From this moment began his perigrinations. The earnest aspirant as he was, Tuko found his Guru in one Laksmidharadas who was staying in an Ashrama on the bank of the Godavari river. Tukopant was given the new name of Sri Ramavallabhadhas by his Guru, and he was taught *Gopalavidya* which illumined his mind.

Not content with finding solace for himself, he thought of communicating that bliss to the world outside and with this noble object he started on his sacred mission. At Nasik, he met one Sadhu by name Gopal Goswami. Here he met also his old friend Krishnajeepant and the trio began in right earnest the practice of Bhakti Yoga. Ekanathi Bhagavat was profoundly studied by them. After some time he went to Vayee in Berar, which was a rendezvous for many Bhaktas. One interesting story is narrated in connexion with

his meeting with another Sadhu by name Umavallabhadas, who, as his name indicates, was a staunch devotee of Siva. While he was staying in a temple dedicated to Mahadeva, once a discussion arose between these two Bhaktas. While the one argued Shiva was the superior deity, the other vehemently declared that Krishna was the superior. The story goes that next morning the deity appeared to Ramavallabhadas in the form of Mahadeva, and to Umavallabha He appeared in the form of Krishna. Both were lost in wonder. They came to the conclusion that both were the forms of one and the same God, and that in diversity there is unity. The differences are practically without any distinctions. These are all man-made artificial differences. From Vayee Kshetra, Ramavallabhadas proceeded to Konkan, where he began the exposition of Sri Shankaracharya's Brihadvakyavritti with his commentary in Prakritabhasha. Later on, he went to Gokarna, a famous place of pilgrimage in the North Kanara District. During the Shivaratri festival here thousands of pilgrims gather, among whom was a Saraswat lady by name Lakshmi Bai. At the time of her taking the sea-bath she chanced to lose her earring which was a sign of auspiciousness. The lady was standing aghast at the loss. Near by was our saint watching the lady in deep sorrow. When the reason was explained to him, she was commanded to throw the remaining one also and invoke the blessings of Kubera. The devout lady without any hesitation threw away the other jewel also and began her prayers. Lo, in the very presence of the saint, both the ear-rings

were washed to her feet. Her joy knew no bounds. She fell at his feet and implored him to go over with her to a village called Mallapur, near Kumta. The Sadhu forthwith accompanied her to her native village and preached to her his Gopalavidya. Even to this day at the temple dedicated to Sri Krishna, this very *Vrata* is consistently followed by the members of the Chandavarkar family, of which this lady was the earliest member. She originally belonged to the Nagar Samasthana now in the State of Mysore where her husband was said to be the Dewan. The Krishna Jayanti *Vrata* is now followed just in the manner it was preached by the Sadhu 300 years ago.

The songs composed by this saint are full of Bhakti-rasa to which a brief reference will be made later in this paper. Here it would be enough to record that Mr. Subrao Gopal Ubhayakar, a descendant of this Avadee's family—that was the name given to Lakshmi Bai—has published many of the scholarly works of Sri Ramavallabhadas, which alone form the sources of any biography of this Krishna Bhakta. Some of his works are highly philosophical and also full of Bhakti-rasa. In the section dealing with his philosophy reference will be made to some of these valuable works.

The exact date when Sri Ramavallabhadas shook off the mortal coil is not known. The event must have taken place somewhere near Pandharpur on Ahada-Ekadashi. His philosophy is embodied in some of his works.

(1) On the Bhagavat Gita, he has a very valuable commentary called "*Chamatkari Teeka*". The Marati

style of it is as simple and expressive as the thought is sublime. The illustrations used for the exposition are so homely that every reader knowing Marathi must be able to grasp and enjoy the sublimity of the subject matter. (2) *Krishnajayanti Vrata-katha*.—This book deals with the esoteric meaning of Sri Krishna's teachings, the allegorical significance of Radha's love, and the importance of the *Utsava*. (3) *Vakiavritti Teeka* on the Bhagavata and a lucid commentary on the Tenth Skandha called *Dashaka Nirdhara*. The commentary is in the form of a poem. (4) *Vaishnava Gati* is another of his works on the Bhakti-marga.

All these works are in Marathi and are very popular in the Konkan District right upto the South Kanara District.

The saint lays great emphasis on Bhakti-marga. He has ably dealt with the nine-fold path of Bhakti. The term used by him is *Navavidha-Bhakti*. The nine-fold path consists of the following :—

(1) Shravanam : Hearing of the glory of God ; (2) Keertanam : Singing the praise of God ; (3) Vishno-smaranam : Constant meditation of God ; (4) Padaseva : Service ; (5) Arachanam : Worship of God ; (6) Vandanam : Salutation ; (7) Dasya : Disintegrated loyalty to God ; (8) Sakhyam : Companionship ; (9) Atmanivedanam : Self-surrender.

Having spoken of the significance of the nine-fold aspects of Bhakti, he advocates the worship of God as endowed with attributes (*Sagunopasana*). Pandharpur is a place sacred to the deity Vittal. When asked where Vittoba is, he remarked : Vittoba, no doubt resides in Pandharpur

but when we apply the ointment of Gurukripa (grace of a spiritual guide) to our eyes, Vittoba seems to pervade the whole universe. Vishwa, the universe, is the Pandharpur and Vittoba is the soul of that universe. Again in another hymn of his, he says : My Pandharpur is here only. I need not go far. When He pervades every atom in the universe how can we say that He is far from us ? "Speaking of the need for self-surrender" he remarks : "Oh God, I have surrendered my whole body to you. Save me, or ruin me. You can make the poor rich and the rich poor. But I know this for certain, that when I have entire faith in you, I have no cause for any kind of fear. I live and have my being in you. I pray that my *Dehabuddhi* (body-consciousness) be destroyed and *Atma-buddhi* (Self-consciousness) be given unto me. "I am He. One can sing the glory of Hari, only when he is Hari himself." "God is One. Some call him Ganesha, some say he is Ravisha but they fail to realise that He is only One without a second." Always think of Om. That is the Bija. Seek the Guru in right earnest. Through him hear ; get the confirmation through the Sadhus ; take Viveka and then realise. When can one obtain the Guru ? When one begins to practise Viveka (sense of discrimination), renunciation and concentration, Guru of his own accord will bless him and lead him to bliss. These are some of the gems of 'purest ray serene' scattered through his works.

Saint Ramavallabhadras carried on the work of Ekanath, Jnanadeva and Tukarama in the Kanarese districts on the Malabar coast. He brought the message to the door of every one,

both high and low. He appealed to the emotion of the seekers. In the murky corners, the torch was lighted up. The doors of Mukti was thrown open for all. It is therefore that he can be classified among the benefactors of humanity. Almost all his works are in Marathi and demand a

careful perusal, at least through translations. He seems to have been a scholar in Sanskrit as well. His piety, earnestness of purpose, desire to do good to others and above all his profound and marvellous songs are all admirable, nay, they are soul-stirring.

PRESENT TENDENCIES IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D.

[The following is a review of "Contemporary Indian Philosophy" edited by S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, and published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 375. Price 16sh. net.]

I

WHILE the dictators who are the captains of power presiding over the destinies of nations, are spreading the cult of hate, it is salutary to find that philosophers are keen on bringing about intellectual co-operation and 'a better mutual understanding between the whole mind of East and West.' Adolph and Benito may take a pride in dividing humanity into hostile camps ; but no sincere seeker of truth can help registering his feeble voice of protest against the forces that make for evil in this world. As an attempt to launch a counter-attack on the fissiparous tendencies that we find to-day, as an outstanding contribution towards the achievement of a harmonious relationship between the East and the West and as an indication that the Occident has come to realise the perennial delight of Indian Philosophy, thinkers all over the world will welcome the publication of 'Contemporary Indian Philosophy' by the Editor of the Library of Philosophy. Lovers of philosophical knowledge will feel grateful to

Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Prof. J. H. Muirhead for editing this volume which brings out in an eminent way that present-day philosophy in India, far from being a traditional theology or blind formalism, is rich with fresh flower and fruit.

The general editor in his Foreword commending the volume says that it removes effectively certain misconceptions about Indian Philosophy. That the dreamy Indian mystic dwells in the cloudland of fancy without any sense of reality is one of the widespread notions in the West. But as Prof. Muirhead writes, "Contrary to what is usually thought of the remoteness from practice of Indian philosophy, what here strikes one is the lively sense of its practical value." And, again, none of the expositions of philosophy in this volume is the outcome of a narrowness of outlook. To quote Prof. Muirhead, "Another equally striking feature (again contradictory to popular views) is the spirit of tolerance that breathes in their teaching—the conviction that it is one truth that is expressed in all forms of anything

that can be called in the true sense of religion." This is in the true spirit and tradition of the Upanishadic philosophy.

Though we have in this volume different world views, we notice running through them all unshakable faith in the Spirit which is the source and solace of all-that-which-is. Some of the writers expound directly the Vedic tradition, and the others give a critical exposition of Indian thought in the light of metaphysical and scientific developments in the West. But all of them are true to the spirit of the Vedic tradition and they tell us what they consider to be the true function and content of philosophy. We can do no better than give here a resume of the philosophical tendencies that are to be found in the various essays of this book.

II

In reply to the questionnaire sent to him, Mahatma Gandhi gives a brief statement of his philosophy of life. His religion is Hinduism which, according to him, is religion of humanity including the best of all known religions. Truth is God; and we are all sparks of Truth. The way to the goal lies through continuous and continuing service of all life. How refreshing it is to hear the naked Fakir tell us in words reminiscent of the Upanishadic seers, "In this scheme there is nothing low, nothing high. For, all is one, though we seem to be many"!

III

Dr. Tagore's religion is essentially a poet's religion. The real artist that he is, he regards the world as the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image-making. The universe with

its rhythm and harmony is the work of the Master-Artist. "The vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing."

Mahatma Gandhi tells us that Reality is Truth, and Dr. Tagore sings the song of the Beautiful; but both of them know that Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth.

IV

Swami Abhedananda expounds the philosophy of Vedanta as he has received it from his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, "the embodiment of the Absolute Truth of the highest philosophy, as well as of Universal Religion which underlies all sectarian religions of the world". The Swami compares the system of Vedanta with the Kantian system and finds it to be more critical and more sublime. The uniqueness of this philosophy lies in its assertion of non-difference of the Jiva from Brahman. "The self or Atman, the true nature of the ego or Jivatma, is one with the essence of Divinity (Brahman) which is absolutely pure, perfect, immortal, unchangeable and one. No philosopher, not even Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel or Schopenhauer, has reached that height of philosophic thought".

The Swami disputes the view which confuses the doctrine of Maya with Illusionism, and says that Maya is the power which produces time, space and causation, as also the phenomenal appearances which exist on the relative plane. The Advaitin, however, need not fight shy of the word 'illusion'. The world is nothing more than an illusory manifestation brought about by Maya.

Iswara is the arch-juggler whose magical feat is this universe. Illusion does not mean nullity or Sunya. The nature of the world, as that of Maya, its parent, is indeterminable. It is not unreal because it appears; It is not real because it is sublated; and it cannot be both real and unreal because of contradiction.

V

Prof. K. C. Bhattacharya, to whom an explication of the concept of philosophy appears more important than the discussion of any specific philosophical problem, begins his essay by stating wherein he differs from Kant. For Kant the self is a necessity of thought and the object of moral faith, but it is not in itself knowable. The Professor thinks that, while the self is unthinkable, while it is not actually known and is only an object of faith, there is the possibility of knowing it without thinking. Thinking is only one of the ways of knowing. Though the self is not an object of thought, it can be known.

Only one of the forms of theoretic consciousness is literal thought. All the others are symbolistic thought which should not be called thought at all. "Four forms or grades of thought may be distinguished. They may be roughly called empirical thought, pure objective thought, spiritual thought and transcendental thought". The content of empirical thought is fact which is dealt with by science. Philosophy studies the contents of the other three forms of thought which are respectively self-subsistence, reality and truth. The facts of science are actually known and literally thought. The contents of philosophy are not literally thinkable and are not actually known, but

are believed as demanding to be known without being thought.

Corresponding to the three grades of theoretic consciousness there are three grades of philosophy which the Professor calls philosophy of the object, philosophy of the subject and philosophy of truth. The philosophy of the object deals with the self-subsistent object which is intelligible only in reference to the subject. The philosophy of the spirit has to do with the spiritual or enjoying consciousness of objectivity as a symbol of the real subject. "The study of all contents enjoyed in explicit reference to the subject. 'I', may be called the philosophy of the spirit." The attitude of the philosophy of truth is neither objective nor subjective. Truth is to be distinguished from reality in that while the latter is enjoyed the former is not. "What is called the absolute is a positively believed entity that is only negatively understood." It is conceived rigorously as truth in (Advaita) Vedanta.

VI

Common sense Empiricism is the name by which Prof. G. C. Chatterji calls his philosophy. Philosophy should not be divorced from life. It is a natural activity springing from some abiding human need or purpose. Sundered from experience, philosophy would be no more than barren formalism and mental gymnastics. In the words of Prof. Chatterji, "Philosophy begins in concrete experience, and must return to concrete experience in the character of guide or mentor, but in the actual solution of its problems it must remain unbiased by considerations of utility or subjective satisfaction."

The Professor who is averse to all brands of Idealism rejects the Hege-

lian dictum that the real is rational. But this denial of Idealism does not mean that he supports the doctrine of Materialism. To him reality is rich with variety. Experience reveals three phases of objective reality which he calls external nature, other minds and values. Philosophy cannot offer any explanation of the origin, destiny and future of the universe, for experience which is its criterion and touchstone is incomplete. Religion and philosophy have the same content, though their attitudes differ. Consistently with the philosophy of Empiricism, religion is to be regarded as a suspense of judgment on final issues.

The Professor is right when he is hard on solipsism and Berkeleyan Idealism whose logical conclusion is Humeian skepticism. But it is open to question whether a faith in a timeless Absolute lulls us to a spirit of happy acquiescence in the intellectual, social and moral muddle in which man from his finite point of view appears to be involved. It will be interesting to note that the philosophy of Advaita equates experience with the Absolute—experience not in the narrow sense of the term, but experience taken in its totality. As Bharatitirtha, an eminent exponent of Advaita, observes: When the self is conditioned by objects, it is spoken of as experience; and when the adjuncts are not intended, it is called the Absolute.

VII

Writing on the Pertinence of Philosophy, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy defines philosophy, after the ancient Greeks, as the love of wisdom. As contrasted with science whose sphere lies in particular departments of knowledge, philosophy is a wisdom

about knowledge. But there can be a reconciliation of science and religion. "Each is then dependent on the other, although in different ways; the sciences depending on revealed truth for their formal correction, and revealed truth relying upon the sciences for its demonstration by analogy, 'not as though it stood in need of them, but only to make its teaching clearer'."

It is not possible to divide religion from metaphysics, though they may be distinguished. The distinction between religion and metaphysics, writes the learned Doctor, "is that of Christianity from Gnosticism, Sunni from Shia doctrine, Ramanuja from Sankara, of the will from the intellect, participation (bhakti) from gnosis (jnana), or knowledge-of (avidya) from knowledge-as (vidya)." Religion would be unintelligible without the postulation of duality; and religions may and must be many because of difference in the modes of knowing God. But metaphysics is the common ground, the basis and norm of all religious formulations. Ultimately, however, both religion and philosophy are identical. "Both, considered as ways or praxis, are means of accomplishing the rectification, regeneration and reintegration of the aberrant and fragmented individual consciousness; both conceive of man's last end (purushartha) as consisting in a realisation by the individual of all the possibilities inherent in his own being." For all the great thinkers and mystics of the world, religious and intellectual experience are too closely interwoven ever to be wholly divided.

VIII

Dr. Bhagavan Das believes in (1) infinitely countless individual selves

or souls; in (2) their rebirths—the passing of each self, through all the possible experiences, in infinite time, space and motion; in (3) cycles and circles of time and space on all possible scales of duration and extent, in which the process of rhythmic evolution and involution manifest themselves; in (4) one all-including, all-pervading, ever-complete, timeless, spaceless, universal Soul also identical with and including within itself all the countless individual selves, and whose eternally changeless, and yet also ever-changing, Ideation the entire world-process of all souls and bodies is.

The faith to which Dr. Bhagavan Das subscribes is Atma-vidya. The first three articles of his faith refer, we believe, to the relative reality of the world with its irreconcilable dualisms. They cannot be on a par with the fourth which alone is the real doctrine of the self. The Doctor records his faith in Advaita when he says that nescience is the root of all misery and that true knowledge (Vidya) of the identity of the Jiva with the supreme self removes all fear and sorrow. Vedanta or the final knowledge, as he says, is not only a theory or set of beliefs but also a philosophy which sees and worships the One in all animate and seemingly inanimate nature. But on that account, can we say that it is Jnana-bhakti-karma, knowledge-devotion-works, all in one? If nescience be the cause of all misery, then it is only Jnana (distinctionless cognition or intuitive experience) that should be regarded as the direct means to release. Devotion and works can at best be auxiliaries. The Doctor strikes the true note of

Vedanta when he writes, "From the standpoint of Final Knowledge (Vedanta), the ultimate and sole Truth and Reality as well as Ideality is the Absolute, and the relative or comparative truths and falsehoods distinguished by scientific logic are both unreal, illusory (Maya)".

IX

Prof. Surendranath Dasgupta who is sick of Absolutism desires that philosophy be grounded on experience, either direct or indirect. To him the Bradleian Absolute is no experience at all, as it is never felt or realised. There is no experience which is absolute or self-valid. The Professor criticises the doctrine of self-validity of knowledge, and defines validity as the consonance of an awareness with what it proposes to be. "There are two forms of validity: (1) that which establishes its right by an implicit or an explicit history of reference to the structure of our experience woven out in association with the experiences of others, (2) that which emerges out by itself borne on the shoulders, as it were, of a previous mental history of a different order".

Consistent with his philosophy of Dependent Emergence, Prof. Dasgupta disagrees with the Sat-karyavada and regards the effect with the Naiyayika and the Bauddha, as a new emergence. In the place of the changeless self or Sakshi there is to be found only a composite self, an integrated whole, as a part of the bigger mental whole. The self not only grows but may change its nature at different times as a result of the mental history, as also on account of environmental influences, and on the occasion of diverse kinds

of apperceptions. In some systems of modern evolutionary philosophy, space-time has been regarded as the ultimate original nature. But since space-time also, in the view of Prof. Dasgupta, is a relational whole, there must be some level of which it is a product. That level is the level of our ultimate relational terms. At different levels different emergents are projected. The relational complex we call animal is of an entirely different order from the relational complexes of the material order. "As life advances from the vegetable to the animal and from the lower animals to the highest, the human, we have a gradual advance of a multi-fold differentiation of functions and activities which all work in a selective harmonious manner leading to the development of the body and the reproduction of similar bodies in it in endless series". When the mind emerges from the biological basis and finds itself in commerce with other minds, there arises a new non-biological purpose which is Love. The emergent forms of value point towards the apex, God, who is neither the architect of the universe nor the fulfiller of our wishes. He "emerges within and through our value-sense, pulling us up in and through the emergent ideals", and with him we feel united in the deepest bonds of love.

X

Dr. Hiralal Halder advocates Realistic Idealism. The Berkeleyan position that to be is to be perceived is, he says, unassailable. "The objective world can no more exist apart from mind than can the outside of a thing exist in isolation from its inside". But from the right pre-

mise that nothing is real apart from mind, as Dr. Hiralal observes, Berkeley draws the wrong conclusion that everything is reducible to the ideas of the mind. "If to be is to be perceived, it is equally true that to be perceived is to be". Reality is neither mind alone nor matter alone. It is the source and presupposition, the truth of both. "The material world is inwardised in mind and mind is externalised in matter. They are the correlated phases of the one all-inclusive spirit. In preaching this truth idealism is in no way inconsistent with realism".

XI

Prof. M. Hiriyanna discusses the epistemological problem of truth. First, he examines some of the theories of error. The Prabhakara regards error as non-apprehension of non-relation between the subject and predicate terms of an erroneous judgment. All knowledge is true; and error is only incomplete knowledge. As the Professor points out, this view is far from convincing. A purely negative explanation cannot account for error which is misapprehension and not mere lack of apprehension. When we mistake a block of crystal for ice, it may be argued that the ice, "though not present in the given situation, is still to be reckoned as a physical existent because it is found elsewhere and should have been actually experienced at some other time." This is how the Naiyayika would explain error. But how could the ice experienced elsewhere and at some other time be perceived as here and now? "The fact is that those who give such explanations confound likeness with identity. They forget that, while the

erroneous object may be similar to what has once been experienced, it need not be the same". Setting aside the views which consider the content of error to be either a memory image or an ideal construction, Prof. Hiriyanna shows the excellence of Anirvachaniyakhyati. The erroneous content is a presentation which is quite unique. Its nature cannot be fully expressed in terms known to logic or to psychology.

"True knowledge, by contrast, is that whose content is free from such unique presentations". Not correspondence but coherence is the test of truth. Knowledge is a system and truth is coherence therewith. It may appear that the acceptance of coherence involves relativity of truth. But the very notion of *relative* truth suggests the recognition of an absolute standard by which all knowledge is judged. The absolute truth which is self-complete is the goal of epistemology. "All the elements of the universe—whether they be knowable objects or knowing subjects—appear in it as internally related; and each of them reveals itself there as occupying the place that rightly belongs to it with the whole."

XII

Sir S. Radhakrishnan begins by combating false ideas of religion. Religion should never make us neglect the duty of service to man. It may start with the individual, but it must end in a fellowship. Secondly, we should not confuse religion with spiritualistic and necromantic practices. "Religion is a search for truth and peace, not power and plenty." Thirdly, religion should not make of us passive sufferers of existing inequities in the social order. "Rightly in-

terpreted, religion means courage and adventure, not resignation and fatalism." Uncritical acceptance of meaningless forms and creeds is inconsistent with the true religious spirit. "The need of the world to-day," says Sir Radhakrishnan, "is for a religion of the spirit, which will give a purpose to life, which will not demand any evasion or ambiguity, which will reconcile the ideal and the real, the poetry and the prose of life, which will speak to the profound realities of our nature and satisfy the whole of our being, our critical intelligence and our active desire."

The values of the human soul give an intimation of the fact that at the centre of the soul there is a something, a spark "so akin to God that it is one with God, and not merely united to him" (Eckhart). The real is apprehended through intuition which is not only perfect knowledge but also perfect being. Man's being is grounded on the rock of ultimate reality, and he can intuit the fully real because he is himself the fully real. "True religion is born of spirit, not of flesh and blood, not of codes and customs, not of races and nations. The life of spirit consists precisely in being free from these things and penetrating into true being."

XIII

Prof. R. D. Ranade describes the evolution of his own thought from a positive dislike of philosophy to a passionate love of mysticism. He wonders "how the pendulum has swung exactly to the other extreme". At first, he hated philosophy, as Saul did Jesus before the enlightenment came. But unconsciously there was a strong philosophical impulse within

him which led him to start with a pluralistic conception of spiritual reality. One of the first things he thought desirable was a comparative study of Indian and European philosophy. He was attracted by the Relativism of Herakleitos and concurred with him in the view that Relativism had no application to divine life. He regarded "truth" to be one, and its existence to be only in God, while all other things were full of error. But he felt that even a static philosophy should find a place for motion and change. From his study of Western and Eastern thought he came to realise that self-consciousness was not only possible, but alone real, that intuition was the only faculty by which self-realisation could be attained and that mystical experience had no meaning apart from moral development. These were the conclusions he had arrived at by the year 1928. Since then, he says, there has opened a new intellectual vista before him; and he hopes to place his views before the philosophical world in course of time.

XIV

Mr. V. Subrahmanya Iyer expounds an Indian view of Man's Interest in Philosophy. One of the lessons he learnt from his master, the late Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swami of Sringeri, is that "Philosophy is knowledge that rises above creed and scripture, vision and ecstasy, art and science, its sole object being a complete realisation of all that life implies". A distinction is to be drawn between *tattvam* and *matam*. Religions or *matams* may be many; but philosophy or *tattvam* is only one. Hence Fichte's view that "the kind of phi-

losophy that a man chooses depends upon the kind of man that he is" is not the Hindu idea of philosophy. Neither the intellect nor intuition is the means to philosophic knowledge. Philosophy, in India, "is based finally upon *Reason*—not authority, tradition, revelation, intellect or intuition and the like, though all these with their data are needed for enabling one to rise from intellect or intuition to 'Reason'. The sole function of reason is to detect and eliminate the cause of error whether of intellect or of intuition". Reason reveals to us the non-dual Spirit which is not only the ultimate truth but also the ultimate reality.

XV

Prof. A. R. Wadia finds in the Karma theory of the Hindus a satisfactory solution to the problem of evil; and true to the Religion of his Fathers, he believes that there can be nothing higher in life than morality. "Ethics raises certain ultimate questions which can be either dogmatically answered by religion or rationally by metaphysics." Dissatisfied with the religious foundations of morality, the Professor turned to metaphysics. By temperament he has always been an idealist and he believes that the Absolute as the unconditioned or the self-conditioned is the logical presupposition of all our experience. But his Absolute does not exclude growth and evolution. This he regards as the purport of Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit. "The growth of the parts cannot but affect the whole—the Absolute—if there is a real organic relationship between the whole and its parts." But we are inclined to ask: can the Absolute be a Whole-of-parts?

The very concept of identity-in-difference is unintelligible.

Prof. Wadia speaks of the particular brand of Idealism he accepts as Pragmatic Idealism because "Idealism by its very emphasis on the fundamental unity of nature in general and mankind in particular links itself with moralism."

XVI

The great thinkers of India have given us in this volume sublime thoughts expressed in clear and unambiguous words. Two main trends can be discerned in these essays: Idealistic Absolutism and Pluralistic Monadism. Some of the writers think that the Absolute is the substrate of all things and thoughts; while the others hold that the universe consists of many reals, animate and inanimate, with God as their final end. But whatever view each Indian philosopher might champion, we have no doubt that all of them have shown in an unmistakable manner that contemporary Indian philosophy is a

dynamic force working for a better ordering of human society.

Prof. Muirhead thinks that the publication of the volume at this moment is significant. When the idea of this book as a continuation of the series on Contemporary British and Contemporary American Philosophy was suggested to him by an Indian friend, he welcomed it. "Coming as it did at a moment when, on the eve of the gigantic political experiment legislated for in the Indian Act, the need of a fuller understanding of the mind of the leaders of thought in that country, some of whom are certain to be called to take a prominent part in the new administration, is above all things desirable, the proposal seemed to be one of more than theoretic interest." Now that the Act has come into force, will these leaders of thought be given the necessary assurance and opportunity to serve their country by breaking the shackles that weigh heavily on her?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Sri Swami Narayana : *By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh. Published by the Sri Bhagwat Dharma Mission House, Rajkot. Pages xvii + 360. Price Rs. 4.*

This book is an account of the life and works of Sri Swami Narayana, better known as Sri Swami Sahajananda, the famous Sri Vaishnavite reformer of Gujarat. He civilised the unruly tribes of Gujarat, spread Sanskrit culture wherever he went (though himself an illiterate), established Satsangs in various parts of India open even for Muslims (not to speak of untouchables) and helped immensely in the abolition of crime and animal sacrifice. He built beautiful temples, formed fellowships for study and worship and organised

poor feeding on a large scale in many places. We wish that the present day social reformers take to heart the excellent lead given by this most practical of reformers, and thus help the regeneration of the Indian masses.

The Human Soul in the Myths of Plato : *By the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom Aahlu, 6, Hermon Hill, London. Pages 68. Price 3sh. net.*

The Myths of Plato, with their peculiar Oriental setting, are unintelligible to most European readers. Even scholars like Burnet and Zeller do not give accurate rendering of Plato. This unique publication thus serves a very useful purpose. In five succinct chapters the nature, choice and

descent, judgment, restoration and ascent of the Soul are well explained. The Soul being a principle so highly abstract and paradoxical that finite and concrete language cannot express fully its true nature, Plato, as every other great mythicist, makes use of symbols and images in order to lead the consciousness upwards to the reality behind them and beyond. And this is strikingly similar to the method of the Upanishadic seers. The similarities are so many that even the unwary Greco-Sanskrit scholar is compelled to notice with admiration the unity of thought underlying both. When symbology in the various mythologies come to be rightly interpreted, Plato's myths will be found to be perfectly consistent not only with Upanishadic but also with Chaldean, Orphic and Egyptian mythologies.

Christ and Communism: By Stanley Jones. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London. Price Rs. 5 sh. net.

Stanley Jones, the ambitious Christian writer, is not unknown to the Indian public. In this book the author tries to match the kingdom interpretation as against the economic interpretation of history. And he seems to succeed by a confused usage of the terms 'Christ,' 'Church' and 'Paganism.' Communism is to be rejected as it has put vengeance into its programme, which Christ did not. Hence Christ is the only Saviour at the present crisis. The device of Mr. Jones is simple. He makes a Christian world by damning the pagan gods, religions and peoples wholesale (pages 219, 262, 284, 297, 148, 137), and that is because, "the conscience of Christendom is more and more revolting at the un-Christian mess into which pagan economics and pagan politics have landed us" (p. 306). Consequently pagans should become Christians as we cannot make a Christian world if the State remains poor which the pagans could never do. He solves the problem of differences by doing away with those who differ from him! Such are the schemes of the future Christian statesman as found in this book. Though we appreciate the evangelical spirit of the author, we depreciate his sciolistic remarks on other religions and peoples. We hope that such sentimental remarks do not mar his future works if any.

The New Evolution: By Narayana Kausika. Published by N. G. V. Aiyer Nemmara (Cochin, S. India). Pages xiv+171. Rs. 1-8.

This is the first of a well-planned series which examines the general solution of all modern problems of life based on Truth which embraces the best of modern scientific knowledge and ancient philosophy and religion. It attempts to organise the future society on the basis of Pure Knowledge, Love, Virtue and Power, which alone can infuse new life into all departments of activity, as they alone touch life at every point.

The World's Unborn Soul: By S. Radhakrishnan. Oxford University Press, Post Box No. 31, Bombay. Price 2 sh. Pp. 31.

The contents of this book constitute the inaugural lecture delivered by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, as the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics, before the University of Oxford on 20th October 1936. With deep erudition and with characteristic brevity, Sir Radhakrishnan traces the evolution of man's spiritual aspiration in the West, from the times of the Greeks onwards, through its efflorescence into the Christian piety of Medieval ages, and the tradition breaking intellectualism and scientific spirit of Renaissance, down to its modern phases consisting of a curious medley of humanism, psychoanalysis, religious revivals, nationalism and worship of the State. He describes the mental situation of the West to-day as one of uncertainty, of fundamental agnosticism and of uneasiness, and pleads that for a new wide-spread access of spiritual vitality, the West must recognise the contributions which Eastern cultures have to make. He next proceeds to give a brief exposition of the spiritual ideals of India, and in doing so sheds much light on topics like spiritual experience, the place of reason in religion, the true ideal of humanism, the doctrine of the true self, the theory of Maya and a host of other problems that interest the religious and the philosophical minds. The literary quality of the book, the professor's freshness and modernity of outlook, and the wealth of information coupled with brevity of exposition that form a striking feature of the book, all go to enhance its usefulness to

earnest men and women both in the East and the West.

Prakatarthavivaranam (Sanskrit): A Commentary on Sri Sankara's Bhashya of the Brahmasutras, Vol. I. Edited by Dr. T. R. Chintamani, M.A., Ph.D. Published by the University of Madras. Pp. 588. Price Rs. 8.

The book under review is a precious work saved from oblivion through the laudable efforts of the Sanskrit Department of the University of Madras. Although this commentary has seldom been known till very recently, the importance of it is indisputable; for it is the first full commentary on Sankara's Sutrashashya from the view point of Padmapada and Prakasatman, generally known as the Vivarana school of Advaitic thought. We have before us the first volume of the work running up to the second Pada of the second chapter. The learned editor hopes to complete the book in the second volume, which would also contain a critical Introduction and useful Indices. Little has yet been ascertained about this hidden philosopher whose direct, lucid and profound exposition of the monumental masterpiece of Sri Sankara has been rescued for the world in this volume. Probably he lived in the 11th Century, for he mentions the name of Udayana; and Anandagiri has in turn mentioned his name in various places. It is a perfectly mature work, and great philosophical acumen and wide mastery of other systems are in evidence in it. In the verse immediately following the opening invocation the commentator states that although he had understood the Bhashya, he was sorry for his inability to write the commentary without bestowing a very long reflection over it, and that finally he was however able to chase away that grief by properly finishing the commentary as he wished. The stamp of clear thought and deep erudition, which the work shows, testifies to this inner glimpse of truth, to get which he had to delay the writing of the commentary. Though this commentary is not as prolific as the famous Bhamati, it has a weight and perspicacity of its own, and it certainly deserves the attention of all students of philosophy, especially of the Advaita system. In the matter of colla-

tion of materials, editing and printing, the book comes to a very high standard of excellence.

Sita's Choice and Other Plays: By A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer, M.A., I. C. S. Published by New India Trading Company, Madras. V-200 Pp. Re. 1-8.

The book contains two playlets and a dialogue. The author handles the problems of social reform with the same ease with which he handles some metaphysical matters. The playlets are really nice, and the dramatic element in them is less prominent than the fine diction for which Mr. Panchapakesa Iyer is well-known.

Svayamprakasavijayam (Tamil): By Subrahmanya Bharati. To be had of Visakavijayam, 26, Subhathirai Street, Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 2-8. Pp. 560.

The book gives a vivid portrayal of Svayamprakasa Swami, enumerating the various circumstances of his life which have already caught the attention of the Tamil land. The narrative part is studded with miracles which would tax the credulity of the present-day reader too heavily. But the Swami's burning dispassion for worldly goods, utter resignation to the Divine, indomitable courage born of deep convictions, staggering austerities and sweet saintly temper into which they finally mellowed, cannot fail to impress any sympathetic reader.

The Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna (Hindi): Published by Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, Allahabad. Price 10 annas.

This book contains a short life sketch of the Master in 76 pages, a collection of 568 important sayings arranged under proper headings, and an appendix. This work is bound to prove a boon to the spiritual seekers in the Hindi-speaking areas.

Sri Arobindo and his Yoga (Hindi): By Lakshman Narayana Garde, Sri Arobindo Grantha-mala, 4, Hare Street, Calcutta.

This neatly printed small volume gives a brief and good account of Sri Arobindo's life and message. In the course of the work many practical hints on spiritual life are given.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta, for the year 1936.

"This Home is a college students' hostel licensed by the Calcutta University and run on the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashram. It is intended specially for poor and meritorious students, who are helped through their college course with free boarding, lodging as well as fees, books and other necessities as far as possible. It supplements the academic education of the University by a thorough and systematic home-training calculated to develop the character and efficiency of the inmates. It is open also to a few paying students, who intend to receive the Home-training." At the beginning of the year there were altogether 33 students, of whom 22 were free, 2 concession holders and 9 paying. During the year 9 students left the home and 14 were admitted. At the end of the year there were 38 students, of whom 25 were free, 6 concession holders and 7 paying. Regular religious classes and festivals were conducted throughout the year. Except cooking, all other household duties are attended to by the students themselves. Of the 18 students who sat for the various examinations, one passed with first class honours and 13 were placed in the first division. The total receipts for the year with previous year's balance came to Rs. 14,516-14-9 and total disbursements to Rs. 9,998-7-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 4,518-7-9 of which Rs. 3,186-6-3 are fixed in the permanent fund.

Report for the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaikentalayam (Coimbatore Dist.), for 1936.

The Vidyalaya is situated in a plot of land, about 27 acres in extent, in an inspiring and beautiful and healthy locality. The total strength for the year is 81 in all the five classes together. All non-language subjects are taught in Tamil, and there are special arrangements for training in

carpentry, tailoring, agriculture and horticulture. Agriculture has also been introduced on a small scale. There is no part of the internal life of the Vidyalaya which is not managed in whole or in part by the boys themselves. Children's store and bank, health and hygiene, rural service scheme for rural workers and summer schools are some of the items in the report that catch the eyes of the reader. The important need of the Vidyalaya at present is a new building. The Budget for 1936-1937 demands Rs. 23,800 towards which contributions from the public are earnestly solicited by the management.

Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, for 1936.

The report of this institution for the 15th year of its existence shows that there are in all 132 boys on the roll at the end of the year under review as against 124 in 1935. Of these one is a free student, 31 are concession holders and the rest paying. Altogether there are twelve graduates and fourteen undergraduates on the staff, most of whom are Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Order. Special care is taken with regard to the physical education of the boys. Besides the usual teaching work of the school, classes in typewriting and gardening as well as in music and fine arts continued to be held as in the previous year. To improve the housing arrangement and the equipment of the Vidyapith, the authorities appeal for a fund of about Rs. 50,000 for the construction of a prayer hall, a gymnasium, a library and reading room and for the salary of the paid teachers and for the vocational classes. All contributions for these purposes should be sent to the Secretary. One of the distinguished visitors has rightly remarked: "This attempt to combine the best in Indian tradition and culture with Western discipline and science must appeal to all."

(5)

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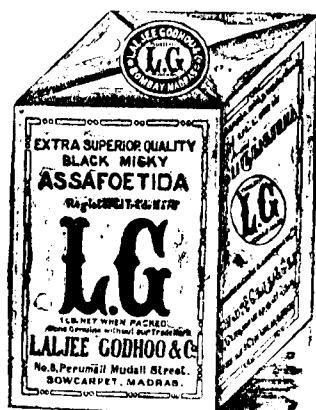
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