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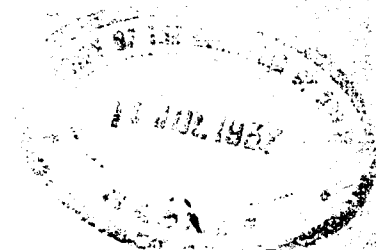
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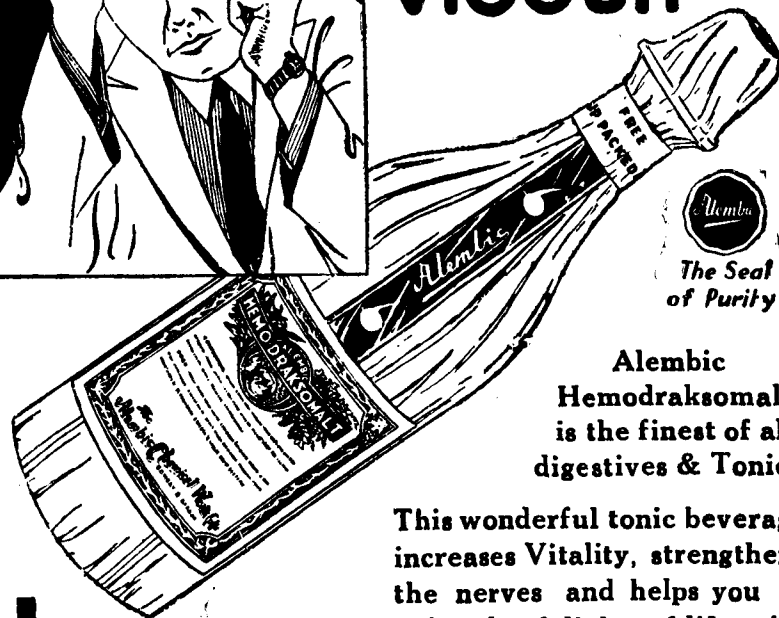
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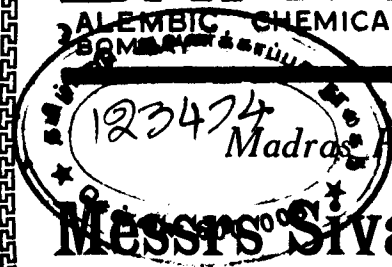


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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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[No. 3

HINDU ETHICS

सर्वेश्वरः सर्वमयः स च सर्वप्रवर्तकः । सर्वात्मकः सर्वशक्तिः सर्वकारणकारणम् ॥

सर्वसाधारणः सर्वरूपास्यश्च महात्मभिः । वासुदेवेति विख्यातस्तं विदित्वाश्नुतेऽमृतम् ॥

तद् ब्रह्म परमं प्रोक्तं तद् धाम परमं पदं । तद् गत्वा कालविषयाद्विमुक्ता मोक्षमाश्रिताः ॥

विषयेषु च संसर्गात् शाश्वतस्य च संशयात् । मनसा चान्यदाकांक्षन् परं न प्रतिपद्यते ॥

मृच्छेण मनसा विद्मो वाचा वक्तुं न शक्नुमः । मनोहि मनसा ग्राह्यं दर्शनेन च दर्शनम् ॥

ज्ञानेन निर्मलीकृत्य बुद्धिं बुद्ध्या मनस्तथा । मनसा चेन्द्रियग्राममक्षरं प्रतिपद्यते ॥

He is the Lord of all, and all objects are His manifestations. He is the one agent in the universe working through every thing. He is the soul of all as well as the power residing in them. He is the first cause that explains every finite cause. To all He is common, and to Him alone is due the worship of every noble heart. Realising Him—who is declared as Vasudeva or the Omnipresent Divinity—one becomes immortal and divine. It is the absolute, the most high, the supreme abode and the final goal. Those who reach it are outside the charmed circle of causality and are eternally free. But the Supreme is not attained because of our indulgence in sense enjoyment, because of our rankling doubt regarding the real, and because of our mind being preoccupied with other objects. With an absolutely refined mind we can know Him, but we cannot reduce that realisation into language; for the Mind has to be cognized with the mind, and Seer by the sight (i.e., self-cognition being unique, the experience it yields cannot be described like ordinary objective cognitions). He, the Imperishable One, is reached by purifying the intellect with knowledge, the mind with that purified intellect, and the senses with that purified mind.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 204.

THE TRUE REVELATION

[In the following paragraphs is shown how the true revelation of God is found only in the person of a real saint.]

I

NEVER since the dawn of thought, the human mind has been making earnest attempts to solve the mystery of life and understand the nature of the power that is at the back of this world of change and mortality. Something in the constitution of the mind of man makes it impossible for him to rest in any half-way house along the road of enquiry. The speculative spirit, even when suppressed persistently, leaps up again and again and rises heavenward as a single flame of aspiration until the problem of life has been thought out to its utmost limits. Scepticism invites man to join the ranks of intellectual and moral lotus-eaters, but in spite of all its seducing charms, robust thought all the world over has preferred the crudities of certainty to the sceptic's engaging fineries of balanced judgment and pretended disinterestedness.

But the reason of man, unaided by any inspiration from the source of life, finds itself baffled in the attempt to answer the ultimate questions—the whence, the why and the whither of life. Environed by the play of brute matter and its mechanical workings, and nurtured in the pitiless struggle, cruelty and selfishness characteristic of life, thought at first finds no sanction to infer the existence of any beneficent power at the back of life. Even if a first cause is necessary to explain the world, neither the mechanical scheme of the physical world

that science reveals, nor the scenes of heartless strife and struggle that daily experience lays bare, would allow us to associate goodness with that principle. Yet the appeal of the great values of life—of Truth, Goodness and Beauty—would leave one wondering why man should feel their urge from within and impact from without, if his environment were not surcharged with influences coming from an Intelligent Power that conserves in itself all these highest values we know of in life. But human thought cannot arrive at a settled conviction about this most absorbing question of life unless it gains light and guidance of a more decisive nature.

II

It is when confronted with this difficulty that the religious mind turns for aid to the Scriptures, the Revelations of God enlightening man on the moot questions of divine nature, and the relation of God to man and the world. In these records of wisdom he finds a sanction to conceive the power at the back of the universe in terms of the highest that he knows of in life. However valuable these inspired books might be as prop to his faltering faith, the childish mind of man, incapable of understanding ideas in abstract forms, requires more concrete embodiment of spiritual principles than it comes across even in books carrying the highest authority. This higher revelation of divine nature we get in the lives of holy men.

For, if anything can convince us that Reality is in essence akin to the highest that is in man, that it is not something less but more than personality and the ordinary human experience of Truth, Beauty and Goodness,—it is the life and character of a truly holy man. For in the carnival of life, the unruffled calm and poise of his personality arrests our attention. In a world where man walks to his desired goal on the bodies of his falling comrades, where cunning might receives cringing reverence and simple goodness is rewarded with ridicule and deception, he sets up a standard of justice, dignity, independence and fellow-feeling that puzzles the understanding of ordinary man. His presence ever breathes the transforming influence of holiness, purity and self-abnegating love—not the corrupting stench of lust and greed that emanates from beastly humanity. He has no self-interest apart from the interest of others, no ambition except the glorification of God and the service of man, no wealth other than the treasures that his head and heart are endowed with. In the Divine he recognises his parent, in His devotees his friends, and in the whole universe his motherland. Wonderful, almost stupifying our imagination, is the might displayed in the universe and the unwearied workings of limitless energy constituting it. No less striking is the intelligence and skill revealed in the structure of a tiny living cell, not to speak of highly complex organisms. But infinitely more impressive is the self-abnegating love of the saintly heart which returns good for evil, gives without the thought of a return, and suffers so that his brother may be saved; for power and skill, however awe inspiring and

wondrous they may be, fail to kindle the latent spirit in man as the sublimity of pure goodness does. Kant, the great German philosopher, declared that there are two things most impressive in the experience of man—the starry heavens above, and the moral sense within. If Kant had come across a true example of saintliness, he would not have coupled the feeling of pure good will with the mystery of the heavens. For the wonder and mystery deepens when we contemplate how, nurtured in Nature's amphitheatre and emerging from the lusts and brutality of an animal ancestry, man has at all come to develop such a faculty as the good will. Still more so is the feeling that overtakes us when we come across an example of pure saintliness, where the good will is not simply an inner feeling but a force operative in every thought and word as purifying and redeeming current of holiness and self-abnegating love. Even a sceptical heart, when confronted with a personality of this type, would feel it necessary to change his pre-conceived theories regarding the nature of the Power that is at the back of the universe.

III

The sceptical mind generally goes in for a mechanical explanation of every phenomenon. It feels that a satisfactory account of a thing is given when it has been refunded to its antecedent condition. The house is only the wood, bricks and concrete of which it is made. Water is only oxygen and hydrogen in a certain proportion. The beautiful rainbow is nothing but an electrical phenomenon. Consciousness and all the mysterious powers of the human mind are redu-

cible to the workings of the brain cells. The whole world, with multifarious forms of life and wondrous display of intelligence, power, beauty and goodness, has come out of matter in its simplest form—atoms, electrons energy or whatever else science may describe it to be. This has been the method of sceptics and materialists of all ages and climes. But does an insight into the mechanism of things really dispell the mystery embodied in them? Does the mind feel convinced that when the constituents of an object have been discovered, the configuration and the values responsible for its peculiar individuality have also been duly explained? A little thought will show that the method of mere simplification absolutely fails to unravel the complexity of things. The house is the impress of human purpose on the bricks and other materials, and without taking it into consideration, the materials in themselves do not explain it. In the water particle are peculiar properties like moisture, even traces of which cannot be found in the hydrogen and oxygen constituting it. The electrical forces that cause the rainbow are quite innocent of its beauty which makes one's heart leap within oneself with joy. That consciousness and all its attendant developments consist only of the dance of electrons seems more a paradox than an explanation of those wonderful phenomena. For it is impossible for the human mind to conceive how anything can be called the sole cause of another when there is so great a disparity and contradiction between the two in their respective natures and attributes. In fact, while cold logic and the naturalistic bent of mind impel one to seek intellectual

satisfaction in mere mechanical explanation of experience, the personality of man in its totality feels dissatisfied with such a reductive process which ignores the phases of things that really affect our lives. No invocation of mechanical categories, or of a scientific Demiurge can therefore finally dissolve the mystery that surrounds experience in all its phases. Every step in the reductive process only helps to demonstrate the inadequacy of the scientific technique of measurement, and to reveal the presence of an unplumbed depth at the heart of the universe, and of an elusive and tantalising charm in the face of things.

IV

It is this inexplicable and unanalysable residue of mystery, so clearly visible even in the trivial things of the world, that assumes stupendous proportions in the personality of the saint. So unlike is he from all his surroundings, so unworldly are his reactions to the various stimuli coming from men and things, that one is left wondering as to whence such heavenly graces of character are perfected in an individual who shares the same social and physical environment with his fellow beings. In the vast expanse of matter there seems to be only a solitary wave whose crest is crowded with specks of phosphorescence that we call life, intelligence and personality. The background from which they have sprung, and in which they thrive, is for all appearance their antipode—a region of dead, unconscious and irresponsive stuff, entirely swayed by the laws of mechanism. The biological and social environment of life, both in its lower and higher forms, is in no wise more sublime

than the relentless play of mechanical forces. If it is not blind and unconscious like matter in its operation, it is more heinous and gruesome in its workings; for its fundamental law of struggle for existence implies a conscious suppression of one's fellows, and an infliction on others of sufferings which one would gladly shun in one's own case. Yet, how has the self-regulating principle of life sprung out of a purely mechanical organisation? How has the light of consciousness emerged from the bosom of unconscious matter? How has man, nurtured in the struggle characteristic of life, begun to feel the faint whisperings of conscience whose dictates go directly against the law of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, the very constituent principles of his biological and social environment? And, more than all, how in the personality of the saint the voice of conscience has become truly operative even against the odds of worldly temptations, replacing the laws of struggle and survival with those of surrender, love and suffering? how in the saint, man, the beast has got transformed into man, the God? how the sanctifying flame of holiness has come to burn bright and steady in the region of the human heart where the violent gust of passions, the hot winds of lust and greed, have been raging for what length of time no one knows?

V

Here are facts sufficiently puzzling to a reflective mind, and complex enough to make one dissatisfied with the reductive processes and simplified explanations of materialism. In fact through every bit of experience the Divine vouchsafes His presence unto

us. For finitude is but the lisping of Infinity. As soon as we ask the 'why' of even the most trivial of the things that we perceive with any of our senses, our enquiry stops, and we are stranded in a sense of mystery. We seem to hear the spirit in all laughing at the audacious attempt of our little understanding to measure the infinite involved in finite existences. But familiarity is the best corrosive on the sense of wonder even where wonder is desirable, viz., the unfathomable greatness and mystery at the heart of things. The face of God, visible even in the trivial things, therefore fades before our vision insensitised by familiarity. Even the starry heavens, which roused the sense of wonder in Kant, leave the prosaic man of the world ordinarily cold and irresponsive. But there are, nevertheless, lucid moments in the lives of all, following some revolution within or a crushing blow from without, when the opaque coverings of our vision are torn asunder, and we get a passing glimpse of the transcendental revelations that the grandeur of natural phenomena or the beauty and rhythm of forms and sounds have to communicate to us. But more than through the beauty and majesty of Nature, more even than through the faint whisperings of conscience within us, it is in the life and character of the perfected saint that man gets the most luminous revelation of God which one who has not oneself risen to the status of sainthood can possibly have. For in the effort to produce the saintly character, Reality lays bare its innermost essence, otherwise hidden from our view by its biological and material vestures. It reveals itself progressively in the successive strands

of experience open to us—as unconscious power in matter, as self-regulating vitality in life, as the blind wisdom of instinct in consciousness, as the sense of freedom and conscience in self-consciousness, and as pure holiness and divinity in super-consciousness characteristic of the saint. Not in the roots of the evolutionary process, but in the fruits at its progressive stages of maturity does the Power at the back of the universe reveal its nature.

VI

Man is like a savage travelling in a railway train for the first time, and that at night. The experience of such a giant vehicle running so fast without any animal even to pull it is quite novel to the savage, and entices him into speculations about the origin of the motion. If he is quite foolish, he may be satisfied by thinking that it moves of itself. If he is a little wiser, he may attribute the motion to some spirit, caring little to make himself clear about the nature of that spirit. But as he looks out of the railway compartment into the enveloping vistas of darkness all around, he sees from one end of the train sparks of fire coming out. He notices this phenomena accompanying the motion of the train all along. If he is intelligent enough, he will at once discover in fire a clue to the nature of the power moving the train, even though the exact origin of those sparks may be beyond his capacity to trace, and even though his immediate surroundings in the railway carriage may go only to complicate the riddle suggested by them.

Such is the solution that suggests itself to the man of faith regarding the riddle of the universe. Not in

terms of the rudimentary state arrived at by the reductive process but in the highest known to human experience does he interpret the nature of Reality. Our knowledge of the universe, limited and partial as it is, may in many respects seem to go against this interpretation, but the voice of faith drowns these whisperings of doubt by the clinching questions: "How then have the higher forms of organisation come out of the simpler? How do the primary values of our experience come to be? How again does life, consciousness and self-consciousness emerge? And, how, above all, has true saintliness, the smokeless flame of holiness and love, manifested itself in this world, sanctifying everything by its touch and compelling the reverence of even the most prosaic of men? If the universe were only what it appears to our superficial view—a lifeless, unconscious mechanical force at the physical level, and a ghastly unrighteous gladiatorial show at the biological level—how have these expressions of intelligence and urges of nobler passions been possible in it? how, as the crowning achievement of its evolutionary process, has it produced the saintly type in whose life the laws of struggle and survival are all reversed and replaced by those of purity, love and self-sacrifice?" No, exclaims the still small voice of faith in man, the universe which unfolds all these potentialities cannot in its essence be something 'less' than these. To conceive of it, therefore, in terms of goodness, of beauty and above all of holiness would be far more correct than to interpret it in terms of the concepts provided by the reductive process. If unconscious mechanism and brutal struggle are looming large in

our superficial view, it is not because the universe has no higher strand in it, but because our vision is limited and does not see sufficiently deep into its nature and its purpose. So the man of faith sings with the poet:

For tho' the giant Ages heave the hill

And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;

Tho' world on world in myriad
myriad roll

Round us, each with different
powers,

And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the
soul?

VII

And this spirit, which forms the innermost essence of ourselves and of the universe, no doubt reveals its nature in the great scriptures of the world, but no where does it manifest itself so gloriously as in the character and personality of the illumined sage whose type is described in all vividness in the following verses gleaned from the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita:

"When a man puts away all the desires of his mind, and when his spirit finds comfort in itself—then is he called a man of steadfast wisdom. He who is not perturbed in mind by adversity and who has no eagerness amidst prosperity, he from whom desire, fear and anger have fallen away—he is called a sage of firm understanding. He who has no attachments on any side, and who does not rejoice or hate when he obtains good or evil,—his wisdom is firmly set. The objects of sense fall away from the embodied soul when it

ceases to feed on them, but the taste for them is left behind. Even the taste falls away when the Supreme is seen. The man into whom all desires enter as the waters enter into the sea, which, though ever filled, remains within its bounds—such a man attains to peace, and not he who hugs his desires.

"Thinking of Him, at one with Him, abiding in Him, and delighting solely in Him, the sages reach a state from which there is no return, their sins being dispelled by their knowledge. Sages look upon all alike—whether it be a learned and lowly Brahman or a cow or an elephant or even a dog or an outcaste. Those whose minds are thus set on equality have even here overcome their being. God is pure, and is the same in all, therefore are they established in God. He who knows God, and is established in Him, he who is undeluded and is firm of mind—he neither joys at what is pleasant nor is vexed at what is unpleasant. His soul being unattached to external objects, he finds the happiness that is in himself; he is in union with God, and he enjoys undying bliss. The Yogin who is happy within, who rejoices within, and who is illumined within becomes divine, and attains to the beatitude of God. Those whose sins are destroyed and whose doubts are removed, whose minds are disciplined and who rejoice in the good of all beings—such holy men attain to the beatitude of God. Those who are free from desire and anger, and who have subdued their minds and realised themselves—around such austere men lies the beatitude of God.

"He who never hates any being and is kindly and compassionate, who is free from the feeling of 'I' and

'Mine', and who looks upon pleasure and pain alike, and has forbearance; he who is ever content and is steady in contemplation, who is self-restrained and is of firm conviction, and who has consecrated his mind and understanding to Me—dear to Me is the man thus devoted. He by whom the world is not harassed and who is not harassed by the world, he who is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety—he is dear to Me. He who has no wants, who is pure and prompt, unconcerned and undisturbed, and who is selfless in all his

enterprises—dear to Me is the man who is thus devoted to Me. He who neither joys nor hates, neither grieves nor wants, and who has renounced both good and evil—dear to me is the man who is thus devoted. He who is alike to foe and friend and through good and ill repute, who is alike in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachments; he who is alike in praise and dispraise, who is silent and satisfied with whatever he has, who has no home and is firm of mind—dear to Me is the man thus devoted."

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.]

 ONE day I asked the Mother, "Mother, how shall I lead my life?"

Mother: Do just as you are doing now. Pray to God sincerely. Always keep Him in your mind.

Disciple: Mother, I become frightened to see even great souls falling from the ideal.

Mother: If you constantly live in the atmosphere of enjoyments, the objects of enjoyment will naturally come to you. My child, don't look at objects of temptation—not even at their representations in wood. Don't go near them.

Disciple: Man cannot do anything. He, our inner guide, gives us the inspiration of work.

Mother: Yes, it is true that we are like puppets and He has the string

in His hand. But are we conscious of it? Infatuated by our vanity, we think that we are doing everything. We do not at all depend upon God. He who depends upon God is saved from all troubles by His grace.

Referring to a Swami, the Mother said. "Sri Ramakrishna used to warn the spiritual people by saying, 'O holy man, be always alert and careful. A holy man must be always vigilant. He must always be careful. He walks on a slippery road, and one who does so must always walk on his toes. Is it an easy thing to be a monk? He must never look at objects of temptation. While walking, he must fix his eyes on his big toe.' The ochre robe of a monk protects him always, like the collar of a dog.

Nobody can injure him. The Sannyasin has before him the public road. Everyone makes way for him.

"It is the natural tendency of mind to run after evil things. It refuses to think of noble ideas. Many years ago, I used to meditate regularly at three o'clock in the morning. One day I did not feel well, and through sheer laziness did not practise meditation. For this reason I neglected meditation for some days. Therefore one must have tremendous sincerity and make unrelenting efforts to do good things. While I was staying in the Nahabat at Dakshineswar, I would at night look at the reflection of the moon in the calm water of the Ganges, and would weep and pray to God, 'O God, there are dark spots even in the moon. May there be no stain in my mind.' While I was staying in the Nahabat, Sri Ramakrishna forbade even Ramlal* to come to me. He was such a near relative of mine; but now I appear before everybody and speak to all.

You are a young man of Calcutta. You could easily have married and enjoyed the world if you had so desired, but once you have renounced those things why should you turn your mind again towards them? Why do you eat the sputum after throwing it on the ground!"

Disciple: Is it, Mother, desirable to practise posture and breathing exercises?

Mother: One gets psychic powers from them, and these powers deviate one from the path of truth.

Disciple: Is it desirable for a monk to visit holy places?

*Ramlal was a nephew of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mother: If the mind be peaceful at one place, then what is the necessity of pilgrimage?

Disciple: I cannot meditate, Mother. Please awaken my Kundalini.

Mother: Oh yes, the Kundalini will no doubt be awakened. Practise a little meditation and Japa, and you will feel it. Can one ever awaken the Kundalini without any effort? Practise meditation and Japa, and you will feel the result. While practising meditation, your mind will be so concentrated on the ideal that you will never care to give up the meditation. But if any day the mind refuses to meditate, you need not force it to do so. Simply salute the Lord and then do your other duties. But you will find that on some days meditation becomes spontaneous.

Disciple: Mother, why can't I control my mind? When I try to think of God, the mind is distracted by so many objects.

Mother: If by objects you mean money, wife or children, then no doubt it is bad. But it is quite natural for the mind to remember our various works and duties. If you cannot meditate, practise Japa. One gets realisation by simply repeating the name of God, as the old saying goes. Yes, by mere repetition of His name, one realises God. If you can meditate, well and good; otherwise do not force your mind to do so.

Disciple: Is it good to practise spiritual disciplines in our monastery at Benares, or should one retire into complete solitude for that purpose?

Mother: At first one should mature the mind by spiritual practices in a solitary place like Hrishikesh. Then when the mind has become pure and strong, wherever one lives or whatever company one keeps, it never becomes agitated. A tender young plant should be protected by putting a hedge around it. But when it grows into a tree, neither the cow nor the goat can do it any harm. It is absolutely necessary to practise spiritual disciplines in solitude. Whenever any idea crops up into your mind, whenever you want to know anything, go to a lonely place, weep before the Lord, and pray to Him. He, the all-compassionate God, will remove the impurities of your mind, destroy all your difficulties and explain everything to you.

Disciple: I have no power to practise disciplines. I have taken shelter at your feet. May your will be fulfilled.

At this the Mother with folded hands began to pray to Sri Ramakrishna, "O Lord, give him the power to preserve his monastic vows." Continuing the Mother said, "He is looking after you. Why should you fear anything? Always do Sri Ramakrishna's work and also practise meditation and prayer. It is desirable to be engaged in activities. That keeps away useless thoughts from our mind. If you are always alone without any work, then you

give idle thoughts the opportunity to disturb your mind.

Disciple: Where and how should one practise spiritual exercises?

Mother: Why, Benares is the best place for you. Spiritual exercises mean to constantly remember the lotus feet of God and devote the mind to thoughts of Him. Always repeat His name.

Disciple: What is the use of mere repetition of name unless one has devotion for God?

Mother: Whether you willingly jump into the water or you are pushed into it, it is all the same. Your cloth will be drenched in either case. Meditate regularly every day. Your mind is not yet matured. Through meditation it will gradually become quiet. Always discriminate. If the mind goes to any external object, think of it as impermanent, and then devote yourself to God. Once a man was angling. A procession with bridegroom and music passed by his side, but his mind was fixed only on the float.

Disciple: What is the goal of life?

Mother: To realise God and to be constantly absorbed in His meditation. You are a monk and belong to Him. Certainly He is looking after you, both here and hereafter. Why should you be worried then? Is it possible to think of God always? Sometimes go out for a little walk, and at other times think of Him.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

By Dr. P. T. Raju, M.A., Ph.D., Sastri

[Dr. P. T. Raju is a Professor of Philosophy in an Indian University and the author of "Thought and Reality: Hegelianism and Advaita." In the following article he gives a masterly interpretation of the Doctrine of Maya from the psychological, ethical and logical points of view, in face of some well-known criticisms. His final conclusion in the last paragraph about the reason for misconceptions regarding the doctrine of Maya is specially noteworthy, and the opponents of the doctrine will lose much of their antagonism to it if they keep that in mind.]

I

THE conception of *Maya* in Advaita philosophy is so technical and full of nuances that the general mind is apt to misunderstand it easily. In ordinary parlance the word has so many associations with magic, legerdemain, deceit, and hallucinations, that the Advaita philosophy, in spite of its popularity, cannot be said to have been rightly understood. The conception of *Maya* has been strongly attacked continuously even from the time of Sankara. Yet the fact that the concept has entered into the very lives and thoughts of people shows that it has some truth which the Indian mind instinctively tries to appropriate, though even without the right understanding of it. Of late many Christian writers have criticised it; but no ardent student of Advaita can fail to notice their misunderstanding. They have been criticising Sankara for holding a view which he did not hold. To a large extent their fault is due to their allowing themselves to be guided by certain current adverse notions of Advaita set afloat by the rival schools of Vedanta.

A very common misunderstanding of the doctrine of *Maya* is that it teaches that the world is a mere illusion, a shadow or a dream that has

no substantiality. Therefore, it is said, the Hindu is in general other-worldly, apologetic of his existence, pessimistic in his outlook, and without zest for life. It is also said that the Advaita system has no ethical significance, because morality has meaning only in this world, but Advaita declares this to be a passing shadow. But the criticism is based on the popular conception of the word *Maya*. Advaita does not teach the shadowy nature of this world, nor that we should be sorry for our birth here. It teaches renunciation not to the brute who has no experience of the values which this world has to offer, but to one who has already the experience of them. Renunciation is preached to the latter just to remind him that the values of the world are not the highest, that there is something higher. The higher can be realised only when the mind is detached from the lower. These values are not physical objects or curios which man can collect and keep for himself even while collecting the better and costlier one. They refer to the depths of experience, the greater depths unreachable if man wants to be in contact with the lesser ones. Yet man cannot reach the greater depths without passing through the lesser ones. This aspect of the Advaita philosophy of life is

not specifically treated, because such treatment was not required as it was already taught in the doctrine of *Adhikara* or desert, and that of the four *Asramas* or stages of life. Only those should renounce who are not attracted by the things of the world. But in whom can such an attitude to the world be produced? Not in the boy whom the bright and the brilliant colours of the world, its strong tastes, and loud noises attract, not in the youth who is moved by the sweet smells of flowers and the beautiful looks of women, not even in the householder with his cares and anxieties about the present and future of the family. That is why it is required of every man that he should pass through the four stages of life. He should at first lead the student's life by the end of which term his intellect will have been sufficiently developed to guide him in his later stages. Then he becomes a householder in which stage he experiences all that is to be experienced in this world, enjoys all the values which this world contains. Next he goes to the forest and becomes a forest-dweller. The solitude of the forest enables him to co-ordinate all his experiences, brood over them, assign each its value, and examine his own mind to find out whether there is anything still in this world towards which it is particularly bent, and without which he feels that his life is incomplete. Then, after much thinking and self-examination, when he succeeds in co-ordinating his intellect, emotion, volition, and instinct, he makes the great resolution to renounce and enter the stage of *Sannyasa*. This renunciation should not be felt as something great by him, for he is to renounce a world which has nothing in particular to offer

him. If a man really feels that he has done a great thing by renouncing, we should say, he is not fit for *Sannyasa*. We hear in the histories of great saints that rich and beautiful ladies who offered themselves to them were not rebuked as seducers, but were simply answered by the saints that they did not want them as the pleasures offered did not attract them.

When so much is expected of the man who is to follow the Advaitic ideal of life, it is unfair and unreasonable to say that it has no ethical significance. The forest-dweller's stage is intended for the complete co-ordination of volitions, emotions, instinct and intellect, and such co-ordination is possible only in a man who is highly virtuous. The realisation of Brahman is not possible for the immoral. One deserves initiation into the knowledge of Brahman only when one acquires *Sama* or tranquility, *Dama*, or self-restraint, *Titiksha* or forbearance, and such other qualities. Of course, morality is subservient to the realisation of Brahman or the religious life. The moral law, for Advaita, cannot be its own justification. No Categorical Imperative, which is an absolute demand of morality, is recognised. Kant, who formulated this imperative, has often been criticised as giving mere form without content, for what precisely that Categorical Imperative demands could not be determined. Morality is inherently relative, and cannot be the basis of an absolutist philosophy. Of course, no absolutist philosophy should run counter to the normal demands. And Advaita certainly does not preach against them; on the other hand, it requires the strictest observance of them.

II

Thus the doctrine of *Maya* does not preach either immorality or even indifference to morality. On the contrary, because Advaita demands perfection of mind, *Maya* also, as an essential aspect of Advaita, demands it. It is of course not a concept directly based upon ethics. Yet it is a concept based upon the actual course of life. In life it signifies the alogical nature of its process or creativity. Apart from absolutistic considerations, the problem of the relation and interaction between the ideal and the actual in life requires that concept. Even in Aristotle we read that the ideal acts as an attractive force on the actual. The question here arises, how can the ideal, if it is merely a mental creation or projection, act on the actual? And if the ideal too is actual, where does the need for the actualisation of the ideal or the realisation of it arise? The only satisfactory answer seems to be that the ideal is actual at a different level of reality or depth of being, that both are continuous or related, and that, for the agent concerned, the ideal is not actual, because it is actual at a higher level. This relation is therefore alogical. For logical relations hold only between actualities of the same level. Besides, there is another important point to note. When the ideal is actualised, the actual of the agent must have been altered, and so must have ceased to exist. The realisation of the ideal is the realisation of a new form, and the new form cannot retain the old form as such, and so throws it out of existence. That is, at the level of the higher, the lower as such must cease to exist. It is

important to note that this existence refers to forms, and that, according to Sankara, it is forms that come and go out of existence. *Sankara's is distinctly an idealism without ideas*, and those who compare him to Plato should take note of this fundamental difference, for *Plato's is undoubtedly an idealism of the ideas*. Sankara recognises no eternal universals, and his Absolute is not a system or an identity in difference of these universals. Now, though we speak of the realisation of the ideal or the actualising of it, for the agent it is the realisation of what is already existing at a different level. From his point of view such realisation is in truth the transporting of himself from the lower to the higher level. The higher is not felt by him as his creation, but as an objective fact already existing and awaiting recognition. These levels of reality are not produced by the agent, and if we confine ourselves to moral experience, the transportation from one level to another is really a change in the outlook of the agent, a change of standpoint which gives an altered picture of the universe. After this change, the agent cannot but wonder why he had been regarding the universe differently. He feels like one who has newly learnt the appreciation of music, who begins to see some positive quality in what once used to be a mere combination of notes. The agent then cannot say that his old experience was unreal, for it was actually felt by him; yet he cannot say that it was real, for the real is the new experience. The only concept that is adequate to this fact is that of *Maya*. *Maya* is what cannot be dismissed as unreal or

merely imaginary, and yet is not the real.*

In the light of the above considerations we can see that *Maya* is a concept that pertains to the metamorphoses or transformations in human life, where the higher and the lower, the ideal and the actual, meet and interact. It is a concept expressive of the feeling of the alogicality of the process felt by the agent himself who undergoes the process. If we take a spectator point of view, we can place these levels one above the other, and say that there is between them the logical relation of identity in difference. But such a point of view misses the true significance of the process. This is a process of life—of a conscious life that is aware of its continuity through the different levels—which experiences thrills and surprises at every change, and along with its own transformation finds the universe also continually being transformed. The concept of *Maya* is therefore connotative of an important aspect of our life. It has as such to be recognised by every system of ethics, though it itself is not based upon any such system for the obvious reason that morality is relative, and when made absolute becomes mental purification and perfection, which gradually shades of into, and becomes identical with, religion—which is the process of life striving after the highest ideal.

III

So far as regards the ethical side of Advaita. Sankara has not left any definite system of ethics, but if we

**Maya* is described also as that which cannot be treated as both real and unreal at once, because nothing can be both at once.

take his system as a whole and analyse it, we cannot fail to notice the above import of his concept of *Maya*. There are cognate problems in both logic and metaphysics. Every philosophy that admits levels of existence, whatever their number, cannot but accept the doctrine of *Maya* in one form or another. The higher levels of reality cannot be treated as produced by the agent as he passes through them, but as already by implication present all along. Otherwise, how the higher level forms the ideal which can act on the lower cannot be explained. This admission necessitates the admission of the principle of *Maya* as above shown. Again, every absolutism has to give place to this principle at one place or another. The crux of absolutism is the problem of the relation between the finite and the infinite. It treats only the infinite as the ultimately real, and the finite as the phenomenal appearance, and exhorts the finite to realise the infinite. But how can the phenomenal world come out of the infinite? If the infinite is the only real, then what comes out of it must also be infinite. Spinoza tells us that the phenomenal world is seen only because of the finitude of our intellect. Otherwise, only the infinite will be seen. But on his theory, it is difficult to understand how the finitude of the intellect has come to exist. For if the mind's finitude is the cause of the existence of the phenomenal world, we require some other cause for the mind's finitude. But the mind is equally a part of the phenomenal world. Spinoza calls this phenomenal appearance an illusion, which implies that we cannot dismiss the phenomenal world as merely imaginary, and yet cannot treat it as real.

And everything that is neither real nor unreal, as Sankara calls it, is *Maya*.

If the finite is real and comes out of the infinite, then there should be something besides the infinite which makes it produce the finite. But if so, the infinite would no longer be infinite, for it is limited by that other entity. But if there is nothing else, it is difficult to understand not only how the infinite produces the finite, but also why the infinite creates at all. This problem can be solved only by treating the world as not having the same reality as that of the infinite, as not existing at the level of the infinite, but only at the lower level. Thus we have in our hands what *Maya* means.

IV

Even in the philosophy of Ramanuja, this concept has to be admitted, though he makes a very adverse criticism of it. He seems to think that, by treating the world of Nature and finite minds as the body of the Absolute, he escapes the difficulty of explaining how the finite comes out of the infinite. But the difficulty is thereby only pushed back, and not solved, for so long as he makes the distinction between the ideal and actual states of the body of his Absolute or Iswara, the ideal state being the state of perfection and the actual being phenomenal, the same problem appears in another form, namely, why and how does the phenomenal state come out of the ideal? To answer this question, Ramanuja postulated an indescribable and inexplicable power called Iswarasakti or Lakshmi who is made to perform the same function which *Maya* does in Advaita. The only difference be-

tween Ramanuja and Sankara seems to be that the principle is personified and made a fit object of worship and devotion by the one, while the other leaves it intellectual and impersonal. Ramanuja says that the world is real; he does not say that it is *Maya*, i.e., it is neither real nor unreal. But even then, if the world is to be related to the ideal and the relation logically understood, the help of a concept identical in essence with *Maya* has to be sought.

Even in Hegel, who is often compared to Ramanuja, we find the need felt for the concept of illusion. Hegel calls it *Tauschung*. The Absolute, Hegel tells us, is eternally perfect, and as such is the Good eternally realised. Yet the Absolute is the all-inclusive whole outside which nothing exists. Thus just as Ramanuja's Iswara includes the finite world as its own body, Hegel's Absolute is an identity of the manifold of the phenomenal world. Though the theory that the relation between the finite and the infinite is identity in difference is associated in Indian philosophy particularly with the names of Asmarathya, Bhaskara, and Vallabha, even in Ramanuja we find a view closely connected with it. Hegel then is faced with the question, how, if the Absolute is eternally perfect and good and includes every thing, are we account for the presence of evil and the continual strife for the realisation of the good? Hegel answers that the good is eternal and eternally accomplished, and the evil and the strife are due to our illusion. It is illusion that makes us see evil. This admission shows that no absolutist philosophy can dispense with concept of *Maya*. For, otherwise, if the evil is real,

and if the Absolute is to be constructed out of evil, which is the phenomenal world, by making it a harmony, the Absolute would be a far-off divine event and not an eternally accomplished fact.

Coming to a very recent absolutist, F. H. Bradley, we find our view still holding true. Bradley proves that nothing finite can be self-consistent and real, for the real is always an individual that can exist by itself, whereas the finite cannot be self-dependent. It therefore depends for its existence upon something else, namely, the Absolute, which is self-consistent and therefore real. But then the question is raised, why and how, if the Absolute is the only real, the finite appears at all. Bradley answers that *somehow*—and we cannot understand how—the appearances come out of the Absolute and are absorbed into it. But does this absorption constitute the Absolute? No, it cannot. The Absolute is eternal and is an eternal implication of our finite consciousness, be it, in logic or ethics. Then are we to say that the finite is unreal or that it is real? Neither. That is why Bradley takes shelter in his *somehow*, which shows the alogical nature of the process. If this “*somehow*” is treated as a principle, it would be the same as *Maya*.

V

Further, it is this concept of *Maya* that gives positive significance to error and evil. Very often it has been mentioned that no monism or absolutism can recognise evil as a positive entity. Almost all systems of monism regard evil as really no evil, but as so only due to our finite point of view. Evil is thus explained

away. It is said that evil exists only because we do not possess the widest outlook, only because we do not view things *sub specie aeternitatis*. What is evil from a limited point of view is good from the unlimited. Hence it is said the universe is good. It is against such monisms and theodicies that Bradley's sarcastic definition of optimism, that the world is the best of all possible worlds where everything is evil, is directed. Is evil merely a privation or absence of the good? Is the evil changed into good by changing our stand-point? Can pain be changed into pleasure by looking at it from the level of the Absolute? The peculiar quality of the feeling of pain is different from that of pleasure, and pain is not merely the absence of pleasure. Pain is something positive, it is not pleasure viewed from a wrong point of view. Yet that pain is only pleasure viewed from a wrong stand-point is implied by almost all monisms. And the root of the difficulty lies in their attempt to regard the Absolute as a whole of these finites. Thus the good is harmony of these evils. These monisms have to treat it so, because they want to regard the finite as real; and because evil is found in the finite world, the good which is the Absolute has to be viewed as a system of evils. Evil, according to them, is evil only when taken in isolation, but when taken as an aspect of the whole, it is good. But from the other side, evil is only the good viewed from the finite level. Thus the actual difference between evil and the good ceases to exist.

But the principle of *Maya* can give place to the positive quality of evil. According to it, the Absolute is not made of the finites; the finites

are neither real nor unreal for the Absolute. Yet they are experienced somehow by the finite minds in a way that cannot be logically understood. So the experience of evil is a positive fact. Of course from the eternal point of view evil does not exist, not because the same evil appears as pleasure by being viewed in a different light, but because evil ceases to exist. Evil is a form of experience completely different from that of the good. One is as positive as the other, not the same viewed differently. Evil can be given a positive significance in Sankara's absolutism, because *Maya* implies the positive experience of a hard fact which is neither real nor unreal.

In logic too for the same reason error gets a distinctly positive significance in Advaita. The object of illusion is not an imaginary idea, and also not a thing seen somewhere else in the past. It is *Anirvachaniya* or inexplicable, which is the same as *Maya*. It is *Anirvachaniya* or *Maya* for the reason that it is neither real nor unreal nor imaginary. So long as an illusion lasts, it is seen as an objective fact, a fact which exists in front of us. But an object of imagination is always known as non-existent. Hence the object of illusion cannot be treated as unreal like the object of imagination. Yet it cannot be treated as real, for the real is what exists always, and is never cognised as non-existent, whereas the object of illusion is regarded as non-existent by the correct cognition. Hence Advaita regards the object of illusion as a distinct positive entity, and relegates it to a realm of existence lower than the empirical. Similarly the empirical world which cannot be real like the Absolute is given by the prin-

real. But the other forms of monism both in the East and the West, and many realistic systems of India regard the object of illusion, like evil, as a real object but viewed in a wrong place.* Thus the object of illusion cannot have a distinctness of its own, it cannot be a unique object, but an object seen somewhere else, and remembered or wrongly seen as existing in front.

Thus consistent and co-ordinate treatment of error and evil must be based on the doctrine of *Maya*. In Western philosophy many monistic writers have emphasised the fact that evil, as a hard fact experienced in this world, should be given a positive nature different from that of the good. But the emphasis on the object of illusion as a positive entity different from the real is not to be met with in almost all the idealists of the West. It is no answer to say that many writers maintain that error somehow and somewhere belongs to reality. For then the object of illusion becomes some object which exists somewhere else but not in front of the agent. The agent sees the object in front of him. Thus in almost all monisms the tendency in ethics seems to be at variance with that in logic. But logic and ethics are normative sciences, and now when it has been rightly recognised that any philosophical system is the result of a particular method, the method followed in both ethics and logic should be the same if they are ciple of *Maya* a distinctly positive character by not regarding it as un-

*Both the *Akhyati* and the *Anyathakhyati* theories are akin in this respect. Against the *Asatkhati* theory the objection is rightly urged, how a non-existent thing can be perceived in front.

to form parts of one system of philosophy. If evil is recognised as a positive entity, error also should be so recognised. Such recognition is possible in any idealism only on the basis of *Maya*. In Western philosophy some contemporary realists, especially of the American school, treat error as positive, and regard the object of illusion as subsistent, though not as existent; but they are realists and pluralists, and a consideration of their doctrine leads to an examination of pluralism and realism, which cannot be attempted here. Yet we can say this much that the distinction between subsistence and existence does not hold, for so long as the illusion lasts, its object is seen to exist, and the difference between subsistence and existence cannot be made in it. Besides, bare pluralism is a theory long ago refuted, and it has value only as a critic of the extravagances of monism. In the history of philosophy greater constructive efforts lie towards the turning of pluralisms into monisms, and pluralisms generally begin as reactions against one-sided monisms.

Again, the desire to treat the world as positive lies at the root of the Advaita conception of *Ajnana* or the principle of *Ignorance*. *Ajnana* may be wrongly understood as absence of knowledge. The nature of *Ajnana* is 'I do not know', it is best experienced in deep sleep. This *Ajnana*, which is treated as the world cause from the subjective side, is ignorance in general. In our conscious moments the ignorance of a particular thing, say of a pen, implies the knowledge of some other particular thing. That is, a particular cognition, for instance of a pencil, must be at the basis of particular absence of cognition, say,

of a pen. But ignorance that is universal cannot be treated as the absence of particular cognitions. For if it were so, universal ignorance must be the absence of every cognition, but after deep sleep we say that we are sure of having no cognition, which surity is impossible without some form of knowledge. Hence, *Ajnana* is not mere absence of cognition, but a distinct and positive entity cognised as such. So the interpretation of Advaita as saying that this world is nothing is due to not noticing this nuance in the meaning of *Ajnana*. And *Ajnana* is the same as *Maya* only considered from the subjective side.

VI

Maya again saves the eternal perfection of the Absolute in Advaita. Its object, as said above, is neither real nor unreal. Though as not unreal it is an object of experience, as not real it can never affect the real which is the Absolute. And just as in ordinary illusion, when it is detected we feel that the true object has all along been there even during the time of illusion, the concept of *Maya* implies and safeguards the eternal presence of the Absolute in its perfection. If its object were to be real, the Absolute could be obtained only by including the real. But as illusions are continuously being experienced, the Absolute would have to be treated as continually growing, and not as eternally perfect. But the Absolute is eternally perfect, and only as eternally perfect is it the implication of our finite consciousness. Hence the object of illusion has to be treated as not real. The view that error contributes to truth does not mean that error becomes part and

parcel of truth, that all erroneous judgments are somehow included in the system of truth, but that error leads to truth or helps its discovery. Now, just as the object of illusion does not become part of the empirical world and implies even during its own life the presence of the empirical world, the empirical world as the object of *Maya* does not become part of the Absolute and implies its eternal presence as its own basis.

VII

There is a tendency among some metaphysicians of the West to interpret the objects of *Maya* as objects of fancy or phantasy. These objects are sometimes called essences; they are the forms of existence. Existence is the real with which we are in contact in our practical life; but the forms have no existence. These essences are the same whether in real existence or in illusion or in imagination. Apart from the question of the tenability of the view, it cannot be correct interpretation of the Advaita doctrine, according to which the objects of imagination possess only *Tuchhasatta*. They are not the objects of *Maya* which possess *Pratibhasikasatta* or the existence of the appearance of existence, and *Vyavaharikasatta* or the existence necessary for our actions. The objects of *Maya* must be experienced as existent, though regarded as not real. That is why they are regarded as not unreal also. Further, the view examined separates form from existence, which creates a number of difficulties. It is not mere existence for which we live in this world, but for the forms; and if the forms of imagination are the same as the forms of existence,

there need be no real strife for the possession of the latter.

VIII

When all that has been said is thoughtfully considered, it becomes easy to understand why the concept of *Maya* is so often misunderstood, and the word flippantly used. The word is highly technical and full of nuances. Its peculiarity lies in, and the difficulty of understanding it is due to, its connoting something which is neither real or unreal. The author of *Nyayamrta* questions the Advaitin how a thing which is not real can fail to be unreal. The word unreal is of course ambiguous. It is commonly used to denote both the imaginary and the illusory. But there is difference between the two. In spite of the common usage, which is often loose and ambiguous, philosophy which has to be logical should distinguish between the two. The unreal is that which is experienced as non-existent. But the critic of Advaita overlooks the fact that the object of illusion is an object of perception, and so existent though only for the time being. we are never afraid of the imaginary snake however poisonous. But the illusory snake terrifies us. So our experience of illusion is of a different kind from that of the unreal. The impact of a world not ourselves, with the implied hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, are absent in the merely imaginary, but present in the illusory. Again, this concept is not to be confused with the view mostly found in Western idealisms that error is and is not truth; that is, error is truth in its element, but is not truth when taken in isolation. For *Maya* is neither real nor unreal. It is a unique fact which has to be recognised

as such, though as distinct from, and as having its basis in, the real. The concept of *Maya* applies only to the forms of existence; for the whole phenomenal world, according to Advaita, consists of forms and names. And these forms, because they are actually perceived, are not unreal; yet, as they are different from their

truth which is the Absolute and on which they depend for their existence, they are not real. The temporal world of forms presupposes the Absolute as its eternal basis. And with reference to this eternal basis, the temporal world is *Maya*, which is neither real nor unreal.

A TALE

(WRITTEN ON "MOTHERS' DAY" IN GENEVA)

By Jean Herbert.

[Monsieur Jean Herbert of the League of Nations is a lover of India and her culture. He is at present translating Swami Vivekananda's works into French, and has already published the translation of Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and three other lectures.]

ONCE upon a time, there was an old mother, loving and wise, who had shared with her many children the best of all she had. Material riches were scanty in her house, but she gave them many rare and precious gifts,—courage, independance, intelligence, ambition, strength, reason, spirituality.

A day came when the children thought themselves grown up, and decided to live on their own, away from their mother. And the physical separation soon grew into something deeper. While they used many of the powers which they had received, they forgot many of the lessons which they had been taught. Spirituality went, then ethics, then brotherly love, and many other treasures.

The children began to forget that they were all one family, they saw themselves as so many different individuals, so many rival units, and they began to quarrel and to fight.

When they thought of their mother, they would often deny and despise

her. What use could the old woman be in their new world, in what seemed to them the only real world? She was not up-to-date, she was hopelessly handicapped in the struggle for life, she spent her time in prayer and meditation, treasuring old obsolete thoughts and ideas. When they tried to drag her into the mad whirl and make her "enjoy life", she would nod gently and reply, "I am too old now to play with dolls." And when one or another of the children came and struck and robbed her, she would not hit back, as any sensible modern person would, but she just blessed them. Indeed the old lady was past all hope!

And so the children went on with their mad games. They amassed wealth and lost it again. They amassed knowledge and used it for destroying their brothers. Many of them were killed in fratricidal wars, and many were maimed. So much so that fear began to enter into them. The most clear-sighted realised that they were heading for wholesale des-

truction, and that the wonderful inventions and innovations into which they had put all their effort and all their cleverness might soon fall upon them and crush them.

And some of them began to think again of the old mother and of those long-despised treasures which she had been keeping for them all the while. And they started to wonder whether after all it was not she who could save them, whether it was not she who held the great secret, the precious "sesame" to truth and to real happiness.

And when they looked into her face, they saw her eyes beaming with

love as if she said: Yes, you are still my children, even though you forgot it. I have a nice hot meal waiting for you, and nice clean sheets in your beds. During all your games, all your playing and romping, you have grown strong, you have made many beautiful and useful things which I never had in the house. But you don't know how to use them. Come to me, all you little Western nations, come to old Mother India, and I shall teach you how all your great discoveries can be used for the good of us all, and you need no longer live in fear and trembling.

SUFFERING AND GRACE

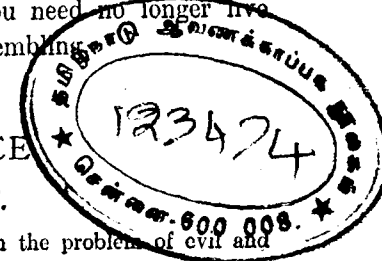
By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.

[In this article Mr. Ramakrishnan throws much light on the problem of evil and suffering in life.]

THE ancient seers have affirmed in unmistakable terms that out of joy was this world born, that in joy does it exist, and that unto joy will it return. But in spite of this clear assurance of wise men, we, who are ordinary mortals, feel that human life is a prolonged agony. This earth of ours seems to us to be a sorry planet, and we are, as it were, in a vale of tears. Life on earth is a sob, a sigh, a moan. We come into the world weeping, and depart from here wailing. Man is but a pendulum between a tear and a smile. Laughter and mirth, poetry and song are rare commodities indeed. As the poet says, our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought; we look before and after, and pine for what is not. Hunger and disease, poverty and death are familiar sights to us.

Earthquakes and wars are only the bigger brothers to the thousand minor calamities that worry us at every step of our march through life. Widows and orphans, beggars and paupers make us feel that the earth is a hell. It is misery that is our constant companion. We are eternally wedded to sorrow.

Some of our miseries, of course, are of our own making, but a good many come to us unsought and quite unexpectedly. We are often unable to explain the how and why of happenings. A millionaire is hurled into poverty in no time, and a young man of brilliant promise is snatched from our midst by the cruel hand of death. To many of us life is a burden which we would willingly cast away, had we the power. But who knows to what fresh miseries death is the door?



Rajawade Sansodhan
N37.24.3-5

The regarding of human life as a great misery is not a fancy of diseased brains, nor merely the conviction of weaklings, pessimists and failures in life. It would seem to have hoary sanction behind it. It was the sight of human misery that drove the Buddha to seek for light, and the tenets of Buddhism centre round the fact of earthly life being a misery. The Gita declares that this worldly existence is evanescent and unhappy. It is a common experience to find even in those who are blessed with all the so-called good things of life—money, honour, success—a deep undercurrent of melancholy. In most of us a feeling of heaviness is always deep-seated.

It is also a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that as we advance in civilisation, our miseries increase rather than decrease. As our tastes become finer, our sorrows become sharper. As our desires multiply, dissatisfaction assails us in a hundred new ways. To the primitive man, perhaps, the origin and the end of sorrow lay in hunger and physical disease. But we who are cultured are easily affected by factors like fame, honour, social position, status, public appreciation. As we grow intellectually vaster and mentally keener, we are only creating more gateways for the use of that artful invader on our peace and happiness—discontent.

Nor is this passage from sorrow to sorrow, this almost ceaseless subjection to melancholy, the sole monopoly of the common run of humanity. We find from the study of history and biography, that some of the most gifted men and women down the ages, persons whom now we adore in temples as beacon-lights to huma-

nity, have had their own share of acute suffering and misery. Philosophers, wise men and devotees who lived and walked with God, and on whom divine grace must naturally have been showered in abundance have been subjected to great suffering. Jesus Christ was the very son of God, and yet only a crucifixion was in store for him. Joan of Arc is now revered as a saint, and yet the reward she had for her great task of national regeneration was being thrown into the fire. And the numbers are legion of honest men and women who have had to ascend the gallows for the crime of offending the State or the Church by trying to stick to their deeply and honestly felt convictions. Rama, the impersonation of all that is noble and good, was exiled to the forest. The Pandavas who were the bosom friends of Lord Krishna had to suffer similarly. Harischandra had to suffer for his devotion to truth. Our Puranas contain numerous references to virtue and goodness being victimised by what seems to us a perverse destiny. Mankind has often been slow to recognise and applaud true worth. No prophet has been honoured in his own time, says the proverb. Recent examples also show that suffering is almost an inevitable adjunct to greatness. Many incidents in Swami Vivekananda's life, for instance, fill us with a sense of bewilderment. This man who was gifted through and through, and was destined to make history in many a department of national life, this saint who was a shining example of practical wisdom, and a past master in the art of meditation, this seer and prophet who was a man with a mission, who heralded a new era

in higher international relations, and whose labours are bearing richer and richer fruit in our own generation—this son of God was not exempt from the trials and hardships to which common men are exposed. He had to taste direst poverty, and on his young shoulders fell the huge burden of maintaining a fairly large family used to affluence and decent comfort. And apart from the physical inconvenience which this poverty brought him, he was also subjected to painful searchings of the heart and storms in the regions of the soul. Again when he went to America and opened the eyes of the West to the glory of Eastern wisdom, when he acquired world-fame and wide recognition, just at a time when one would feel that divine grace was descending on him in profusion, he was often the victim of vile misrepresentation and base calumny, and vested interests even spread false rumours questioning the moral strength of this Suktadeva among men. It is beyond the point we discuss here that Swami Vivekananda was not affected by such a mischievous campaign, but His cause was only strengthened by such a mischievous campaign, but anyhow it is mystifying why at all in a world ordered by a wise Providence, a Prophet whose life is a poem of self-sacrificing service should have been the target of foul abuse and malicious propaganda.

This naturally sets us thinking. This paradox of even gifted men not being free from the afflictions attendant upon ordinary lives needs to be explained.

Calm thinking will show that, as already hinted, what we consider to be suffering may not appear to the great ones in the same light. We

may pity Jesus for the crucifixion, but to him it was the logical fulfilment of a life of resignation unto the Divine Will. If he had trembled before the cross, the words, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!' would not have escaped from his lips. Moreover, suffering, far from being a negation of divine grace, is often the proof of it. In the case of the great ones whose character has been perfected, suffering serves to set off their golden qualities. Suffering in their case is the urge to greater manifestation of inner worth. It is as if the Lord places them in particularly distressing circumstances only to make them effectively bring out the deeper graces of their soul, for the benefit of ordinary men and women. We have to squeeze the flower in order to extract from it its scent. In the case of ordinary mortals, suffering is a great aid to the perfection of character. Misery chisels the angularities of our being, and contributes effectively to the flawless shaping of our character. It is the school where we learn to throw away the undesirable elements in our constitution. Misery makes us stronger in build and chaster in spirit. Above all, misery helps us to think perennially of God. A divine discontent is the basis of philosophical enquiry. It is the feeling of want, the sense of our lacking something that is vital, the consciousness of our being imperfect in some measure, that goads us on along the path of progress. It is only when there arises a thirst from the soul that we ask for a drink divine. When we feel that things are all right with us, when we feel supremely happy in the midst of the (perishable) things of the universe, we give our-

selves up to a feeling of self-satisfaction and false contentment. Such a feeling is pernicious to the development of the higher life.

It is to awaken us from such a feeling of pseudo self-sufficiency that the Lord sends us now and then reminders in the form of misery. Our wealth and our relatives and all the things which we consider as particularly and solely ours, and on which our happiness is based, are removed from us with startling suddenness, and we are made to stand friendless, forlorn, poor,—and then our thoughts go to the One Being who alone is ours for all time and in all circumstances. It is said of Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, that she prayed to the Lord to keep her always in the midst of suffering, as in suffering alone one's thoughts naturally turns Godward.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that so long as we inhabit the body we must pay 'taxes' in the form of disease and suffering. The body is composed of the elements, and being gross, it must inevitably be subject to the law of growth and decay.

The story is told of the saint Pava-hari Baba that when once he was bitten by a cobra, he only said that the cobra was a Messenger from the Beloved. This incident illustrates that, to the great ones, suffering too is a manifestation of divine grace. It is this attitude of regarding misery also as a proof of divine grace that has to be cultivated by us. Such an attitude takes away from misery its sharp tooth.

So long as we are in the conditioned world we cannot hope to experience unalloyed happiness. Joy and sorrow are the obverse and reverse of the same coin, and both have their uses

for us. Swami Vivekananda has said that in addition to worshipping God in his benign aspect, we must also learn to adore Him in His sterner aspect. We take naturally to a God wreathed in smiles and ever bestowing grace on us, but we must also worship God in terror and death, in pestilence and suffering. Not merely Vishnu, the Kalyana-Purusha (the eternal Bridegroom), but also Rudra Deva, the Destroyer,—He whose abode is the burial ground, and who is besmeared in ashes and is the symbol of complete renunciation—must claim our allegiance. Not only Lakshmi, the abode of all prosperity, but also Kali with her garland of human skulls and her waist-chain of severed hands must be worshipped by us. As Swami Vivekananda sang in a moment of inspiration.

Who dares misery love
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.

The Gita also preaches that the man of wisdom must look upon misery and happiness with the same eye.

In the light of the foregoing remarks, misery appears to us to be really a thing of beauty, at any rate, of utility. Ignorant men, when they see a good and honest person in trouble, foolishly blame God, and doubt if divine wisdom governs the universe at all. Many even say that God is blind. But who knows the purpose behind the misery inflicted on an individual? The child thinks that it is put to needless suffering when the mother forces unpalatable medicines into its system. But surely the mother knows better what is good and wholesome for the child.

So too, in our case, God, the Mother, is the best judge of what is beneficial to us. From this point of view, the man whom the world regards as 'unlucky' may not be unlucky at all, for his 'ill-luck' may imperceptibly help the rapid evolution of his soul. Tears may help to wash away our sins, and sighs and sobs may make us purer.

The way of wisdom, therefore, lies in our calmly putting up with seemingly unpleasant experiences in life in the faith that what may be unpalatable to the tongue may after all be wholesome to the system. Misery is a greater teacher than pleasure. When once we realise that

this life of ours is only a passing phase, only a gateway to a life beyond, only a means to a noble end, we will get the conviction that suffering is only a smile shrowded in frowns. For, the Lord who is our base and our goal is perfect goodness; and when He seems to beat us, He really kisses us lovingly, and His angry looks hide a tender and well-meaning heart. And when we feel that He chides us through misery and suffering, He is all the while blessing us. Even when He places us in the shade, we are still really basking in the sunshine of His grace.

THE BUDDHA

By Prof. Heinrich Zimmer

(Concluded from last issue)

[Dr. Zimmer, Professor of Sanskrit in the Heidelberg University, 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.]

UNLIKE the adepts of other religions, the Buddhist is always in danger of being misunderstood either as a thinker or as a religious man. Moreover, he is always in danger of getting himself entangled in the midst of the smaller shrines of his path. This path of Buddhism is known as Yoga, but in quite a different sense from what we usually understand by the term, for Yoga has now taken a special form. Yoga in India is itself much older than Buddhism, for it traces back its origin to the Pre-Aryan Indian traditions. It has many objects, viz., ascetic purification, magical supre-

macy of the individual by gaining extraordinary powers, and the realisation of the Supreme Reality. It is its function to direct itself always to a particular image which is already presented before the will, to an image of the magic personality into which one wants to be transformed, to the image of the god into whose boundless domain one longs to enter, to the image of the innermost One that can be experienced and that stands beyond the shackles of death and time, and without any interference from outside. Even though the aims of Yoga touch the innermost depths of life, the spirit has transformed

them into symbols and images. Hence these symbols and images are interlaced with the domain of spirituality. It is already taken for granted that something which shall be experienced as a Supreme Reality is supposed to be existing. Yet the question is, how to behold this reality, this really existing One.

On this metaphysical reality bases the kingdom of mysticism. Yet this metaphysical Reality rejects all mysticism from Buddhism, because Buddhism as such is through and through metaphysical in its essence, and as such it is unmystical even though some of its schools might have transgressed from its original path into the domain mysticism. Therefore Buddhism appears as an angel of death to the mystical and magical thought of ancient India. We shall see now how the speculative spirit, which demands attention for its constructive thought, dwindles away. In our own history we could see how this archaic phase of thought is buried under the aeons of the Logos. Its beginning could be seen in the genius epoch of the Greeks, and another phase of it in the catholic philosophy. As the time passed, the national genius of the younger nations and races attained their majority, and the pure idea of the Greek Logos vanished. The universal conception of the citizen takes a new phase, under the influence of the spirit of self-criticism. To-day this process can be seen taking a lively form in the philosophical-historical spirit. This spirit could be recognised already in Dilthey's Torso, who is acknowledged on all sides as a critic of the "historical rationality" having for his motto that the sources of historical understanding lie in

experience and understanding. This is also signified by Nietzsche in his new psychology. The later schools of thought have upheld this through their sociology of knowledge. Thus the almightiness of the Logos gives way to the all-embracing functionalism, and our rational spirit develops this functionalism through its critical attitude, whereas to the mystical spirit of India, this functionalism takes a new form through the path of Yoga which gives a special place to the individual uniqueness. On the other hand, the domain of the exact science, unaffected by the world visions and the historical conceptions, produces for itself leading ideas for the life, which are fatalistic. The Buddhist Yogin, now awakened, uses them so as to balance the naive reality, for to him all these are mere conventions of the "Not Otherwise Knowing". Wherever he goes, he remains now as a free personality under the powers which have been formulated as laws by this exact science.

The secret of the naive reality, the Maya, is only comprehensible in the spiritual science that unveils to us a structure which is not the convention of the spirit. This reality, which has power on us, the "Nature", is only traceable in formulas, and these formulas give us the power over the reality. Its vehicle is the technic, and with it, the naive life asserts itself. The Buddha would not be of any help to us if he would have merely produced magic and miracles like other Yogins who preceded him and came after him. Something else is his human magic.

Arising out of the veil of the Maya, the Buddha cast off the mystical spirit of India, for, this had been his

dream. Therefore, to him the world and the I are still different. He does not know about the self-standing structure which lies in the naive real, whether one acknowledges it or rejects it. The Buddha does not want to be a mediator of a legalised definition of the Maya. He acknowledges only its symptoms on the personality of the individual. He wants to heal them right from their sources. Even if he would have offered a construction of the Maya, it would have been a great temptation for those who desire to remain in the veils of the Maya. Moreover, this would have been a great fault in the principle of his untheoretical therapeutic itself. "To these pay no attention."

Even the mystery of the Real does not throw any light on the Path, which the Buddha shows to us. It does not touch the man to whom the Buddha approaches, the personality, the bearer of the destiny who asks for himself where and how he would really stand. To him the pure science does not give an answer. Hence the last formula is merely piecemeal, and not a complete one. The judgment of the mind it rejects, as it cannot be proved, being nothing but mere thought. Such questions, moreover, are unscientific for the exact sciences. That is the tragedy on the path of understanding; it cannot be completed. Though each completed step is full of meaning and significance, the kingdom of the science as a whole is beyond any question. On all sides of the path it lays new foundations of progressive technic, yet it condemns all efforts to utilise its formulas as absolute knowledge transcending the fleeting spheres.

He who asks for the mystery of the personality, for the bearer of the

destiny, for its source in himself, finds an answer only in the experience, and not in words. The Path of the Buddha touches our new psychology and the soul's therapeutics. It points out a new technic of experience and to this new field Buddhism is an elder brother. Buddha has traversed many an ocean unhindered, whereas the new field has just put on sails. However, he is a foreigner to it, because he speaks a language strange to it; yet the object of both is the same. The question that we Westerns want to be answered is how far can we open ourselves to this mystery. The "Golden Petal" which Richard Wilhelm placed before us can be understood only when we can grasp this secret. However, it is not an easy one and cannot be secured all at once. The Western psychiatrist is only a patient before the Buddha, the teacher of all healing sciences (Bhaishajya Guru).

The method of the Buddhist healing is a kind of the highest activity of all-sided concentration. It makes its patients awakened, prudent and courageous. However, one cannot discover the inner world with it, but can only complete something which is already known. It is not a thirst for knowledge. All the meetings on the Path must vanish away, all the values must direct us to something which is beyond the sphere of the names. It is an explanation that might as well disappear in the course of time. Buddhist therapeutics is radical.

This therapeutics knows very well the regions in which the powers flow, out of which the individuality is nourished. It is neither a reservoir nor a treasure, inherited and unfinishable. But here, like everywhere, is

everything a process to transform oneself into life which can be experienced. Again it is like a stream that flows without any intermission, ready to carry one away in its beginningless current. Nirvana hence means to make this stream dry up, to make this fire, which gains always new logs, extinguish. All conditions of destinations that point out what we have been, what we are, and what might become of us, are already there. To transcend these limitations, these boundaries of character and destination of self-created heredity, is its aim. The "Middle Path" which the Buddha shows us is meant for this purpose alone.

To these destinations belongs as well the vitality, the quantum of life appropriate to every one. This is given in the hands of an awakened, which we can see referred in a story from the last days of the Buddha. He happened to rest in a place, which he very often visited on his wanderings, and where he later breathed his last. His glance passed over the beautiful country, over all the sanctuaries around the city, which he was beholding before him. He saw all those scenes, and said to that disciple of his who used to accompany him on his pilgrimages, "Coloured and beautiful is the earth. Lovely is the life of the people." The Buddha continuing said that an Awakened like him could, if he wanted, live a whole world's age. The Lord said this three times, but the disciple kept quiet. The Buddha sent him away for a while, and the tempter, who had been watching him from all the sides of his life, without however being able either to entice him or to frighten him, approached and whispered to him, "Now at once go away from

here. The Buddha's work is to show the way to gods and men, and this is already completed." The Buddha did not reject him. He consoled him telling, "Be content; not far away is my departure. After three months I shall pass away." It is said "with consciousness and a clear sense, he gave up what one can call life." According to his own opinion, he dismissed from himself all impulses to live and exist. The significance of this story is that one could gain to such complete control over oneself. It also means, one must take life as a phenomenon which cannot be expressed with signs like death and time. It is a reality that stands amidst all these phenomena, untouched by the fleeting time in any form.

Here lies the fascination of Buddhism and its immortal results. Here one observes the all-embarassing tolerance towards the world conceptions and morals of the different races and nations out of which it emanates. It is the sublime indifference. Men need restrictions to bind themselves with the society, and also they want a heaven above all these and a path that can lead them to it. They long after an experience of a limitless reality. It is therefore a delicate task to speak of Buddhism. It appears on the arena of life like the boy who is depicted to us in our holy pictures of the Middle Ages, sitting at the feet of the holy Augustine. Addressed by the holy one, he stops emptying the waters of the mighty ocean with a conch. This picture conveys to us an attitude of resignation. This illustration is also very familiar to the Buddhist monks. Perhaps it might have been handed over to us from them. A Brahmin boy happens to lose his chest of

jewels while travelling on the sea. He must have it back at any cost, so he sits down on the shore and begins without any discouragement to empty the waters. In the beginning the god of the waters laughs at him. However, by and by, the boy's unwavering sincerity frightens him, and at last he appears before the Brahmin boy, and gives him back his treasure. The Christian legend takes the boy with the conch as a symbol that God is unfathomable to the human understanding. It means as well that the individual should give up all the limitations of humanity before he would achieve his aim. In India this is shown through the unbreakable will of the boy. Fidelity to the great resolution, which works miracles, is the greatest example to all self-conquest as well as world-conquest. How could one bring home the real significance of Buddhism with words! The initiated in Japan would prefer signs and gestures.

Mere words, it is said, would only point out the way, but they cannot make one experience it. The language is the mirror of the naive reality. In this, the sense does not recognise any quarrel about the sayings that could express its real being. Buddhism looks at these as if they were the vehicles not useful to be kept. A word is a little picture of such a vehicle. Buddhism sees these boats which move on the mighty seas of life. In the night of the Unawakened, the Buddha, the Incorporation of Truth, pours out from above, his light of the full moon. Those who are in the boats can see his reflection on the waters. Everyone thinks the golden path of the reflection of light comes to his own boat. It seems even as if it comes only to his boat. So each sect might think that it possesses the real truth alone. But they ought to know that they are mere boats, and the whole sea is a vessel of melted gold, a basin full of light.

(Concluded.)

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE YOGA VASISTA

By R. K. Valvekar, B. Sc.

[The following is a review of The Philosophy of the Yoga Vasista by P. L. Atreya, M.A., D.Litt., published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. Price Rs. 12, Pp. 658.]

ALL students of philosophy, especially those who can approach the study of Sanskrit works only through their English presentation, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sjt. B. L. Atreya for bringing out in book form this thesis on the philosophy of Yoga Vasista, which he submitted to the Benares Hindu University and was accepted with

approval for the degree of Doctor of Letters.

The author of the Yoga Vasista, as the name itself indicates, is Vasista, the chief preceptor, at the court of King Dasaratha. The young prince Rama, the beloved son and the light and life of Dasaratha, gets disgusted with the world before he has passed his teens. He with-

draws himself from all the usual activities of life, and from royal pleasure with which he is surrounded. The king rightly becomes uneasy at the show of the premature renunciation, and not knowing how to deal with the situation, he calls in the aid of the royal sage, Vasista. He summons Rama before the saint. Finding himself in the presence of an able counsellor and sympathetic friend, Rama gives free vent to all the pent up feelings and doubts that had depressed him and made him turn his mind away from the world and its activities. "Childhood, youth, body and riches," said Rama, "all are unstable. They unceasingly pass from one condition to another like the waves of the ocean. Life is unstable as the flame of a lamp placed in open air, and the splendour of all the objects is as momentary as the flash of lightning. The creator of the world seems to be like a playful child, who quickly changes his toys, having soon become disgusted with them. Life is fast fleeting; death is awfully cruel; youth is extremely evanescent! Everything is under the sway of death and decay; all relations are chains of bondage; enjoyments are fatal diseases; and desires are tantalising mirages. All thinking is egoistic. All things come into existence only to disappear. All human beings are self-deluded to be entrapped into the snares of desires and thereby to be afflicted with the troubles of birth and death. Sons, wives, riches, etc., are considered to be the elixir of life, but none of them can be of any ultimate good to us. They are no better than the temporary soothing sensations, during a prolonged swoon due to poison . . . I can bare myself to be sawed alive! But

the pain accruing from worldly desires and ambitions, and from the ways of the world is utterly unbearable". Continuing in this strain to give free expression to his pessimistic vision of life, Rama concludes by inquiring of Vasista, "Is there any better state of existence which is free from suffering, ignorance and grief, and is full of unconditional good?" What is the most properly desirable end of life? How should one live in this inconsistent world? How can one obtain unchanging and perpetual joy within oneself? What is the method, what is the science and art of saving this life from undesirable occurrences? Let me know, sir, the best possible way of becoming free from the sufferings of life,—whether it be by oneself engaging in the activities of life, or by withdrawing from them."

These are the questions Vasista is called upon to answer by his royal ward and disciple. These questions, fundamental in their very conception, and as vast as the universe and as deep as life, are sufficient to stagger the mind of any ordinary thinker and philosopher. The responsibility is made no less heavy by the thought that on the satisfactory nature or otherwise of the replies to these questions depends not merely the enlightenment of a youthful mind but the happiness of an old king and the future of an empire. But Vasista is neither an ordinary thinker nor philosopher. He combines in himself all the acumen of an astute philosopher and all the subtle experiences of a mystic Yogin, with all the sympathetic love of a tender mother and the fresh and simple joy of a child. As such Dasaratha could

not have sought the services of a better man to dispel the cloud of despondency overcasting the life of Rama. Vasista readily and willingly undertakes to solve all the doubts and questions oppressing the mind of the young prince. How completely he succeeds in achieving this can be easily guessed from the fact that prince Rama no more thinks of renouncing this life.

The peculiarly simple method followed by Vasista throughout the book can only be understood by remembering the young age of Rama and the special didactic method followed in those remote days. Reading the book as it comes down to us to-day through the centuries, we have to admit, as the author rightly remarks, a want of systematic arrangement and the consequent repetition of many ideas, sometimes apparently contradicting themselves, throughout this whole work. These defects are more than compensated, by the unequivocal manner followed by Vasista in whatever he has to say, making it more than clear by means of similes, analogies, illustrations, and simple stories which even the quite ordinary man cannot fail to understand. Mr. Atreya, however, is to be heartily congratulated for presenting to us the book in a very systematically arranged form with proper attention to the unity of the subject matter. The author has freely compared the opinions and conclusions of the ancient sage Vasista on all important matters with the opinions of almost all the leading thinkers, philosophers, psychologists and scientists of our own day, in the East and the West. The result is surprisingly marvellous, for on almost all the important issues

these modern authorities and Vasista see eye to eye, which convincingly proves the depth of wisdom of the ancient sage, and makes us regret the fact of the book not having received the study and publicity demanded by its contents.

What then are the salient points of Vasista's philosophy? The author of the present book has succinctly summarised these in 27 pages from page 553 to 580 under different heads. "Life, as it is usually lived by the ignorant, is full of misery and suffering. It is characterised by perpetual change, death, deception and imperfection at every step. There is a craving in us, however, not only to escape from misery, change, death, ignorance and imperfection, but also to be happy, perfect and wise. When this craving is strong, mind is ripe for appreciating and understanding the philosophy. . . . Ignorance or the lack of the knowledge of the nature of the Self and of the world is the root cause of all our sufferings and troubles. . . . There is nothing like fate making us miserable or happy in spite of ourselves. We are the makers of our destiny by our own efforts. One should, therefore, never give way to the evils of life, and should always make efforts to conquer them. . . . Direct cognition is the ultimate source of all our knowledge. There is no other means of knowing anything rightly. . . . There is no essential difference in the nature of the contents of dream, imagination and waking experience. All these are of the same nature, and are felt to be so when they are being experienced. All contents of experience, of whatever thing it may be, may be termed as ideas, and we might say, nay, it is a fact realised

to be true, in higher experience, that the objective world is an ideal construction of the mind, is a work of mentation like the world of dreams, and has no existence apart from the mind. The extension of space, duration of time, and the mass of bodies are also subjective ideas and are relative to the experiencing individuals. This doctrine is very much similar to what has been scientifically demonstrated by Einstein. . . . Thought is the most potent force in the world. Every one becomes what he constantly thinks himself to be. Our world, our environment, our bodies, our powers and capacities change in accordance with the thinking. All our limitations are the limitations of our thought. All sufferings and miseries are consequent upon our perverse thinking, and can be cured by right thinking. There is no other agency except our own thinking that determines our destiny here and hereafter. The Self in the subject should be identical in essence with the ultimate substance of the objects, the Ultimate Essence of the universe. The Self is the reality that is at the root of the universe, which manifests in all things of the world. The individuality, however changing and impermanent it may be, is not dissolved with the decay of the physical body and its total dissolution by death. The body is only an external manifestation of the inner will-to-be, which, with countless desires and hopes, persists to continue as an individual mind, and will, as a consequence of the unfulfilled desires surely experience another body and another world. What the loss of the physical body does is, only that it shuts off the individual from the experience of the

world which is relative to the senses. The absolute and ultimate reality is not only the self, and essence of all forms, the source of all movements, but also the home of bliss, nay, bliss itself, which consciously or unconsciously we are all seeking but seeking in wrong places. Knowledge for Vasista is not a mere satisfaction of 'the natural desire for knowledge as an end in itself'. Nor is it a means to worldly gain of money, name and honour as it is generally supposed in the present time. People who gather knowledge for these purposes are mere buyers and sellers of knowledge, rather than true lovers and lovers of knowledge which only the truly wise men are. We have not only to *know*, but also to *be* and to *feel*, for all these aspects are at the root, One, and so expand *pari pasu*. As our individuality not only consists of intellect but also of emotion and of activity, which are identically the same at the root, and as the self is not only Absolute Consciousness but also Absolute Rest and also Absolute Bliss, the practice of self-realisation may proceed along three ways, or along any one of them, for they are only the three aspects of the same process. " Such in brief is the philosophy of Vasista which was revealed to him by Brahma (the Cosmic Mind), and which he realised in his own experience to be true. He also found it to be in perfect accord with reason (*yukti yukta*), and capable of being realised by everyone through his own rational investigation (*vichara*). Thus reason, intuition, and revelation are not at variance for Vasista.

In the last chapter the author gives his critical estimate of the

philosophical position of the work and ably compares it with the other ancient and modern systems.

The want of an index is the only

desideratum that one feels compelled to point out in spite of the detailed contents which to some extent have doubtless compensated for its absence.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

[OR THE GOSPEL OF DIVINE LOVE ACCORDING TO SAGE NARADA]

By Swami Thyagisananda

[Swami Thyagisananda has till now been translating the Svetasvatara Upanishad which will soon come out as a book. He will hereafter translate the Bhakti Sutras, first of Narada and then of Shandilya, and expound the doctrine of Divine Love on the basis of these aphorisms.]

INTRODUCTION

The Narada Bhakti Sutras, or Narada's Book of Aphorisms on Divine Love, is too well-known to need any introduction to our readers. Along with the Shandilya's Bhakti Mimamsa, it forms the standard authority on the *bhakti* cult in India. It does not purport to be an original composition but assumes only the humble role of a *vyakhyana* or commentary, as may be gathered from the very first *sutra* itself. A commentary in the ordinary sense it certainly is not, in matter or in form. A perusal of the book will convince every one that it is really a transcript from the author's own life and experience. No doubt, the author has been helped much by the experiences of the *bhaktas* and *rishis* who had gone before him, as recorded in our scriptures, but they come in only as corroborating his own experiences in the field, or as differing from his own. While he sticks to his own view in preference to those of others, he does not stoop to criticise others, but satisfies himself that the interests of truth can best be safeguarded by merely pointing out gently how his own experiences compel him to differ

from others, and leaving the reader free to exercise his own individual judgment to choose for himself out of the common stock of spiritual experience.

It is not quite certain who the author of this work is. Opinions have been hazarded by those who consider themselves privileged to speak with authority on points of forgotten history, that the work could not have been composed earlier than about the 12th century by some unknown author, and that it must have been passed off as the production of the well-known Rishi Narada. We do not presume to intrude on the special province of scholars, but until something definite can be pointed out to negative the ordinary accepted opinion, we think it safe to be guided by the traditional view about the authorship of the work. And a perusal of the book shows that it deserves to have come from the pen of the great Rishi Narada himself, or one like him.

Narada is one of the well-known figures in the *puranic* and *bhakti* literature of India. Although he appears to assume various roles in

various works—as a relative of the Rishi Parvata, as the Lord of Satyavati (the sister of Vasishtha's wife Arundhati), as a counsellor of Kubera, as one present at the *sarpa* sacrifice of Janamejaya and so on—we are not much concerned here with these aspects of his life. But as the inspirer of Vyasa and Valmiki for writing the Bhagavata and Ramayana, he has secured a safe corner in the hearts of all genuine devotees and lovers of literature. As the teacher of Dhruva, Prahlada and a host of other devotees of undying fame, he is best remembered as one who is always at hand as a safe friend, philosopher and guide in spiritual life, whenever any one deserves such external help, especially when the external surroundings make it too hot for one to live a normal life. Though known as *kalipriya*, or one who is interested in fomenting quarrels, we are never left in the dark as to his real motive, which is nothing else than the good of the world. Born as a *sudra* in the previous life as noted by the Bhagavata, his accidental contact with devotees inspires him to higher efforts in spiritual life, and he finally scales the highest heights of realisation accessible to man, and even earns the right to be considered by a grateful posterity as a *manasaputra* or spiritual son of the great creator (Brahma), fit to be made a messenger by God Himself to the world. That he was well learned in all the sacred lore, and that he had a brilliant and original intellect, is attested to by the innumerable philosophical disquisitions, devotional talks and moral exhortations that stand to his credit in the various Puranas. But the wide range of his studies is best attested to by himself in the Chan-

dogya Upanishad. At the beginning of the seventh chapter of the Upanishad, where we find him approaching the great Rishi Sanatkumara as a suppliant for instruction in the knowledge of Brahman, he recites the various books he had studied. Such study by itself does not give him the necessary peace of mind, which he gets after realising the Atman by sitting at the feet of the great Rishi.

The very name Narada is significant. It is derived as नरस्य धर्मो नारः तत्तु ददाति इति नारदः. It means one who teaches man what he really is and how to become perfect, or, in the words of the Swami Vivekananda, one who helps man to manifest the perfection or divinity already in him. The word will be easily seen to be a correlative of the words Nara and Narayana, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, and Narada appears to us as the intermediary between God and man.

We thus see how qualified he is to take up the position of a teacher of man. He is one of the *adhikarika-purushas* or souls commissioned with a divine mission, referred to in Brahma Sutra III-3-32, who, in spite of their supreme realisation, are gracious enough to retain a little of their ego so as to be able to lend a helping hand to other struggling souls less fortunate than themselves, or who are willing to place themselves in the hands of God as willing instruments for the service of man, or who prefer the enjoyment of the divine play and the company of the Lord to becoming one with Him. He is the typical *bhakta*, *jnani* and *yogi* in one.

Narada, however, prefers to deal with *bhakti* as being the easiest

and most efficient of all paths, which is available for all irrespective of caste, creed or sex. In their highest flights, *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma* merge into one another, but on the lower steps of the ladder they appear to be different methods of approach to the one unity of spiritual experience. All the *yogas* aim at the purity of the mind, as in the words of Jesus Christ, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The three functions of the mind, intellect, emotion and will have to be purified of the dirt of the ego, and the three *yogas* aim at achieving this. *Jnana yoga* purifies the intellect, *bhakti yoga* the emotions and *karma yoga* the will, and man is free to adopt anyone of these paths in preference to others. But he would do well to attempt a synthesis of all these paths as it would be very helpful to achieving the end more speedily. Those who are by nature more intellectual or emotional or dynamic may prefer to adopt only one of the paths as suits their nature. However, the mind being homogenous in nature, any single path, strenuously pursued must necessarily result in the purity of the whole mind, as physical exercise, though confined to particular organs, such as the hands or the legs, necessarily results in the health of the whole organism. While choosing to write a book on *bhakti* or divine love, Narada does not lose sight of the other paths and accepts them all as helping to achieve the final consummation, and thus we find in these aphorisms a happy synthesis of all the *yogas* as attempted before by Bhagavan Krishna, the *yogesvara*, in the Gita itself. If the Brahma Sutras of Vyasa aim at the knowledge of God and man, and the

Dharma Sutras the service of God and man, the Bhakti Sutras aim at nothing more than completing the scheme by advocating a way for purifying the emotions so as to provide a proper background and motive for the service of God and man.

CHAPTER I

अयातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः । २

अय = Now अतः = therefore भक्ति = the religion of Love व्याख्यास्यामः = we shall expound.

Now¹, therefore², we shall expound³ the religion of Love.

Notes—I. Now.—This refers to the best possible conditions under which an exposition of the religion of Love is likely to appeal to a spiritual aspirant. In other words, it is meant to refer to a proper *adhikari* or recipient. A study of any subject will appeal only to one who has an intense desire for knowing the subject, and it is likely to profit only one who has got the capacity to understand, and the readiness to practise, the truth that is taught. In technical language these qualifications are known as *arthitvam* and *samarthyam*. Even if these two are present, if one does not show the necessary interest and attention in the study, and has not sufficient faith in the capacity of the teacher or *sastra* to help him, he is not likely to profit by such study. *Sraddha* or faith, in other words, is another necessary qualification.

These are, however, only general qualifications for taking up the study of any subject. Each *sastra* insists upon certain special qualifications also. For example, as the necessary qualification of a seeker of the knowledge of Brahma, Sri Sankara

insists upon the fourfold fitness (*sadhana chathushtaya sampatti*), consisting of perfection in morality, spirit of renunciation, faith in the words of the spiritual teacher and scriptures, and a yearning for liberation. The Purvamimamsakas insist upon a previous study of the Vedas before taking to the study of the Sutras of Jaimini and so on. Both these again go to the length of saying that such study is to be confined only to male members of the first three castes, all other members of society being ineligible for the same. The *bhakti sastra* is more liberal in this respect, and is open to all. A belief in the grace of God and in the possibility of escape from *samsara* with His help are the only qualifications for the study of these *sutras*. Even illiteracy is no bar, nor a previous record of vicious life. On this point there are the following authorities: "Even if the most sinful man worships Me and worships no other, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has decided aright. He soon becomes righteous and obtains lasting peace. Proclaim it boldly, O Arjuna, that my devotee never perishes. For those who take refuge in me—women, Vaishyas, Sudras, nay, even they that are born of the womb of sin—attain to the highest state" (Gita IX, 30-32). "Every man, even down to the lowest born, has equal right to follow the path of devotion, as is seen from the long line of devotees, like

other objects common to all" (Shandilya Sutra, 78)². "I bow to the Almighty Lord, by adoring even whose devotees people like the Kiratas, Hunas, Andhras, Pulkasas, Pulindas, Abhiras, Kankas, Yavanas, Sakas, as well as those who are sinners, purify themselves" (Bhagavata 18)³.

Untouchable saints like Nandanar, Chockamela, Ravi Das, Kannappar, Tirupana Alvar, and Tirumangai Alvar, and female devotees like Mirabai, Avvayar, and Andal have thus graced this fair land of Bharata Varsha to bear witness to the catholicity of the path of devotion. Moral wrecks like Ajamila, Valmiki and Tondaradi-podi Alvar, Narayana Bhatta, who was author of the famous Narayaniya, and Vilwamangal are all shining examples of what the religion of Love can do for redeeming even the worst sinners, however low they might have had fallen. Saints like Ramakrishna, Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram and others prove to the hilt that the religion of Love does not stand in need of literacy. There is no doubt, however, that if the student has equipped himself properly before he takes to the study of the *bhakti sastra*, he can profit better by such study. Some such special qualifications are mentioned by Sri Ramanuja. They are: (1) *viveka* or discrimination in food, (2) *vimoka* or freedom from desires, (3) *abhyasa* or practice, (4) *kriya* or doing good to others, (5) *kalyana* or purity consisting of truthfulness,

1 अपिचेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्य भाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवहितो हि सः ॥
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छन्ति निगच्छति ।
क्रीतेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥
मां तु पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपिस्तुः पापयोनयः ।
क्षियौ वैश्या स्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिं ॥

2 आनिन्य योन्यधि क्रियते पारंपर्यात्सामान्यवत् ।
3 किरातहृणान् पुलिद पुत्कसा आभीरकका-
यवनाः शक्तादयः ।
येऽन्येऽपि पापा यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाच्छुच्यन्ति तस्मै
प्रभविष्णवे नमः ॥

satyam straightforwardness (*arjavam*), kindness (*daya*), non-violences (*ahimsa*), charity (*danam*), etc., (6) *anavasadam* or cheerfulness, (7) *anuddharsha* or absence of excessive hilarity.

2. *Therefore*—this expression refers to the reasons that prompted Narada to write on *bhakti* instead of on other topics such as *jnana* or *karma*. His reasons are: (1) *bhakti* by itself leads to realisation and escape from *Samsara*. (2) It is the easiest of all paths. (3) It is the only path available to men at large. (4) It is a help even to those who aspire for *jnana*. (5) Even *janis* after realisation sometimes take to *bhakti* for the sake of the sweetness of loving relationship with Personal God. (6) The most important of all the reasons is his own eagerness to share his bliss with others.

3. *Expound*—The Sanskrit word means to comment upon. But the work under consideration is not at all a commentary in the ordinary sense of the word. What the author perhaps means is that *bhakti sastra* is a commentary on the actual experiences of the devotees, and not a mere speculative philosophy based only on reason. Nor is it only second-hand knowledge interpreted by a mere scholar. For the exposition is based upon the author's own personal experiences as supported by those of others as recorded in the scriptures. Such an interpretation by a realised man is necessary as otherwise people may be carried away by the stories of miracle and supernatural incidents connected with the lives of the *bhaktas* (devotees), and may neglect to put into practice the true spiritual principles illustrated in their lives.]

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Yoga the Science of Health: By Felix Guyot (C. K. Kerneiz), Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., Paternoster Row, London.

The book is an attempt to present the science of Hatha Yoga in an assimilable form to European readers, and awaken, if possible, practical interest therein among them. Within the short compass of nearly 200 pages the author has attempted to present the theory and practice of some of the exercises of Hatha Yoga in so far as they have a bearing on the science of health. Whatever may be said of the treatment of the vast subject of Hatha Yoga within this small compass, there can be no doubt that the matter and presentation will make a definite appeal to a few at least who are attracted to the ways of healthful living, propounded and experimented in the East, and in India especially.

Words of Wisdom: By Swami Rajeswarananda. Published by The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Road, Chamarajapet, Bangalore City. Price, Superior edition Re. 1-6-0, Popular 0-12-0, Pp. 182.

This book containing 450 numbered paragraphs arranged from the author's diary forms a nosegay of inspiring thoughts on religion and ethics. Although there is no connection between the paragraphs forming each article, the book has an elevated background of spiritual mood and outlook running throughout the work and giving it an inner unity.

Whichever page one may turn and run the eyes over, one senses at once a high moral tone, and perceives a spiritual beauty of concept that cannot fail to induce a reflective reader to think in terms of the sublime and the universal. We wish a wide circulation for this edifying book.

Sri Ramakrishna, The Saint of Humanity : By K. Devanathachar. *Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavangudi, Bangalore City.* Price 4 as.

The above brochure is a study of Sri Ramakrishna's luminous life in a very small compass. Why the Master is called the saint of humanity becomes amply clear in the course of the book. The outstanding features of this unique life, those especially having an immediate elevating influence over our day to day life, are brilliantly touched upon. Mr. Achar has stressed rightly the devotional aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's life and instructions; for that attitude alone could easily bring spirituality within the reach of the large mass of common men. We welcome this short publication worthy equally of the theme and the occasion.

Upadesa Saram of Sri Ramana Maharshi : with English translation and notes by B. V. Narasimhaswami. (2nd. Edn. revised and enlarged.) Published by Niranjanananda Swami, Sarvadhikari, Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai. Price 4 as.

To-day many are the persons who are interested in the Maharshi and his message, not only in India but also in the occident. The necessity is all the more keen therefore for a clear, brief, methodical and well authenticated presentation of the central teachings of the Maharshi with regard to the spiritual problems of man. We find with great pleasure that this neatly printed small book has eminently supplied this need. The present edition embodies also for the first time the special teachings of the Maharshi on the doctrines of Karma, Samadhi, Happiness, etc., as well as on mysticism and doctrine of "the heart." The book with its freshness of outlook and simplicity of exposition will be found to be of real help by minds that are bewildered in the withering atmosphere of academic Vedanta.

Sri Maharshi : A biography with 111 illustrations. The 'Sunday Times' Bookshop, Madras. Price 8 as.

We heartily recommend this decently printed life-sketch of Sri Ramana Maharshi to all who wish to know in brief about this great spiritual personality and the scenes of his life.

Hindu Conception of God and Religion : By K. M. Das Gupta, B.A., Pleader (Retired). Publisher : Nishi Kanta Das Gupta, B.A., Pleader, Khulna. Price Re. 1.

In the first part of this small book the writer has put in quite ordinary language some of the leading conceptions of Hinduism such as the motherhood of God, the principle of Dharma, spirit of toleration and the like. The second part is devoted to the Hindu system of worship. Both with regards to the ideas and their presentation the book presents a rather sorry performance.

The Problems of Religion : By Raghuvarachari, B.A. Copies can be had of Verai-pada, Ahmadabad. Price 1 Rupee.

In this luminous essay the author presents for the common man a brief description of what real religion is, and how it fulfils a need of humanity which could in no way be supplied otherwise. We hope that the author's modest attempt will be appreciated by all who have faith in religion.

My Ideas and Ideals : By S. Banerji. Copies to be had from S. Chand & Co., Delhi.

"It is a work not originally meant for publication," writes the author in his Preface. The impression left by the perusal of the book inclines us to say that it would have been only sagacious if he had stuck to what he meant originally; for what good could possibly be found in taxing the patience of a reader with a book about which the writer admits, "I have destroyed more than I have built?"

Golden Resources : By L. V. Narasimha Rao, Santivasati, Guntur.

The plan and execution of this book is not very encouraging. Ideas ranging from Brahman and Paramartha to palmistry, vitamins and Ayurvedic pharmacies all appear here. There is a sad lack of unity, method and clear thought. However the spiritual ideal which the author likes to hold as a means for human happiness will meet with the approval of many.

Smiles and Tears : By K. Vaidyanathan, B.A., "Sriniketan", Kosapet, Vellore.

Smiles and Tears is a collection of about ninety poems and nursery rhymes from the pen of Mr. Vaidyanathan. Poetry is the last thing one may attempt with

success in an alien tongue so much so that even if a few lines could catch the ears of cultured readers, the writer has ample reasons for satisfaction. In the present collection, amidst much that is jejune, there are a few pieces which reveal a poetic mood mirrored in a form and language which, if not perfect, is at least free from glaring defects.

Pilgrims' Staff : By Ram B. Motwani, with an introduction by Prof. L. H. Ajwani, M.A. Can be had of Ram B. Motwani, Larkana (Sind.). Price Re. 1.

A neatly got-up small book of selections in verses culled from various sources by R. B. Motwani dedicated to his father and intended to help and relieve pilgrims on the pathway of life.

My Master and His Teaching : By C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., Ph.D., with a foreword by Princess Norina Matchabelli. Published by Mr. Framroze Hormusji Dadachanji, Meherabad, Ahmednagar, (India). Price 8 as.

Mr. Deshmukh has tried to bring out some of the impressive features of the life

and teachings of the Mehar Baba in this short work. As a second part to the study is attached a few metrical outpourings of the loyal devotee.

Bhaja Govindam : By Vidwan P. Krishna Murthy, Teacher, Wesley Girls' Normal School, Secunderabad (Deccan). Price 4 as. Can be had of the author "Sita Bhavan", St. Mary's Road, Secunderabad.

This booklet contains an English rendering of the famous "Dwadasa Manjarika Stotram" of Sri Sankaracharya. The Sanskrit text is given in Telugu script.

The Mystic Life : An introduction to practical Christian Mysticism. The Curtis Philosophic Book Co., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

A dainty little book which can easily be carried in one's pocket. It must be of considerable interest to non-Christians also who wish to have an idea of mysticism, its pursuit in daily life, and how it can help in the solution of so many problems confronting the world.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Ramakrishna Mission Sisumangal Pratisthan, Calcutta, Report for 1935-'36.

The Sisumangal Pratisthan is the only institution of its kind run by the Mission. During its existence of five years it has succeeded in winning universal admiration as an ideal maternity hospital and child welfare centre. The centre provides (a) antenatal care to expectant mothers, (b) hospital and domiciliary maternity service to registered cases, (c) postnatal care to children up to school going age, and (d) training in midwifery and obstetrical nursing to women of good families. All these services are rendered free of charge to poor people. The expectant mother is advised to come to the Pratisthan and register herself early in pregnancy, attend the clinic regularly and follow the doctor's advice religiously. During the past 18 months, 2105 new antenatal cases and 6783 repeated cases were treated. Among the patients treated were Bengalees, Guja-

ratis, Marwaris, Maharatis, Punjabis, Madrasis, Mohammedans and Christians.

The Pratisthan has a well-equipped hospital with 25 beds for labour cases. The hospital is like a home and the nursing arrangement is excellent. The staff is sympathetic and imbued with the spirit of service. One special feature of the hospital is that the new-born babies are kept in a separate Baby Ward. During the reported year and a half 1119 labour cases were attended to in the Hospital, and 368 cases at Home.

In the section for the training of midwives altogether 18 pupils appeared for examination in December 1936, and all of them came out successful. The financial position of the institution is not satisfactory. During the latter half of 1935 the institution received a total sum of Rs. 8,866-4-3, which, added to the opening balance of Rs. 5,099-4-9, makes a grand total of Rs. 13,965-9-0, and the total ex-

penses for the year was Rs. 9,954-12-3. During 1936 the total receipts amounted to Rs. 23,164-0-4. This, added to the opening balance of Rs. 4,010-12-9 and Rs. 1,000 which was taken as a loan, makes a grand total of Rs. 28,174-13-1. The total expenditure came up to Rs. 23,352-10-9, thus leaving a closing balance of Rs. 4,822-2-4 of which Rs. 4,759-3-3 belongs to the Building Fund.

The importance of such a popular and up-to-date centre in a country like India where nearly 75 per cent. of the maternal and infantile deaths (no fewer than 15,70,000 babies under one year die annually in India) occur from causes which are preventible by intelligent antenatal care only, is patent even to the layman. The mead of praise the institution has won from distinguished personages, both professional and lay, provides an ample index to the efficiency and utility of the institution; but in spite of this some of the urgent needs of the institution are yet to be provided for. For a building and premises of its own and to defray the annual recurring expenses of running it, the Management of the institution looks for help from all generous sources. An amount of about 2½ lacs of rupees are required for the building and equipment, and an amount of Rs. 24,000 yearly for maintenance charges. All those who consider the cause worthy of their support may send their contributions for the purposes mentioned above either to the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sisumangal, Prathisthan, 104, Bakul Bagan Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta, or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, P.O.

The Ramakrishna Mission, Barisal, Report for 1936.

The germ of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideas sown as early as 1904 gradually took root, developed and finally took shape of the present Asram by 1926, and ever since it has fallen into line with other similar centres of the Mission. Among the activities of the centre the Student's Home claims notice first. In the reported year the strength of the home was 18, of which 7 were free students, 4 half-free, 5 partly paid and 2 full-paid. The Asram Library contains 780 books, consisting mostly of religious literature and some children's books. The library and reading room are freely used by the public. The boys of the Home collect donations in kind and coin from the generous public and conduct relief among the poor and the needy and nurse the diseased as far as they can. The Asram has arranged for the treatment of eye diseases in a very small scale. In the reported year the centenary celebration formed a unique item of the activity of this centre.

The Ramakrishna Sevasrama, Shyamala Tal., Report for 1936.

In the Sevashram 4,438 cases, including repeated cases were treated in total. All the three systems of treatment, Allopathic, Homoeopathic and Ayurvedic, are followed. The Savasram badly suffers from want of funds. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary. The Ramakrishna Sevasram, Shyamala Tal, Sukhichang, P.O., Via Tanakpur, Almora, U.P.

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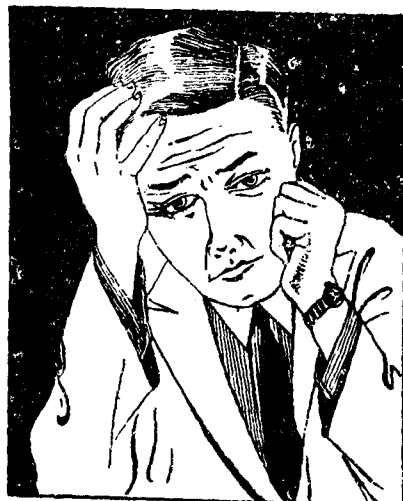
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Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 216.

GOD or MAN? ; GOD and MAN ; AND GOD in MAN

[The following paragraphs deal with one of the burning problems of the day—the conflict between the interests of the individual and of society.]

I

EVERY form of social philosophy may ultimately be analysed into a quest after a proper adjustment of the relation between individual and society. The individual is like a plant flourishing in the soil of society. All that he is, he owes to nourishment he draws from his social environment, and the advancement of his physical comforts, his intellectual attainments, his aesthetic refinement, in fact all that contributes towards what is called the 'good life' ultimately depends upon the flourishing state of the society as a whole. It would therefore seem that his supreme duty consists in the whole-hearted surrender of his self to society, and working heart and soul for its welfare. As for reward, he ought not to expect anything more than the thrill and the satisfaction derived from the opportunity of service. If there is to be any individual gratification at all, it ought to consist only in whatever he gets incidentally out of the amenities he helps to create for the collectivity.

However appealing such an idea might be to our intellect, every one feels in his heart of hearts that there is something unique even in his particularity. He is not simply a cog in the social machine, but a centre of intelligence, feelings and volitions, with a sense of the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the ugly and the beautiful. He is too much of a self-conscious entity to be reduced to mere mechanical subservience. In spite of his dependence on society, in

spite of the all-important function of society as the conserver of all cultural values, the individual feels that he is an end in himself. To equate the significance of his life with his contribution to the social welfare goes against something fundamental in his way of thought. If he once comes to know that those in whose hands the guidance of his life lies, look upon him in such a light, he feels himself reduced to the position of a slave—of one exploited to serve the purposes of others. In his domestic relations, in his daily work, and in his political and social functions, he may be serving the collectivity, but without an element of self-satisfaction, either of the narrow or of the disinterested kind, it will be impossible for him to play his part well.

As a result of the varying emphasis laid on these two ways of evaluating the human being, different views or philosophies of life have developed. It is to these that we refer by the threefold heading—God or Man? ; God and Man ; and God in Man. We shall now consider the implications of each of these.

II

The philosophy of 'God or Man?' indicates the contrast between pure asceticism and pure humanitarianism, both of which are born of a lopsided emphasis on one or the other of the two principles mentioned before—individualism and collectivism. The pure ascetic is one who sees nothing but corruption in society. To his eyes man appears to

be a creature wallowing in sin, and any improvement of his ethical and spiritual standard on a collective scale is an impossibility. His is a microscopic view which always sees the details, and seldom the wholeness of things. As a consequence he fails to perceive the higher social values that have been created by a painful process of evolution, but magnifies all the dark spots of human nature and society, which, no doubt, are too many. He feels convinced that nothing great can be achieved in so corrupt an environment as the human society.

Side by side he feels within the urge of a higher ideal. If society is unredeemable, the individual is not however so. He may have a hundred short-comings, but these can be checked and even eradicated, and thus he may prepare himself for a higher life, which may be realised, if not in this world, at least in a world to come. But all these higher developments are impossible so long as one is in contact with society in any form. Hence in several countries and several periods of history, especially when the moral standards of societies are at a very low ebb, we find large numbers of men drifting away from society into forests and deserts to find that environment for higher development, which they could not get in the societies they were born in. They are men endowed with a high sense of the uniqueness of the individual. But unlike in the case of most of our modern individualists, their individualistic outlook is not, however, motivated by any desire for indulgence in selfish pleasures, or for exploiting others for one's private gain. They seek solace in the individual only due to their faith in, and aspira-

tion to realise, their spiritual possibilities.

As opposed to asceticism, with its emphasis on the individual and with its tendency to shun society, is humanism and its extreme development, collectivism, which tend to submerge the individual in society, and to discourage in him any sense of his own uniqueness. According to the humanistic world view, the individual in his intelligence, activities and affections, is the creature and organ of the race to which he belongs. All he has, including moral qualities, is a social heritage. Thus the very tissues of his life are woven for him by the collective activities of the race. Apart from the society the individual is a mere abstraction having no reality. The God that man has been worshipping is only the image of society wrongly interpreted as a transcendent being due to the superstition of a pre-scientific age. Thinkers of this persuasion would therefore ask men to shake off their allegiance to theological fictions, and direct the same to society. In the service of society, country, race or humanity, the individual is to seek fulfilment. Comte, the celebrated positivistic thinker of France, therefore, raised this theory to the dignity of a religious cult, and placed the image of humanity in the niche vacated by God. This doctrine, which formed only a philosophical theory a century back, has, however, been reduced to a type of political conception of the State as a collective man. The vision of it, which is inspiring the imagination of millions in different parts of the modern world is nothing but the apotheosis of society with one difference. In place of having man as such as the object of adoration, the new

conception of State limits its attention to the race or the nation. But the renunciation demanded of the individual is complete. The collectivistic ideal of the State can be reached only when the distinction between private and public is completely obliterated, and the individual is taught to accept unquestioningly that the purpose of his existence is to be equated with his function in the collective life of the State. He must become an unquestioning tool of the State, brought up, educated and nourished by the State, only to be used exclusively for its purposes according to the discretion of its Pope, the Dictator.

No doubt there is very great difference in the implications of collectivism in its application to humanism and to nationalism, but then there is one point in which these implications are identical. To the question "God or Man?", they unanimously answer 'Man'. Their ultimate consequence is therefore bound to be the banning of every form of spiritual world-view in order that man may concentrate himself exclusively on society. If they tolerate religion at all, they can tolerate only a cult which preaches a national God, and not one who is a God of truth—He who is the common father and mother of all. For what collectivism wants to do is to create a mentality quite opposed to the ascetic type which leads to the neglect of social values in the hope of conserving individual values, which encourages man to shun society in order to save the soul.

III

Religions all the world over attempt to bridge the gulf that separates society-shunning asceticism and society-adoring collectivism. But

they generally proceed to do this from a wrong point of view. Most of the religions are generally dualistic and even deistic in their outlook. They make a hard and fast distinction between Nature and Super-Nature, between matter and spirit, between man and God. When such an absolute distinction, implicit in every form of dualism, is maintained, it is logically impossible to avoid purely ascetic ethics. For if the world is 'other than God,' something completely contradictory to Him in substance and properties, the natural consequence would be an ethics according to which a life of dedication to God would mean one of complete severance from the world, especially from society. And that is asceticism pure and simple.

Religions, however, get over this difficulty by the philosophy of 'God and Man', the 'and' signifying the very loose manner in which they relate the two terms. It is not that religions of this type do not inculcate the virtue of service. In fact some of them do actually inspire their followers with a high ideal of service. But what distinguishes them is that even in their highest flights they cannot overcome the dualism of God and man, or the natural and the supernatural, and as a consequence, they have to keep the worship of God and the service of man as two distinct categories. Why should one love one's fellow beings? Because it is pleasing to God. God has given this duty of service to men as a command to be obeyed by the pious, and He is pleased with those who obey it. Religious life proper is something quite apart from it, and consists in prayers, communion, etc., and service of society is connected with it only indirectly, the connection arising from

the fact that it is a commandment of God.

Christianity is one of the most conspicuous examples of this kind. No one can deny that Christianity, in the past few centuries at least, has been responsible for works of service on a large scale in different parts of the world. There has no doubt been a mixture of motives in institutionalised charities, and an exaggerated importance laid on the number of converts gained, has very often contaminated the quality and spirit of the service rendered. In spite of this, however, it has to be admitted ungrudgingly that a true Christian very well understands the importance of service. But Christianity itself has provided no explanation of its famous dictum, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," except it be the crude one that God has commanded man to do so. That is why the very same gospel of Christ, which its modern interpreters represent to be the fountain-head of all true and healthy social relationship, served as the prime incentive to the hermits of early Christianity to migrate in their hundreds to inaccessible deserts and wildernesses in the belief that life in society is something antagonistic to the true spiritual interests of man. Many a modern Christian thinker would disclaim such manifestations of asceticism as an aberration resulting from the contamination of hated 'oriental' ideals, but these worthy gentlemen have to answer the pointed question whether their world-view maintains an absolute distinction between Nature and Super-Nature, between God and Man. If it is in the affirmative—and Christian Theology has always answered it in the affirmative—then the old ascetics were right, and their critics are wrong.

For in an absolute philosophical dualism of the Christian type, an ethical dictum like "Love thy neighbour as thyself" can at best inspire only service of a passive type, and not of a dynamic quality. Christian philosophy and Christian ethics seem to contradict themselves, and the special developments of the latter have therefore to be traced to influences other than its philosophical soil.

It would be seen from what we have said before that the doctrine of "God and Man" is an attempt, imperfect though it be, to reconcile the individual's sense of his uniqueness, with the claims of society on him.

IV

If any doctrine can adequately reconcile the claims of the spiritual and the social, of individualism and collectivism, it is the Vedantic gospel of Divine immanence, to which we refer as the philosophy of 'God in man'. It is curious that Vedanta has been criticised by Christian thinkers as an other-worldly gospel discouraging every form of active social life, or as pantheistic philosophy devoid of dynamic moral fervour. And yet it is Vedanta that has upheld from time immemorial the doctrine of Divine immanence, in the light of which alone the modern man can build a cultural edifice, which while rising to the level of spiritual transcendence, maintains its firm basis in a vigorous social life.

Unity of existence in one form or other is the cardinal principle of Vedanta. God and Man, the world and the spirit, Nature and Super-Nature are not entities that stand in isolation due to differences in their essence. There are regions of thought in which the differences between these gradually shade off into each other,

so much so God can be worshipped both in transcendence and immanence. To the thoroughgoing monist He is the only real existence, and the world of multiplicity is only an apparent manifestation of His. As the real substratum of the world, He is immanent in it. Thus the whole world, both in its higher and lower aspects, reveals and symbolises the Supreme Being. Though God is thus present, as the underlying substratum, in every aspect of Nature, those that are sublime and pure in their appeal reveal His essence better than others. For it is the nearness of the symbol or manifestation to Him that accounts for its power to stimulate the higher nature in us. Until a person's spiritual insight is fully developed, and he is able to see the spiritual substratum everywhere and in everything, this perception of difference in the value of manifestation is bound to persist.

Even in the case of those Vedantists who do not accept a thoroughgoing theory of monism, the doctrine of immanence holds good. They may not agree to the idea that the world-process is not real in an absolute sense, or to the doctrine that the purified self of the individual is identical with the Universal Self. Yet they lay as much emphasis as the other Vedantists on the theory of the immanence of God, and maintain that though God is the master of Nature, yet He is present in every form of Nature's manifestation. They may maintain an absolute distinction in entity between God and soul, yet they grant that God dwells in every soul as the soul of all souls. Hence in spite of the dualistic strain of thought, those systems of Vedanta also maintain that the world symbolises the Deity. For

if He is present everywhere in the manifested phenomena of this world, it is natural that for a man who accepts this idea they become symbols revealing His presence to a lesser or greater extent according to their refinement and capacity to suggest a sense of the Divinity.

The importance of this doctrine in reconciling man's spiritual sense of a uniqueness to be realised through his particularity, with the demand of society that he should live entirely for it, will be quite obvious. For according to the doctrine of immanence, although God is much more than the world, He is not an extra-cosmic being who is to be propitiated by prayers or won over by offerings, but a Presence that is to be felt in all the experiences of life. Worship here changes from prayer into communion. For prayer implies petitioning, which is essentially associated with an extra-cosmic God, whereas communion is more an attitude of mind than an activity. Not that in communion, forms of worship like prayer, offerings, etc., have no place. What it insists is that these are to be valued only in so far as they help one to have that attitude of mind characteristic of communion—the attitude which perceives the presence of God everywhere.

It also maintains that, since the cultivation of a proper attitude is the essence of communion, it is quite arbitrary, and inconsistent with the doctrine of immanence, to posit any absolute distinction between the secular and the sacred, or between work and worship. In fact what is called divine communion has two expressions—the inward and the outward. The inward expression of it is what passes ordinarily under the name of spiritual disciplines with graded men-

tal exercises consisting of rituals, invocations, prayers, sacraments, meditation, analysis of one's mental workings—in fact of all the methods devised by man to bring about an awareness of the Divinity lodged in his self through introspection. The external form of communion is an attempt to evoke in one's mind a sense of the same immanent Presence, but it is done not so much through a shutting off of the senses from external contacts as in inner communion, as through a participation in the activities of life with a particular attitude of mind. This attitude consists in looking upon society as a manifestation of the Supreme, and accordingly discharging all one's duties towards it in a spirit of worship. If God is immanent in oneself, He is immanent in others as well. Society, which is a collection of individuals, may therefore be taken as the highest expression of the Divine in this manifested world. The various types of work necessary for its up-keep and prosperity may appear purely secular to a mind that does not understand the philosophy of immanence, but to one who has really grasped its essential principle, any work of social utility becomes an act of worship of God and direct communion with him. In fact for him the difference between work and worship, between the secular and the sacred, disappears, and both these apparently contradictory forms of activities become mutually complementary as the introspective and the active forms of communion. The whole of life becomes divinised. It is this synthesis of life and metaphysics that forms so unique a feature of the Bhagavad Gita.

V

Now what is the importance of this philosophy, which we would call the 'Philosophy of God in Man' in reconciling individualism with collectivism. Individualism has been responsible for much evil, and has received the hearty condemnation of moralists of to-day as well as of the past. But yet it survives and it would survive as long as there is humanity, because it stands for man as a sign-post of one line of development. There is really a uniqueness in individuality, and the culture of this uniqueness in its true cosmic significance is the essence of spiritual life. On the other hand when we try to be unique in our isolation, that is, in disregard of our right relationship with the totality of existence, then we become self-centred, and we degenerate into pure materiality. Thus the sense of individuality, which represents the principle of conservation of moral values in man, is responsible both for the degradation as well as elevation of man in the spiritual scale. It may be that in the state of spiritual perfection individuality as we understand it is transcended in a sense of unity with the Cosmic Spirit, but this transcendence is not to be achieved by a premature suppression of individuality in the interest of any collectivistic or humanistic gospel that disregards the transcendental and super-social significance of the human individual. Nor can any society or nation tolerate, without grave peril to its own status in the world, the unhealthy spiritual individualism which expresses itself as extravagant asceticism that shuns and scorns society as an unmitigated evil. But in the light of the doctrine of immanence, otherwise described here as

the philosophy of 'God in Man,' we can have an ideal of life that takes due cognisance of the spiritual urge of introversion that manifests itself as asceticism, as well as of the ethical urge of extroversion that takes the form of humanism and collectivism,—an ideal that in fact fuses or synthesises both these into a rational and

harmonious scheme of spiritual life with its twin forms of communion, namely meditation, in which one communes with the Deity immanent in the self, and service, through which one communes with the same Deity as manifested in others and in society at large.

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

By P. Manikkaswami Mudaliar, B.A.

[Swami Ramakrishnananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the pioneer of the Ramakrishna movement in South India. His birthday anniversary falls on the 4th of August, and we hope that in connection with this occasion, it would interest our readers to peruse these reminiscences about him by Mr. P. Manikkaswami Mudaliar who is a close student and follower of the Swami.]

I

DURING the last decade of the 19th century and the opening of the 20th century, one of the most prominent persons in the sphere of religious activity in Madras was Swami Ramakrishnananda. He was the founder of the Ramakrishna Math at Madras and one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was sent to Madras by Swami Vivekananda to spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna and to found a Math here. The birthday anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda falls on the 4th of August, and it would not be inappropriate to bring into our recollection a few inspiring incidents of his life, and ponder over them.

II

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, his Sannyasin disciples were all gathered together in the Baranagore Math by Swami Vivekananda. Soon after, these disciples began to leave the Math one after another, some for pilgrimage and

some for Tapasya, except Swami Ramakrishnananda who stuck to it, having taken upon himself the duty of performing daily Pooja to Sri Ramakrishna. It was Swami Ramakrishnananda's notion, nay realisation, that though Sri Ramakrishna had disappeared in body, he was yet present and living in their midst. For seven long years the Swami confined himself to the precincts of the Math, and did not go even to Calcutta but spent all his time in Pooja, meditation and reading scriptures. Besides, he was looking after the physical comforts of such of his co-disciples as happened to stay with him, and was thus the main prop and pillar of the Math.

When, on his first return from America, Swami Vivekananda was proceeding on his triumphal tour from Colombo to Almora, the citizens of Madras approached him and requested him to send them a Sadhu who could minister to their spiritual needs. Accordingly he sent Swami Ramakrishnananda, as he thought

that his orthodoxy entitled him best to work among Madrasis, who are proverbially known for their orthodoxy. Swami Ramakrishnananda came here in 1896 and was accommodated in the house now situated east of Lady Wellington's Training College for Women, and then known as Ice-house.

III

Within a short time of his arrival, Swami Ramakrishnananda started religious classes in different parts of Madras, which attracted in large numbers the school and college-going population, as also the intelligentsia from the middle and upper classes. I had the good fortune of attending a few of those classes and getting a good grounding in the philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya. I also underwent a thorough change in my outlook of life, for which I am deeply indebted to the Swami. Though, as a result of the Swami's teaching, few were able to renounce the world, and take to the life of Sannyas, it cannot be gainsaid that not a few imbibed a desire for renunciation which unfailingly had its reaction and salutary effect on their daily conduct in life.

After the class hour the Swami used to invite questions. I readily availed myself of the opportunity not so much for enlightening myself as to enlighten the Swami, as my youthful conceitedness would have it. I took pleasure in plaguing him with all sorts of questions and quick repartees. Not a few occasions there were when the Swamiji was cornered, and could not, as I thought, find his way out. One day with a strong backing of my agnostic and sceptical friends whom I took with me, I went on putting him question after question, the chief of

which was, "How could the unperturbed Brahman become ever perturbed." The answer given was so unintelligible that I exulted in having made his position untenable, which exultation made the Swami come down on me with the words: "What do you know? You simply blabber without in the least knowing what you are talking about." These words, though uttered in angry tone, proved to be of saving grace to me. I felt they came like a thunderbolt and were just sufficient to bring me to a sense of seriousness. The irreverent attitude disappeared, and somehow a feeling of reverence coursed through my body, and I instantly reined my tongue and became silent.

A day or two after this incident, I was impelled to run up to the Math. I expected a very cold reception; but lo! I was struck with the love and cordiality with which the Swami received me. I took courage and resumed the topic about which we had a difference of opinion, and in the heart-to-heart talk which ensued, there was such a mutual exchange of views that it had the effect of laying bare the hollowness of my position and the profundity of the Swamiji's view point. From that day onwards, need I say, I became his humble follower and a passive listener ever ready to drink in the nectar-like words which fell from his lips. I lost no opportunity of coming in close contact with him, and the illumination I derived from such contact, being one of feeling, can hardly be described in words. I placed at the disposal of the Swamiji all my resources—mental, bodily and financial—which the Swami was gracious enough to utilise whenever needed.

IV

In discoursing on religion, Swami Ramakrishnananda eschewed all metaphysical and philosophical technicalities, and had the power of clothing most abstruse ideas in simple language quite understandable to even ordinary lay minds. His one aim seemed to be to wean the English educated young men from their habitual leaning to the materialistic Western culture, and to make them recognise, appreciate and follow the nuggets of golden truths embedded in Hindu Scriptures. He would not tolerate disparaging remarks regarding Manu, Vyasa and such other saints and sages of India, but would hold a brief for all traditions, customs and usages, round which the Hindu civilisation has grown.

He invariably taught his students Vedanta as expounded by Sankara. He would exhort his students to apply three tests before accepting any truth. It must be supported by (1) scripture (Sruti), (2) reasoning (Yukti) and (3) experience (Anubhava). Of these three tests, he would accord the highest rank to reason. When any truth happens to have the support either of scripture or of experience or of both, but not of reason, he would advise his students to defer their verdict until they could get better and clearer light from scholars more learned, or from men of acknowledged spiritual greatness. He would take his students step by step through rational grounds to the dizzy heights of the monistic conception of Consciousness (Samvid, as he would term it) pure and simple, where there is neither the notion of God as the creator, preserver and destroyer, nor the conception of the knower and the known.

By subtle and elaborate arguments he would establish that man is not this body, $3\frac{1}{2}$ cubits in length, nor the mind, but that he is infinite in his real nature. He is Reality itself—Reality which is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute. The Swami would not, however, like to leave the student immersed intellectually in this abstruse thought, but would suddenly turn his attention to the standpoint of a Bhakta who considers himself to be an insignificant entity and surrenders himself to God, who for him is all in all. Such a sudden turn in the view point was beyond the comprehension of students of ordinary calibre who would accuse him of blowing hot and cold in the same breath. Such a sudden change of view was possible for men of Swami Ramakrishnananda's type only. For by his close contact with his Guru Sri Ramakrishna, he had acquired such a clear knowledge of Gnana and Bhakti that he was able easily to jump from the one to the other without losing hold of the common ground. Some would say that he did so because he himself was a Bhakta and would cite the fervour and devotion with which he offered worship to his Guru, in support of their opinion. While it cannot be denied that he had unparalleled devotion for Sri Ramakrishna, his Guru—as every Gnani has to his spiritual teacher—it should also be borne in mind that in the books he has written and published, the monistic idea comes out more prominently, and that it was this idea also that he generally taught in his classes. Once when I approached him for practical instruction for meditation, he told me, "Think of the vastness of the universe." From these facts I have been,

and am still of opinion, that Swami Ramakrishnananda was a monist and Gnani in his heart of hearts, and that his love for, and worship of, the Guru could not be considered as sufficient ground for putting him under the category of Bhaktas. At best I can take him both as Gnani and a Bhakta—a combination rare to find in one individual.

V

The Swami, being a Sannyasi, naturally emphasised in his teachings on renunciation and service, but this did not appeal to the public of Madras who were accustomed to hear Puranic and other stories from Pandits. Whether on account of this or for any other reason, the Swami's classes grew thinner and thinner and had to be closed ultimately. A few of the students attending these classes began to repair to the Math and benefit by his teachings. Their love and attachment for the Swami grew intensely and they stuck to him through thick and thin. They kept themselves ever ready for service of any kind in all ways possible. Regarding the dwindling of attendance in his classes, the Swami would wittily remark, "Religion is like *Sakkārapongal*" (a kind of sweet dish), meaning thereby that the mental condition of the people was too weak to take to the study of religion proper, much less to practise spiritual life which needed great control of senses.

VI

The Swami's solicitude for his students was remarkable. He would keep watch and ward over their habits, manners and conduct in life. The Swami wished that his students, most of whom were poor, should live more comfortably and enjoy the ordi-

nary amenities of life. He would rather suffer than put his students to any expenditure which their meagre purse could not permit. Once a student who had a lift in his office came forward to help the Math with a small monthly subscription, but the Swamiji who knew his position was very reluctant to accept it.

If the Swami should find a student sitting with his chin resting on his palm he would at once direct him to change his posture as it indicated a pensive mood to which a religious aspirant should not give room. If he should find a student gently shaking his legs ceaselessly when seated on a chair or bench, he would immediately ask him to stop it, as it would cause restlessness of mind. If he should see a student drinking water standing, he would forthwith advise him to sit and drink, as otherwise it is likely to cause a local disturbance in the body resulting in ill-health.

On one occasion a poor student of his offered a donation of Rs. 15, and when he learned that it was got by joining a lottery, he admonished him severely saying that money got by the sweat of one's brow alone was helpful for spiritual advancement.

There used to go to the Swami a student whom he loved very much for his simplicity, frankness and unostentatiousness. But this student did not know how to serve and show respect to his teacher. With a view to removing this defect in him, he one day called him near and said, "Well, you shampoo my leg a little." Need it be said that he did as directed in the right attitude of mind, at which the Swami was much pleased. On another day when the Swamiji was lying down slightly indisposed, and a junior

Swami was fanning him, he saw the same student entering the Math. At this the Swami said something to the junior Swami (the student heard only the word 'Susrusha' which means service) who gave up fanning and went away. The Swami, as if to bestow grace on the student, asked him to press his body as well as he could. Such was his solicitude, his magnanimity and overflowing kindness.

VII

There were days when the Swami had to manage the Math without any body to help him—not even a servant to do the cooking. On one such day, as the Swami returned from his class in the evening, he espied a stranger sitting at the threshold of the Math. On inquiry he found that this man somehow fell in the company of, itinerant class of beggars known as Bairagis, and that, their treatment being intolerable, he managed to run away from them to seek the Swami's protection. The Swami, out of his bene-

volent heart, gave him shelter, and in a few days thereafter admitted him as an inmate of the Math. This man, in whom the truant tendency still lingered, decamped one day without the knowledge and permission of the Swami. When after some days he returned and repented of his conduct, the Swami forgave him and readmitted him. It would be surprising to learn that this man, under the burning spiritual influence of the Swami, got all his previous tendencies changed and became so pure as to be ultimately admitted as a member of the monastic Order.

VIII

Space forbids further enumeration of the inspiring and instructive incidents with which the Swami's life is replete. Suffice it to say that the void created by his passing away in the year 1911 still continues to be a void. For the company of such exalted spiritual personages is rarely to be had.

THE SPIRITUAL PATH

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, the author of 'The 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 forming the substance of some of his class talks in Europe, the Swami gives many a practical suggestion to spiritual aspirants.]

BEGIN EARLY

ONE has to begin as early as possible with one's spiritual life. Unless we have sown the seed of spirituality in our soul early in life, there is no possibility of creating the spiritual mood in later life. Those who are not spiritually minded while they live in the world, can never be spiritually minded when

they retire from the world. They will find that the old impure impressions have become so deep that there is no possibility of effacing them, that they have become the slaves of their instincts and impulses, and that they can no longer act in the way they would like to, cannot take up a higher and purer life, neither mentally nor physically. Our ideal is to make a

beginning of liberation in this very life and to make the best use of the time that is given to us.

THE LORD'S GRACE

The Grace of the Divine comes to a person in the form of self-effort, in the form of the will to strive for something higher and more permanent than all these phenomena. Some speak of destiny, others speak of self-effort, while again others hold, "Yes, it is true that everything depends on the will of the Lord, but the Lord desires that I should strive my utmost. Self-effort comes to me as a manifestation of my 'destiny'; it is the will of the Lord that creates in me the desire for striving". But without purity and real, unfeigned dispassion there can never be any spiritual life, or even any deep spiritual striving. Unless we strive our very utmost and our best, the Lord's Grace will not descend on us.

CONTROL THE MIND

What is most essential in all forms of spiritual life is to keep the greater part of the mind thinking of God, thinking of the Ideal, and never to allow it to give its thoughts entirely to the world or worldly affections and relations even when occupied with some worldly duty. We must know how to divide the mind to some extent, so that we can make one part of it cling to the Lord and to the Lord alone, whatever be our occupation. Through constant practice, through unflagging practice, we may develop an attitude of mind that enables us to think and to feel that whatever we do is a service to the Lord, and that we have no right to the fruits of any of our actions. "O Lord, whatever works I do, I look upon it as a form of worship to Thee." This

service may be physical, intellectual or spiritual.

Watch the reactions in your mind brought about by certain people and things, and act accordingly. Avoid everything that is apt to rouse old, evil impressions and thoughts belonging to your former life. We cannot allow ourselves to run after worldly love and affections and have the higher Divine Love at the same time. God and worldly affections cannot live together.

DEFINITE IDEA OF THE PATH

AND THE GOAL

We should have the ideal fixed that neither worldly nor heavenly pleasures are our goal, that our ultimate goal is Self-realisation—neither this world nor heaven, nor any other world. Heavenly enjoyment is no better than earthly enjoyment, and so long as there is hankering after heavenly enjoyment, we can never attain the goal. We must yearn for God more than for His creation either in heaven or in earth.

Before we actually begin our spiritual life in real earnest, we must decide if we are really fully prepared to pay the price. We must fix once for all our ideal, our conduct of life, and everything, and then stick to it in all circumstances. If we wish to transcend all the unrealities, there must always be a certain amount of dare-devil in us, a certain amount of fearlessness and true heroism. Unless we are prepared to sacrifice all our worldly desires and our sense of 'I-ness', we can never hope to realise the higher ideal. "Give us discrimination, give us renunciation, give us devotion and knowledge"—let us pray thus to the Divine.

DISCRIMINATION

You must never associate too freely with people and must always use discrimination. If another person attracts you, just direct the mind into some higher channels, create in yourself some dislike or disgust for the person in question, so that that person loses all charm for you. Later on this disgust is to be effaced so that you can look at that person with the same indifference with which you would look at a stranger you have never known. In spiritual life, although to a great extent you cut off your personal relations with others, you come to have a wider love and sympathy for them through the medium of the Divine. When one finds something higher, the lower ideal automatically loses its attraction, and is put aside.

We should also practise a certain amount of control and discrimination regarding the food we take. And so long as we are in the body, the body must be properly taken care of and nourished to keep it a fit instrument for realisation of the Divine and for the Divine's work. There is much more body-consciousness in the person who is ill or weak than in the perfectly healthy and normal person. We have to see that our body-consciousness is reduced to a minimum if we want to make good progress in spiritual life.

Unless our mind be to some extent pure and non-attached and prepared for renunciation, we can never even think of God-realisation. Try to purify your heart, to purify your mind, as much as possible. Then the blazing fire of spiritual realisation will burn away all desires.

MEDITATION ON THE HOLY PERSONALITIES

Few people can begin their spiritual practice with the meditation on the Formless and Attributeless Aspect of the Divine. Even the conception of God without form but with attributes is beyond the grasp of the many. So long as it is impossible for us to form even an idea of the Divine in both His transcendent and immanent aspects, we should first of all try to think of the Divine Glory as manifest through the Holy Personalities—the great Incarnations and Prophets of mankind. It is very easy for us to speak of worshipping God in truth and in spirit. But since, as a matter of fact, we cannot do so, it becomes a meaningless phrase and nothing more.

We think in terms of our small, limited, impure, individual consciousness, but the great ones think in terms of the Infinite Consciousness. We are like small, tiny, self-forgetful bubbles, while they are like mountain-high waves that are always conscious of their ocean-origin. The ocean never comes to be limited by the wave-form.

The Incarnation is a glorious manifestation, but never the whole, of God who is the reality at the back of ordinary beings also.

Tiny bubbles that we are, we find it difficult to understand even a full wave-consciousness. By worshipping and meditating on the great ones, we are able to come in touch with their super-consciousness. This breaks the bonds of our limited existence and brings in a new light, a deeper awareness that lies hidden in the depths of our being. The waves

bring us in contact with the ocean. By lifting ourselves consciously to the plane of their knowledge, we get rid of all our false notions, of our being identified with the body, of being men and women. Dropping the limiting adjuncts, we get a new and purer sense of existence — a universal consciousness that gives the true meaning to our individual existence and life.

INDIVIDUAL AND UNIVERSAL

In trying to separate itself from the ocean, the bubble runs the risk of bursting its bubble-form, as it can never exist without the contact of the ocean. But the trouble is that we are not conscious of this great fact. We consider ourselves to be separate entities, separate from the ocean and separate from one another. When this initial mistake is made through ignorance, all other mistakes follow as a matter of course and make our life one of endless misery.

Although we may take our limited existence to be absolutely real at first, we find, on deeper consideration and experience, that it is not so. The false conception of reality is wholly due to ignorance. It is through this that we come to cherish many a petty and ignoble idea, and we suffer because of that. However, by getting rid of the false conceptions, we rise above all illusory, limiting adjuncts, and regain our true nature, the true dignity and glory of the Divine in us, who is not only our *self* but is the *self* of all.

HINTS FOR MEDITATION

In the beginning of our spiritual life we have to create our own images, but these must be images of which the pattern is right, *i.e.*, imaginations of something that is real, not of

something wholly imaginary. Some stress the sense of the Presence more than the form, although they, too, may call up the form. The same Being permeates both the form called up and the devotee, as It is the devotee's own eternal Being — his true *self*.

Just think that your whole heart or head is permeated with the Divine Effulgence, and that this Light is part of the Infinite Light that pervades everything. Melt away your whole personality, your I-ness, into That. Melt away your body, your mind, your senses, your emotions, into That. Just imagine this very vividly. And then this infinite ocean of Light takes shape as part of this Light, becomes solidified in the form of your Ishtam (Chosen Deity), but never lose sight of the infinite background of which your Ishtam and you yourself as well as all others are parts, and which permeates all these. The ocean, the One Eternal Principle, lying at the back of both yourself and the whole universe, must never be lost sight of, because it is That which is to be fully realised by you one day.

But one who does not lead a pure life and is not disciplined ought not to follow this instruction, because meditation becomes dangerous in the case of a person who is not properly prepared and has not gone through the proper preliminary training.

SELF-SURRENDER.

Only one who has really passed through strenuous self-effort can give himself up and surrender himself wholly and unconditionally at the feet of the Divine. All forms of striving make the mind pure and fit for the Divine touch. And self-surrender can

only be accomplished after having gone through one's spiritual practice with great perseverance and doggedness. Self-surrender can only come when our wings are dead tired like those of the bird sitting on the ship's mast after having tried in vain to reach land when the ship was on high sea.

Too much activity is very dangerous, because it usually becomes like the aimless activity of the monkey. This kind of activity is just restlessness, and we see it in people who are terribly afraid to be left to themselves. But on the other side you find a form of so-called self-surrender that is nothing more than inertness, indolence, lethargy. And this is just as bad as aimless activity. The true aspirant should always try to combine both—activity of the right kind and self-surrender.

STUDY AND PRACTICE

Religion is something different from, and something more than, book-knowledge. Through mere scholarship, through mere intellectual study, you can never learn the Truth. When we think too much and too highly of intellectual life, we can never realise the essential truths of religion.

"Let one study as well as he can, master the subjects, but after having become a great scholar, let him renounce desires and try to live upon the strength which comes from knowledge."

One must be free from all guile, from all falsehood, all lack of uprightness, from all the perversities of the mind, and then become a man of meditation, if one wants to make real spiritual progress.

Having known the essentials of spiritual life, having formed a clear

idea of the Divine, you should try to practise the disciplines. Do not read too many empty words. That creates only disturbance and trouble. Now, this does not mean that you should not go in for studies, but you should make it a point to study with a view to realise the Truth, and along with your studies there must be some real spiritual practice every day. You must always train your intellect and have your fixed studies, think deeply on the problems, and form a habit of clear thinking and deep study, so that you would feel uncomfortable the day that you have not studied anything deeply pondering over it and over the truths it contains. This daily study is to be made an important item of your spiritual practice.

LUST AND GREED

Sri Ramakrishna's message is: "Be spiritual and realise the Truth yourself." By living the spiritual life, we can make the Divine living in our own life. The Master shows us how we may overcome sex and greed—these, our greatest obstacles on the path of all spiritual progress. He wishes us to have a new outlook towards ourselves and others. Men as well as women must have the Divine outlook, and not think of themselves in terms of sex and body. To see the Divine in oneself and in all others, men and women, is the only solution for the world-problem of sex and the relation between the sexes. This is a most vital point to note for the spiritual aspirant. You can never rise above the sex-idea by just hating woman or man, as many mystics of the Middle Ages tried to do. Something more is needed. The Divine is in me, in all, in everything. "I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am the Self."

BUDDHA'S PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

It was the mission of Buddha's life to ask people not to think too much of philosophies and metaphysics, of rites and ceremonies, but to make religion—the Spiritual Law—a living force in their own lives by leading a life of purity, meditation, spiritual discipline and mental control. What did Buddha say of God? He was silent on the point. It is not essential to speak of God so much, but far more essential to follow God's path, to live the spiritual life. What is the use of saying: "O Lord, how beautiful Thou art! How beautiful are Thy skies, Thy stars, Thy whole creation!" The Creator is always greater than His creation, and does not feel proud of it. Seen from our human standpoint, we find it great, but to God it is insignificant. So it is more important to follow God's path than to praise God eternally, without ever doing anything. This lip-service is of no use to the aspirant.

Once Buddha was asked, "Sir, is there a God?" He replied, "Did I say there is a God?" "Then is there no God, sir?" asked the questioner. "Did I say there is no God?" came the reply. Buddha wanted to stop all empty and hair-splitting discussions and speculations, and make people do something. So he said, "When a house is on fire, do you first go and trace the origin of the fire, or do you try to extinguish it?" But we in our foolishness very often try to trace the origin first, but before we have succeeded in the attempt, the whole house is burnt down and nothing remains of it but a heap of ashes.

We always want everything to be done for us by somebody else. There can be no vicarious salvation with-

out any self-effort on the part of the aspirant. Most of the so-called religious people are mere parasites in the world of religion and spiritual life. It would be better for them to take up something else.

AVOID TEMPTATIONS

During the period of our spiritual training we must try as much as possible to avoid all temptations, both in its gross and subtle forms. We should salute anything that may become an object of temptation to us, from a safe distance. Let us not go near it. We must not rely too much on our own strength for a long time to come. We have such a dirty mind full of filthy impressions that once it is really stirred up, it may create no end of troubles. Lust, hatred, greed, vulgarity, all these are lying hidden in us and waiting to make us their prey. And so we must be on our guard.

Always the trouble arises through our being too little aware of the danger in the form of a tiny and apparently insignificant ripple in the mind. The outer stimulus, even if it be a very subtle and scarcely perceptible one, gradually affects the mind. Sometimes even the memory of some old impure impression is enough to upset us, because the germ or the seed is always inside, never outside. Unless the seed be inside, it can never sprout.

Attachment in any form may be enough to muddle the brain and bring about the spiritual ruin of the aspirant, but when attachment and anger combine, the whole mind becomes chaotic, and all progress is stopped. All struggle for the Higher Life comes to an end when passion has its sway over a person. That is why we should carefully avoid any

harmful stimulus, even if it be a very subtle one, and keep our mind engaged with the higher thoughts. We should not give an opportunity to the lower propensities and impulses, and avoid as much as possible the company of persons of the other sex as well as that of those of our own sex who do not lead a strictly moral life, at least during the period of our spiritual training.

"Fill the mind with Vedantic thoughts until you fall asleep or until this body of yours drops off"

We should not give an opportunity to the passions to sway us. It is the nature of the mind to think, and if we do not give good and pure thoughts to the mind, avoiding all old impure associations, it is bound to

think of bad and impure ones. So be up and doing. Always be on your guard and follow the path intelligently and assiduously.

PRAYERS

O Lord, with the passing of every day the duration of life is seen to shorten, and youth to decay. The days that are gone do never come back; time verily is the devourer of the world. Fortune is fickle and short-lived as ripples on the surface of water, while life is momentary like a flash of lightning. Therefore, O Thou Refuge of all, do Thou even now protect me who seek refuge in Thee.

May the wicked become virtuous.
May the virtuous attain tranquillity.
May the tranquil be free from bonds.
May the freed make others free.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—VIVEKANANDA

By Nikolai Kazanzakis

[Sjt. Dilip Kumar Roy of Sri Aurobindo Asram, to whose kind courtesy we owe this translation from Greek, writes: "This is the translation of a preface written by Nikolai Kazanzakis, to a book in Greek to be shortly published by Mile. Eleni Samios, the author of *La Sainte Vie de Mahatma Gandhi*." This book is a collection of Swami Vivekananda's lectures and other writings translated from English into Greek. 'Nikolai Kazanzakis,' tells me my friend, Monsieur Jean Herbert of the League of Nations, 'is a great writer, poet and philosopher, and the author of a monumental epic poem in which he has striven to express poetically all the philosophies of the world. He has translated into Greek, Dante, Goethe and Shakespeare, is the author of a number of philosophical novels and is an advanced Yogi.'"]

AT the heart of all religions, is in travail a pan-human aspiration for the Beyond. Below the sub-soil of all rigid and fanatical dogmas which create schisms between the religions, there stirs a tremendous breath, a wind—the self-same sigh of Man, which overflows from this earth. And behind the multicoloured religious mythologies is often hidden, incomprehensibly, a Verity which is extremely simple, eternal, without

vainglorious ornaments. The lead of this aspiration, this sigh, this Verity, has shown in all times the one path which has carried the mystic soul to its salvation. For, it is at the end of this path that has always appeared the one reality to which different people and different epochs have given different names: the Idea, the Thing-in-itself, Atman, God.

There was the path, and the aim was to be united with this eternal

Reality, to be one with it. But not only to be one with it, but even more, to understand that for centuries past we have been united with it. Our road was not a going forward but a return home.

India has given birth to spiritual giants such as no other country on earth has; she has produced giants who have aspired for the Supreme Union with a glowing intensity of feeling married to a radiant intellectual luminosity. They were veritable "Bacchants of Light" — in the Hellenic acceptance of the phrase. In no other country have the "God-possessed" perceived with a similar spiritual intensity and passion that behind this series of complex phenomena there exists an Essence which is simple and immutable, that at the back of all these masks an eternal visage gazes steadfastly at the human soul with eyes that watch over and attract him like a shining beacon from behind the herbs, animals, men, ideas.

The Christian and the Mussalman mystics envisage the soul as a virgin lover who approaches more and more her supreme Beloved: the more she draws near the more she rejoices, and the more is Matter transformed into Spirit until she attains the perfect contact and enjoys the ecstasy of the supreme wedlock.

The Hindu mystic follows, often, another path. After being first persuaded by reason that there can be but one Divine Breath—the Atman—and that the human soul can but be one with this Divine Breath, each soul follows up the path along various lanes in the measure of the grace conceded to it—to return at last to its eternal birth place, that of Divinity.

The mystics of ancient Greece had followed three pathways to attain to the supreme union:

(1) God descends in man, chases away the human ego and takes possession of the body and soul.

(2) Man, through spiritual *Sadhana*, ascends to the Divine and unites with Him: he then becomes God which the Germans call 'Vergotterung' (Divinisation).

(3) God and man become one. Man does not indeed become God but he comprehends at last that he has been one with Him, in all eternity: Vergotterung.

These three paths were followed also by Gnostics, the Christian mystics and the Mussalmans. An Arab Gnostic of the second century wrote to his friend: "Do not seek God outside thy self. He is within thee. This is how thou must call to Him: 'My God, my spirit, my reason, my soul, my body'."

According to the Hindus there are four ways which lead to the supreme union: the way of Love (Bhakti Yoga), the way of Works (Karma Yoga), the way of the Intellect (Gnana Yoga) and the mystic way (Raja Yoga).

It was the way of Love that had been followed in the last century by the spiritual giant, Sri Ramakrishna of India. The human soul has rarely experienced with such a depth of intoxication the anguish and the rapture of Divine Love. Like to Maria Magdalene dei Pazzi, the mystic devotee of the Middle Ages, Sri Ramakrishna too had followed the call of the soul crying: Love! Love! Love!

Sri Ramakrishna aspired to invoke—to quote the great Byzantine mystic Nicolas Carassilas—"not only a ray of light but the entire disc of the sun."

That is why he did not want merely a Christian, a Mussalman, a Brahmin, or a Buddhist conversion: he aspired for the whole disc, to re-experience what Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Bhudda, Christ, Mahomed did. He would have nothing whatever intervene between his soul and God: no dogma, no myth, no idea, no idol. Nothing. Absolute nudity.

He had felt the same necessity of direct contact—the need so boldly and exquisitely expressed in the thirteenth century by Mechlhlde of Magdeburg.

The Lord said to the human soul:

—“ Dame Ame, reste ”

(Virgin soul, rest)

—“ Que veux-tu que je fasse, Seigneur ? ”

—“ To unclothe Thee.”

—“ O Lord, I am ashamed ! ”

—“ Dame Ame, we are one—in so much that nothing must stand between us: neither shame, nor fear; nay—nor virtue even.”

—“ Lord, here is my naked soul.”

* * *

Only words of human love can express so completely Love Divine. For either party has the same flight, the same effervescence, finding the same obstacles and the same reactions, achieving at last the perfect contact, the great joy in victory.

Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna's disciple, followed another path to find God and revealed this way to men.

Sri Ramakrishna was a Brahmin, poor, ailing, full of tenderness. Vivekananda was a Kshatriya (the caste of warriors), his family aristocratic, rich, his body that of a robust and exacting athlete. He loved the joys of the body, did not attach an inordinate importance to spiritual austerities, was not interested in religion,—

having been weaned from it all by his western education and the so-called scientific, plebeian, materialistic ideology of the epoch.

One day, in 1880, when he was about seventeen years old, he met the man who was to revolutionise his life: Sri Ramakrishna.

He sat at the feet of his *Guru* for years, and when the *Guru* died, rose, alone to preach the gospel of his preceptor. But his way was not *Bhakti-Yoga*, the path of Love: it was *Karma-Yoga*, the path of action. Vivekananda could not reach out for the supreme union save through action. He imposed on his own life a great mission, which demanded for its realisation action, movement, travel through continents, contact with men, discussions, questions and answers—struggle.

May all men join hands and understand that all religions are the same, that all Gods are but one God. May the Orient and the Occident be brothers, making their common salvation depend on their mutual contact and their collaboration. The Occident will bring her science, her technical discoveries, the feats of the intellect which subjugates matter: the Orient will bring its spiritual glory, its researches in inner life, its marvels of abstractions. Without this collaboration of the two hemispheres humanity cannot but be in perpetual danger.

In 1893, after the death of his *Guru*, Vivekananda preached at the Congress of Religions at Chicago. His voice was warm, puissant, flaming with faith. In Europe and America he preached the unity of all the religions and stressed the need of a psychic renaissance. In India he emphasised social progress, the lights of science and the need of a certain

material comfort. For he was well aware, as had been his Master before him, that “ Religion can mean little for hungry stomachs.”

Vivekananda lived from his depth and loved with the same love the men of the East and the West. Sri Ramakrishna lived in God, Vivekananda—in men. Somebody had once asked a Rabbi: “ How can one love God ? ” “ By loving man,” the priest had replied. It is thus by loving Man that Vivekananda attained the luminous sphere of his Master.

But Vivekananda was not merely a *Karma-Yogi*, an athlete of action. His voice was surcharged with human knowledge and intellectual accumen. He never sought to sweep his audience away into a mystic ecstasy: on the contrary, he sought to persuade them by reason, to enlighten their mind, to win them over by the strength of his dialectic to his own point of view so as to persuade them into collaborating with him in his work. Vivekananda was also a *Gnana-Yogi*, a master-mind of knowledge. He was what Maxime Homologete, the Byzantine mystic, called: “ The robust Man, and the robust Man is one who welds knowledge and action into a harmony.”

Sri Ramakrishna had found his salvation through love of God, through losing himself utterly in the Divine Essence. Vivekananda found his sal-

vation through love of Man, through action among men indefatigably, full of faith and love and intellectual force.

His voice was silenced abruptly on the 4th July, 1902 by death, at the age of thirty-nine.

But his immortal message had been delivered by his mortal breath. That could not die with his last breath. It lives still—this word, luminous and ardent in thousands of souls in the East and the West—it is still potent, battling and fertilising. All that Vivekananda, the mortal, contained of the immortal—was saved. His lectures taken down by his faithful stenographer and disciple Goodwin, have become the gospel of thousands of noble and pure souls, and help our fervent aspiration for love and brotherhood, even at the heart of this horrible fratricidal war of our epoch.

Let us hope that this translation in Greek of a lecture delivered by Vivekananda in California on January 28th, 1902 will not be lost upon us.

“ The inspired word sets the circumambient air in motion, and the movement increases more and more till it impinges on the human ear. There, through it, it penetrates far, into the human soul itself, and bears fruit.”

The word of the great Rabbi Machman instils courage into our hearts.

MORALITY OR RELIGION ?

By H. D. Bhattacharya, M.A. B.L., (P.R.S.)

[Mr. Bhattacharya is the Professor of Psychology in the University of Dacca. In the present article he discusses some aspects of the relation between religion and morality.]

RELIGIOUS men all over the world are to-day deploring the general decay of faith. The churches are empty and the temples do not attract the enlightened. A political leader will have a much bigger audience than an eloquent preacher; and while people will willingly listen to discourses on the health of the body, they will turn away from sermons on the good of the soul. The religious edifices that the piety of an earlier generation had built up are to-day falling fast into disrepair or crumbling into dust except when they are taken over by the Archaeological Department, and preserved only as interesting monuments for the curious tourist and not as sacred places for the devout pilgrim. Gifts to religious bodies are meagre and infrequent, and the ministers of religion carry on a precarious existence on account of the decline of religious rites and festivals. In many communities the only religious ceremonies are connected with social events like marriages that can be legalised only by the performance of some sort of religious ceremony; and even these are dwindling, as civil law is providing for the recognition of relations and contracts without the encumbrances of a religious rite. If material existence is being more and more mechanised, spiritual existence is being more and more secularised. The inevitable effect of the contact of religiously alien groups has been

the evolution of a system of relations in which the religions of the parties concerned play no part. Human relations have no longer any eternal significance and marriage is fast becoming a contract liable, like other contracts not made in heaven, to dissolution by mutual consent or by laches on the part of either of the contracting parties. The enlightened section of the community no longer believes that the omission of death-bed ceremonies by the priest or the clergy, or the denial of church burial has any effect on the destiny of the individual (if he has any destiny at all), nor are precautions taken to ensure intercessory rites for the benefit of the soul after one's death.

It is natural that with the decline of faith should disappear many social practices that drew their inspiration and sanction from the authority of religion. In primitive times the only sure way of securing compliance was to invest each social conduct with a religious sanction and to stigmatise each failure of observance not as a breach of social etiquette but as a moral and spiritual lapse. An instance in point is food-tabu which has played an important part in almost every religion. Swine's flesh would in this way compromise the salvation of every orthodox Jew, Muslim and high-caste Hindu, and the door of heaven would be closed upon every wine-bibbing Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim. Many of the scriptural

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injunctions including those against association with Gentiles and Untouchables, are, however openly defied to-day, and the laws of ceremonial cleanliness have no longer the binding force that they used to have in ancient times. Sea-voyage does not damn a Hindu soul any more—it has even ceased to bring down social ostracism in advanced sections of the community.

A variety of reasons is responsible for this new outlook on religious prescriptions. Acquaintance with other faiths has brought into light the relativity of many religious acts and ideas. What is prohibited in one religion would probably be found enjoined in another, and it would be easy to point out that the sure way of damnation in one religion is the highway to salvation in another. All religions have taken over so much from pre-existing beliefs and local superstitions that many so-called revelations are really survivals of primitive faith or tribal custom. The local and the temporary are writ large upon their face and a little critical and historical investigation exposes their human origin. Many of these prescriptions, again, are not rooted in the basic needs of individual and social life. Every moribund faith runs the risk of such a fatty degeneration and evolves prescriptions and prohibitions that round off neatly the scheme of human duties but have no foundation in the necessities of social existence.

The fact is that religion at one time included within itself a far fuller scheme of social legislation than it would do now. The ancient scriptures tried to encompass not only religious duties proper but also many social rites, just as they taught not only spiritual truths but also natural

science. With the advancing moral conceptions of the race many of the social prescriptions have failed to satisfy public conscience just as advancing scientific knowledge has exposed the crudities of many scriptural accounts of natural phenomena. If the eclipse is not caused by the swallowing of the sun or the moon by the demon or the dragon, obviously religious rites and social acts based on that supposition are useless. There may, of course, still remain a belief in the esoteric virtue of rites and acts performed at such rare astronomical moments; but it is no longer possible to base actions on theories exploded by science. Similarly, food-tabu of former times can no longer be justified by the primitive casual explanation of ancient scriptures, although it is still possible to put forward esoteric or utilitarian grounds for such prohibition.

The question is, what amount of liberty is permissible with scriptural injunctions and inhibitions and what would be the effect on morality if these are all withdrawn? There can be no doubt that 'hell-fire theology' is still the most potent instrument of social discipline so far as the general body of a religious community is concerned. No Arab would like to get after death into a place hotter than the burning deserts of his native land, nor would a Tibetan like to go to a place colder than the bleak heights of his own Himalayan plateau. There is much truth in the statement that even if God does not exist, it would be necessary to create one for social discipline; for the fear of displeasing God is still the dominant consideration for morality with the majority of the human race. If God were wholly benign and if hell were to disappear

altogether, the two primary restraints on immorality would be removed from the minds of most people. That hell is the utter loneliness of spirit, or a rumination on lost or misused opportunities of earthly existence, or a sense of remoteness from God, may appear satisfactory to the refined ethical sensibility of the writers of *WHAT IS REAL HELL?*; but there can be no doubt that the physical torments of hell are what ordinary people dread most. There is, therefore, pragmatic justification for the continuance of belief in a Divine Judge and a Divine Jail for the control of those whose submission to moral rules is dictated by the fear of the punishing rod of an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being. These people are moral only because they are religious in the sense that they believe in a divine dispenser of justice and determiner of destiny. The bribe of heaven and the threat of hell loom so large in every scripture because hedonistic motives alone have an appeal to most minds; in fact, very often even the free will of God in rewarding virtue and punishing vice has to be kept in the background, and an automatic requital of moral actions emphasised, lest people should think that the reward of merit depends upon Divine grace and is, therefore, uncertain and contingent on Divine will. The Hindus postulated the law of Karma because virtuous actions should have certain reward. Kant who fought so much for the autonomous character of the moral law and the categorical character of the moral imperative ultimately succumbed to theological blandishment and thought that without the rewarding of virtue with happiness by God there would be a gap in the ultimate scheme of

things. In other words, the principle of duty for duty's sake would not work to the end, and although Kant concerned himself with the fate of the virtuous, there is no doubt that he had in his mind also the uncomfortable destiny of the vicious as a necessary correlate of the happiness of the good. Even in religious systems, transcendental hedonism had to be imported to ensure morality.

But must men be religious in order to be moral? The lessons of evolution have thrown doubt on, if not totally discredited, the revelation of a complete ethical code to the first race of men to make them moral. In fact, the story of the rebellion of the first men against Divine injunctions (on which the doctrine of Original Sin is based) is a confession that men were no more moral at the beginning than now, if by morality is meant obedience to the law of conduct laid down by God. Even they could not understand the moral significance of an order prohibiting the use of certain food-stuff, and exercised their right of private judgment by disobeying it. We may believe that the dissociation of the moral from the religious—the socially significant from the spiritually beneficial—is an inevitable outcome of the growth of that secular culture which finds that among scriptural prescriptions there are some directions that are vitally linked up with social existence and there are others that have reference to man's real or fancied relations with the supersensible. The remarkable similarity in the decadence of religious rites all over the world can be explained only by the supposition that the esoteric and the mysterious have lost their appeal for minds trained

in scientific methods of explanation by verifiable causes. Men no longer feel that by omitting this or that injunction, of which no rational explanation can be given, they are compromising the good of their own soul or doing bad and improper act. They may obey these as a matter of habit or for social decorum or for uniformity; but the attitude of faith which alone makes them a vital possession has a tendency to evaporate with advancing scientific culture, and the obligatory character of the acts in question disappear.

But no religion can flourish on the merely mysterious—every religion must provide a basis for the moral relation of sentient creatures. Whether within the domain of these creatures is to be included any type of beings other than man, is more or less a matter of historical accident or tribal temperament. While unnecessary cruelty to dumb animals would be reprobated in most religions, not many religions would go the length of Jainism or even of Buddhism, and Vaishnavism in this matter, and imagine that before the judgment-throne of God would rise up the souls of victims belonging to the animal world and demand justice for murder or cruelty or abuse. Very often the main objection against wanton cruelty and unnecessary killing is that they harden hearts and establish a habit of callousness to the suffering even of one's own fellow-men; and the excessive use of animal food may be condemned either on hygienic or on esoteric grounds as disturbing physiological or mental balance. But, apart from such debatable contents, the different religions of the world have a fairly common fund of moral precepts regulating the relations of

the different components of the social structure. An agreed list of essential moral virtues can be easily made out; and although the meanings attached to them will often be found to be different, they no more establish the relativity of morals than the meanings of the terms like plants, animals etc., which are understood differently by the ordinary man and the expert. Even when at one time religious rites involved a negation of the right of other individuals to live, as in human sacrifice to please a god or to placate a dark spirit or to provide comforts to a just departed person in the other world, the motive was frequently to turn away an impending social danger.

If we start with the notion that morality and religion have been united in the human mind from the very beginning and that all moral relations are the outcome of religious beliefs, we shall be sorely mistaken. Religion is primarily man's attempt to come into touch and understanding with supersensible forces, not only through his intellect but through his whole personality consisting of thinking, feeling and willing. In the religious response there may in fact be an abnormal shrinkage of the social consciousness and the individual may feel that by taking up a correct attitude towards the invisible powers by which he is surrounded he is fulfilling the obligations of life, howsoever anti-social that attitude might be. Mortification of the flesh (resulting, in extreme cases, in religious suicide), asceticism, sacrificial cruelty (including human sacrifice), religious promiscuity or prostitution, religious persecution and kindred acts can be justified when we look upon them as attempts to placate the Deity without

reference to their social utility or moral justification. Possibly in some minds there is some lurking belief in their ultimate value for social life as a whole; but in many minds the single motive of their being pleasing to God or beneficial to the self would prompt those acts and occupations. A fanatical oppressor of other faiths need not always be moved by moral considerations though he may occasionally do so. That culture blunts the edge of religious zeal is due to the fact that morality is not indissolubly wedded to religion and very often outstrips the latter in the human mind. A developed moral sense often detects the crudities and contradictions of moral life which the acceptance of a particular religious belief implies. With culture, for instance, came the consciousness in

Greece, Rome and India that the pictures of the gods and the acts enjoined in imitation of their conduct were sometimes morally ignominious and not countenanced by the moral sense of the best minds of the community. There is a limit even to the power of explaining inconvenient details of divine life as symbolic or allegorical; and society has often been obliged to issue the warning that immoral divine acts are not to serve as patterns of human conduct. In fact, the Mediterranean religions perished because the gods became less moral than their devotees who, when they were obliged to make a choice between morality and religion, chose the former and abandoned the latter at first in favour of the one or other of the Mystery Religions, and ultimately of Christianity.

(To be continued)

JAN VAN RUYSBROECK

By Wolfram H. Koch

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe. India has known much about Christianity as preached by the different churches, but little of it as lived and interpreted by its saints and mystics. In the present study the reader will get a short life-sketch and a luminous string of inspiring excerpts from the writings of the eminent mystic, Ruysbroeck. The life and message of such and other kindred mystics of Europe only go to prove the great Vedantic truth that all religions in their essence stand for the same God and the same spiritual ideal.]

"The light of man is the light of thought. The light of thought is above thoughts and surpasseth all thoughts. Yet, O men, be ye not dark, be ye not untrue, unrighteous, evil robbers, wretches, lovers of the world. This, forsooth, is darkness. Light is not gone away, but ye are away from the light. The blind man in the sun hath the sun present, but he is away from the sun. Therefore is he not dark? Yet, again, the world is dark, because the lovers of the world are dark; and the world is evil because they who dwell in the world are evil, as a house is bad, not in its walls, but because of those who dwell therein."—(*Early English Instruction*)

JAN van Ruysbroeck was born in the year 1293 in a village about two miles distant from Brussels, from which he took his name, as was the custom in Mediaeval times. His family name is completely unknown,

and the very silence regarding his parentage indicates that he must have been of humble extraction. Biographers have devoted many a beautiful page to his mother who seems to have been a woman of an exceptionally strong moral character and deep faith in the higher forms of life, but his father is never mentioned in any of their works.

In 1304 he left his home and went to the house of his uncle, Jan Hinckaert, the canon of the famous cathedral of Sainte Gudule at Brussels where he received the greatest part of his education and was enabled to visit the Latin schools.

He took Holy Orders in 1317 at the age of 24, though he never rose to a higher grade than that of a Chaplain. He was placed under the direction of his uncle. The day after his ordination, while celebrating his first Mass, he experienced his first Divine ecstasy.

In 1343 he left Brussels and the world in the company of his aged uncle and of Jan van Afflinghom, generally called 'Bonus Cokus' (the Good Cook), to found the monastery of Groenendael of which he became the Prior in later years. He died on December 2nd, 1381.

Jan van Ruysbroeck is truly the last of the great speculative mystics of the Middle Ages, but his mysticism never became to him an end in itself, but the most perfect means of true and unfailing knowledge of life and its purpose. If he was able to solve the problems of many a soul and to exert his holy and far-seeing influence on those who really sought his counsel and advice with an open heart, this was chiefly due to his clear recognition of the presence and the working of the Divine in the very depths of every human

soul, however degraded and however darkened it might be by worldly and creaturely love as well as by false valuations of life. In all his teachings as well as in his life of dedication and infinite goodness, one feels, as it were, the quiet and peace of the beautiful woodlands surrounding the monastery of Groenendael (Green Valley), where he used to go to meditate and to receive the message of the Highest. He recognised very clearly that Adam's Fall was not due to evil, as such, but that it was the result of his choice between the Divine Oneness and the life of the senses. The more 'Adam' seeks his enjoyment in the sense-world and in the fulfilment of sensual desires, bodily or mental, and the more he clings to personal claims of affection, the more he goes to his ultimate ruin in the form of self-annihilation; and this of his own free will. It is not the Divine who has decreed that choice, but his own preference of sense-enjoyment and of those forms of love which are bound to the senses and to individuals.

The one obstacle between man and the Divine has always been the multiplicity of objects presented and desired by the senses, and so long as these senses are not curbed and placed unconditionally at the service of the Divine without any further thoughts of their satisfaction, none will ever be able to trace his steps back to the One where all is clarity, peace and illumination.

So Plotinus says in a beautiful passage: — "Enter into thyself and examine thyself. And if thou dost not yet find Beauty, do as the artist does, who cuts, takes away, polishes and purifies. Purify thus thy soul of all that is superfluous, straighten that which is not straight, illumine that

which is dark, and do not cease from perfecting thyself till Virtue shines before thine eyes. When thou shalt not encounter any obstacle that prevents thee from being one, when nothing foreign to thee will any longer alter the simplicity of thy most intimate essence, then go and look attentively, for it is only through the eye which opens in thee at that time, that thou canst perceive the Supreme Beauty."

Jan van Ruysbroeck's attitude and realisation find a beautiful expression in his own words: "Vos estis tam sancti sicut vultis. Tantum enim quisque sanctus est, quantum afficitur bonitati."—"You are as holy as it is your wish to be. For everyone is as holy as he is moved by good. The measure of your holiness depends solely on the excellence of your will. Look into yourself to see what is the quality of your will. Then you shall find out the value of your holiness."

He never allowed himself to become a slave to activity, but daily returned to the Divine Source within himself, asking for guidance and light and contenting himself with repeating to others what the Divine had that day revealed to him. If nothing had been revealed, he remained silent and quietly withdrew into himself, surrendering his will and all his wishes to the Divine.

According to Ruysbroeck man should never despise his body, i.e., never give himself to any lower form of bodily enjoyment and lust, because even the elements of which his body is made, can never perish, but shall have to return to the great storehouse after his death. So he should look upon them as only borrowed. The body is the precious casket in which the soul is kept, and the physi-

cal side of man's nature is, as it were, but a sub-structure on which his higher personality rests and which must be made use of for higher purposes of life. To Ruysbroeck 'spirit' is but a name for a soul which has become fit to reach Unity. This Unity ever belongs to it essentially, whether a man be a sinner or a saint. He says, "Every creature in its very essence, its life and its conservation, depends entirely on this Unity. To separate itself from God would be throwing itself into the abyss of nothingness. But this essential Unity cannot make it holy or happy without its own co-operation." To him man is always the sole arbiter of his destiny, and all those who turn their minds and hearts away from worldly attachments and affections, determined to trace their steps back to the Divine, receive by this very determination the necessary grace with the help of which they can do so. Others do not, although they, too, shall be given many an occasion again and again to mend their ways. If they persistently refuse to trace their way back to the Divine Source, they condemn themselves to the sufferings of Hell by their own free will.

Jan van Ruysbroeck distinguishes seven steps in the path which every man must follow to reach perfection.

- (1) Identification of our will with the Divine Will ;
- (2) Voluntary poverty ;
- (3) Purity of soul and perfect chastity of body in thought, word and deed ;
- (4) An intimate knowledge of our own imperfections ;
- (5) To have our pleasure in God alone ;

- (6) A definite and clear intuition arising from the purity of our thought ;
- (7) The state of 'unknowing' in unlimited rest and peace.

Any man who wishes to attain to the higher forms of life must do away with all pictured images which are not God. He must not possess anything with covetousness. He must never, under any circumstance, allow himself to become attached or bound to another person through some natural impulse or inclination, for "every attachment and every human affection encumber the heart of man, except those that are only given to God." So worldly distractions and pursuits, creaturely love and clinging to others or allowing others to centre their affection on oneself instead of on God, trying to keep a personal claim on a person's love, and unchastity in thought, word or deed, were to him the principal causes which separated man from his Divine Essence and prevented his union with the Divine, blinding him to Truth. On the other hand, purity, selflessness and non-attachment coupled with infinite kindness to all, forbearance and unshakable and single-minded devotion to the Divine were the best means of attaining to the highest communion with the Divine. The message of Truth has ever been the same in the East as in the West to people who are able to see beyond their own limited sphere of egoistic and pleasure-seeking love, and who are prepared to receive it with open ears and hearts.

About Ruysbroeck's death there is a touching, simple story which should not be left out as it shows the influence of his way of life on those around him. The brothers who were keeping watch over his body after his death,

suddenly saw him get up and go to an altar. He was dressed in his priestly robes and surrounded and permeated by a dazzling and indescribable splendour. On the following day the brothers buried their beloved prior, full of devotion and joy at having seen him whom they loved and revered with all their heart, come back to life once again. Thus the human heart ever renders homage and allegiance to those who are examples of perfect love, self-surrender and purity.

The following brief quotations are taken from three of Ruysbroeck's minor treatises: *Dat Rijke der Ghelieven* (The Kingdom of Lovers), *Een Spieghel der Eewigher Salicheit* (A Mirror of Eternal Bliss) and *Van Zeven Trappen in den Graed der Gheesteleker Minnen* (Of Seven Steps in the Degree of Spiritual Love). In the case of Jan van Ruysbroeck, no short quotations can ever give an adequate idea of his greatness and the depth of his realisation. So all people who feel a deeper interest for the message of Truth coming to us through the different instruments of the Divine should study his works in their entirety and perhaps even in the original Brabant dialect in which they were written.

THE PLACE OF THE HUMAN WILL

"You are as holy as it is your wish to be."

"No thing and no man have power over our free will, neither the celestial bodies, nor any creature, nor any thing but God alone and we ourselves."

NON-ATTACHMENT, PURITY AND CHASTITY

"There are people who would gladly receive Divine Consolation, were it to

be had without costing them anything. They believe everything to be indispensable that they may possibly obtain them and pass them on to the body for its enjoyment and well-being. But if any man thus follows the promptings of Nature and pursues indiscriminately the well-being and satisfaction of his own body, his heart becomes encumbered by this, and he loses all taste and liking for the good viands, *i.e.*, for all virtues."

"Man may eat of all fruits that are virtuous and get consolation and joy from them, always growing in grace. But the fruit of lustful desire is forbidden to him—that is, to live according to nature in sensual enjoyment. In that very hour in which the highest reason eats of that fruit of unchastity and has intercourse with women, *i.e.*, with the senses and the enemy, contrary to God's law and will, man is expelled from Paradise, naked and stripped of all virtues, and banished and separated from the Eternal Kingdom of God."

"We must hold strict watch over ourselves and guard ourselves against three sins which hold sway over the body: laziness, gluttony and unchastity. Through them many a man of good intentions has fallen into abysmal sin."

"As against gluttony, we must love and choose moderation and sobriety, always restraining ourselves and taking less than we should like, remaining satisfied with the barest necessities."

"As against laziness, we must feel in our innermost soul faithfulness and right intention, and have compassion for all misery, and outwardly we must quickly and zealously be ready for anyone who is in need of

us, according to our capacity, discrimination and conscience."

"As against unchastity, we must avoid and flee from all loose and worldly company and associations, and from all intimacy with those of the world, as far as our outward conduct is concerned, and inwardly we must flee from and avoid all impure imaginations and mental pictures, so that we do not pay any attention to them, nor dwell on them with lustful desire, for by so doing we should become deformed and impure in nature."

"We should strictly guard ourselves against all impure, worldly and evil company, that is, against all those who are unchaste, who love telling lies, who swear and blaspheme God, and who are impure in their words and deeds. Such should be avoided, and we should flee from them as from the Enemy in Hell. Guard your eyes and your ears, so that you may not see nor hear what is forbidden."

"Therefore keep yourself pure, love to be alone, flee from all manifoldness; do your devout practices, busying your hands with good work. Avoid inordinate and lustful pleasures, and do not be in love with yourself. Love Life and Truth. And even if you find yourself to be pure, avoid the very occasion to sin."

"Love that is wrong stultifies the poor mind and blinds the reason of man. Men seek pleasure that is foreign to their true essence and thus cannot reach that wealth which is Unity. That which renders it so difficult to receive the Eternal, is to live in unchastity."

"If you must speak to a person, be he spiritual or worldly, be cautious, reserved and dignified, well-ordered in words and manners, so

that no one may feel angry with you, and always prefer listening and silence to speaking. Be just, truthful and frank, in words and in works, in doing and in leaving undone, and inwardly always walk before the eyes of God. And if you become distracted through speaking and answering, and feel drawn away from union with God, realising and being aware of this, you should be ashamed of yourself, and with undivided contemplation quickly again enter into yourself before the face of God. And so long as you are able to enter into yourself whenever you wish to do so, keeping perfect mastery over yourself, you will have peace and you will live without deadly sins. Therefore I advise you to avoid and flee from cares and restlessness of heart, from the unsteadiness and manifoldness of men, especially of worldly men, unpractised in spiritual or God-devoted life. Seek and desire alone an inward, burning life, and practise this till self-communion and insight with comprehending eyes become as easy and ready as the searching out and looking out with the physical eyes. And if you must use your five senses for the sake of your maintenance, or that of your fellow men, guard your ears and your eyes in order not to take in anything which may distract your heart with pleasure, with lust or with love, and which may draw it away from God and stand between you and Him. Should inordinate love and lust take hold of you, you would lose the mastery over yourself and the free self-communion in which lies all your bliss. Be moderate also in food and in drink as well as in all that your body needs, so that you do not live according to the clamourings of your flesh and of the lust of Nature. For if you find plea-

sure and lust in yourself or in any creature, you have already turned away from God and cannot live for Him, and so will die in sin."

TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS

"This is Righteousness: to be emptied of all creatures and be free from anxiety for them; to be lifted up in intention, desire, soul, body, eyes, hands, and in all that one can do; to give God praise and honour in time and in Eternity; and not to seek joy in creatures and created things, for that produces manifoldness and hinders righteousness. But he who lives thus in Love, is never without great joy."

"The joyful Bliss of God lies in qualitylessness and in the dissolution of the person into that undifferentiated Essence of God."

"In four ways man can see whether he be righteous and guided by Christ in the strength of the Holy Ghost. The first is whether one leaves to God all that one needs in time and in Eternity, and whether one is faithful to God in all that one possesses and in all that one can do. The second is whether one cherishes compassion in will and in works for all human misery and distress, be it bodily or spiritual. The third point is whether one remains patient and mild in all that may befall one from God or from creatures. The fourth is an elevated mind, free from and uncaught by any creature or creaturely love, in a single and steady affection, in a joyful waiting for the Eternal Kingdom with a firm faith. These four points make man righteous in active life. There are four other points which make him righteous in contemplative life. The first is a free mind, holding on to Love and lifted up in desire for Unity. The second is a clear under-

standing of the wonder of the wealth of the Trinity, and contemplating without surprise that immeasurable clarity, becoming transformed into it and being lifted up in the light of Oneness. The third is a joyful inclination and an absorbed holding of all one's powers for God, surrounded and permeated and flooded by greater wealth and joys than these powers

of the world could ever give. The fourth is becoming absorbed and lost in that one Object. None may walk in darkness, for thereby one remains lost in Eternity which is the highest bliss. These four points together with the four previous ones make man righteous in contemplation and righteous in action."

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

[OR THE GOSPEL OF DIVINE LOVE ACCORDING TO SAGE NARADA]

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of Sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Gnani* as well as a *Bhakta*. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRA 2.

Bhakti may be viewed from the standpoint either of the aspirant or of the realised man. In the former view it is the means of achievement—the *Apara* or *Gauni Bhakti*. In the latter, known as *Para Bhakti*, it is the result, and is the expression in actual life. As a tree should be known by its best and most well-developed fruit, Narada begins by giving us, in the next *Sutra*, a description of *Para Bhakti*. To identify anything, one must note its similarities and dissimilarities with ordinary known phenomena. This is what is attempted in the following *Sutra*.

सा तु अस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा । २

सा = That (*Bakhti*) तु = but
अस्मिन् = in This परमप्रेमरूपा = of the nature of supreme Love (*भवति* is).

2. But¹ that² is of³ the nature of supreme⁴ Love of This⁵

NOTES 1. *But*.—This is meant to draw the attention of the aspirant to the fact that the scientific idea of

devotion is somewhat different from the crude notions of the ordinary man full of desires. People approach various supernatural beings such as *Devas*, *Pltris*, etc., through rites and ceremonies, and offer gifts and sacrifices out of fear for them and to ward off their wrath. Or they may try to propitiate them in expectation of some gain in return. This kind of devotion is not worthy of the name of *Bhakti*.

Again though the *Bhagavata* and other *Puranas* say that even fear, anger and other emotions, if directed against God Himself, can lead to *Mukti*, Narada is not prepared to call it *Bhakti*, nor to advocate such practices.

The following quotations inculcate the kind of devotion through feelings contrary to love, with which Narada is not in agreement: "They indeed lose themselves in Hari, who constantly cherish towards Him the feelings of love, hatred, fear, friendliness, oneness or goodwill" (*Bhag. X, 29-15*).

"On whatever object a corporeal being may concentrate his whole mind with his intellect, either through love or through hate or through fear, he attains the form of that very object" (*Bhag. XI, 9, 22*). "I believe that some *Asuras* are also devotees of Vishnu, their minds being impregnated with *Bhakti* through the medium of anger" (*Bhag. III, 2, 24*). But to follow the footsteps of a *Kamsa* or *Sisupala* would be to court disaster, in the case of an ordinary man. These illustrations are given in the *Puranas* only to show how much more easy it would be to obtain salvation through *Bhakti* or love when God is so gracious as to save even his enemies. This is made clear in the following statement of *Atri Smriti*: "Remembering Govinda even through hatred, *Sisupala* attained Heaven. What to say of those who are devoted to Him!" *Sandilya* also makes the point clear in his 6th *Sutra*. He says, "Devotion is of the nature of love, because it is the converse of hate and because it is expressed by the word *Rasa* in *Taittiriya Upanishad II, 7*" (*Sandilya VI 6-7*). Moreover in *Gita XVI, 16* it is specifically mentioned that all those who hate God go in for spiritual ruin. Another reason for the *Bhakti* scriptures giving these illustrations of *Sisupala* and others is to show that, if at all anger has to be shown, it is better to sublimate it by directing it to God, for then in the long run there is at least a chance of remembering the Lord. It is with this view that Narada himself refers to it in *Sutra 65*.

Bhakti should not also be confused with mere emotional excitement or eroticism, as is often done, nor with fanaticism which sometimes passes for

religiosity and leads to all kinds of sectarian quarrels and bloodshed. It is not even mere credulousness or blind belief or faith in whatever the priests may put into one's head, nor what the so-called *Sastras*, good, bad and indifferent, may be interpreted to say. It is not also scriptural knowledge or logic-chopping or metaphysical speculations.

2. *That*.—Refers to the *Bhakti* referred to in the previous *Sutra*. In Sanskrit the third personal pronoun is often used to denote *Prasiddhi* or common knowledge. The word may therefore be taken to indicate that *Bhakti* is already well known to all; only its real nature and implications are not clearly grasped by all. Hence the necessity for a clear definition. There is also a subtle suggestion that the experience of *Bhakti* is not a rare, isolated, individual, subjective hallucination eluding all scientific treatment, but that it is a common experience of all devotees, and as such deserves careful consideration at the hands of all lovers of truth, and is fit to be made the subject of enquiry and study in a scientific spirit.

3. *Of the nature of*.—The expression conveys the sense that real *Bhakti*, being a transcendental experience of bliss, is different from ordinary love, and can never be expressed adequately in words. Cf. *Tait. Up. II, 4*: "Whence all speech turns back, with the mind, without reaching. He who knows the bliss of Brahman fears not at any time." The author himself adverts to it in *Sutras 51 & 52*. But Narada as an exponent of the doctrine of *Bhakti* has in some way or other to convey his meaning through words and analogies. Hence he has to adopt the method of ex-

plaining the unknown in terms of the known, *i.e.*, convey an idea of transcendental experience in terms of common love. The word *Rupa*, meaning, 'of the nature of', is used only to convey this implication.

4. *Supreme Love*.—This is to distinguish *Bhakti* from ordinary human love between the sexes. Supremacy of Love consists in three things. First, it should be such as is not based upon selfishness or egoism, and must be untainted by any base ulterior motive such as fear or gain. Secondly, it should be such as to prevent any other worldly love in the mind of the devotee. Thirdly, there should be complete self-forgetfulness on the part of the lover.

The word *Prema* or Love ordinarily suggests that there must be three entities, *viz.*, the lover, the beloved and the bond of love between them. It is a bone of contention between different schools of thought as to whether any sense of distinction between the three can be felt in the highest spiritual experience. The *Advaitins* deny any such distinction, but the other schools insist that Love or enjoyment of bliss cannot be where there is no such distinction. It is, however, commonly admitted by both the schools that the intensity of the experience may be such as to make the lover forget himself for the moment in the midst of his enjoyment. The difference between the two schools of thought is therefore confined to the question whether the individuality of the experiencing soul is actually lost or not. This is, however, only a metaphysical question with which the *Bhakti* scripture is not primarily concerned.

It would seem, however, that from the point of view of Love also, the

union between the lover and the beloved can be said to be complete only where there is absolute merging of the lover in the Beloved, *i.e.*, when the ego completely disappears. This is indeed the highest experience of all saints as we find it described in the literatures of the world. For example, Sri Suka says in *Bhagavata* X, 29, 15, "Those indeed lose themselves in Hari." So also in describing the Divine Love of a Gopi the *Bhagavata* X, 30, 19 says, "A Gopi whose mind is given to Krishna places her arm on another and says, 'See, I am Krishna'." Again in XI, 12, 12, the *Bhagavata* says, "Their heart and mind being fastened on Me in devotion, they were not conscious of their body, or what was far or near, just as sages are not, while in deep meditation, or as rivers that have entered the sea water are not distinguished by name and form." Again in X, 30, 43 of the same book it is said: "Their hearts given to Him, they talked of Him alone; they imitated his sportful activities; they could not think of themselves as different from Him. They sang only of his excellent attributes; they did not think of their homes."

The same idea is beautifully illustrated by the Sufi poet who describes how in spite of repeated knockings at his Beloved's door, the latter did not deign to open it until he so far forgot himself as to answer, in reply to a query from within, "I am thyself." Jalaludin Rumi says, "Then shall we rise from the angels and merge in the Nameless." Al Hujviri, another Sufi, says, "When a man becomes annihilated from his attributes, he attains perfect subsistence. He is neither far nor near, neither stranger nor intimate, neither sober nor intoxicated, neither separated nor united; he has

no name or sign or brand or mark." (Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali, Pp. 172, 213). Al Hallaj, the Sufi martyr, says, "I am the truth, I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I." According to Jami, 'I' and 'thou' have here no place, and are but phantasies, vain and unreal" (Browne's Literary History of Persia). Cf. also Mohammed's 'Inni-an-Allahu la ilaha illa Ana' which is an exact translation of Isaiah: "Verily, I, even I, am God, and there is none else."

Witness again the saying of Jesus, "I and my Father are One." Ruysbroeck, the Dutch mystic, says, "We have lost ourselves, and been melted away into the Unknown Darkness." Speaking of his experience, the philosopher and mystic John Scotus Eriugena says, "In this state of mystical ignorance, we plunge into the Divine Darkness and lose ourselves in Its life." According to the Neo-Platonists, the highest stage of union with God cannot be realised by thought, and is possible only in a state of ecstasy in which the soul transcends its own thought, loses itself in the soul of God, becomes one with God. Averroes, the Moorish philosopher of Spain, says that "it (the individual soul) becomes one with the Universal Spirit or is absorbed in It." According to Bonaventura, "The soul transcends itself, enters upon a stage of holy ignorance, and becomes one with the Divine will through love." According to the German mystic Eckhart "The soul does not stop till it has passed beyond all differences and has entered the silent desert, into which no difference has ever penetrated, which is immovable and supreme over all oppositions and divisions." Again in another place he says, "Whoever

would see God must be dead to himself and buried in God." According to Schelling, the goal is a return to God, to be realised in a mystical intuition in which the soul strips off its selfhood, and becomes absorbed in the Absolute. Cf also Goethe's lines:

By nothing godlike could the heart be won

Were not the heart itself Divine.

5. *Of This*.—The expression refers to the object of Love, namely God. Narada is very careful not to use any metaphysical or theological expression such as *Brahman*, *Isvara*, *Bhagavan*, *Atma*, etc., nor personal names like Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, etc., lest his teaching should be taken to be sectarian. The indefinite neuter pronoun is very suggestive of the transcendence and immanence of God, as 'this' in contrast to 'that' shows something very near. The object of *Bhakti* is the Soul of our own souls, the *Antaryamin* of the *Upanishads*. The first personal or second personal pronoun would have been mistaken for the subject or object of relative knowledge, and would have given rise to the false notion of God being merely personal. Throughout his work, Narada does not attempt a definition of God as in the *Brahma Sutras*, for he feels that to describe God is to bring Him down to the level of the finite object of relative knowledge. In fact all descriptions of God can be only relative to the stage of spiritual development of the aspirant, and must be coloured by the predilections, capacities, and needs of the person describing, or to whom the description is addressed.

There is a good deal of controversy as to whether God is with form or without it, whether He is personal or impersonal, whether He is with attri-

butes or not, whether He is the material cause or efficient cause or both, etc. These disputes, we must remember, are relevant only to the relative plane of *Sadhana*. Each view is only a partial view of the whole truth. On the doctrine of the Chosen Ideal, each aspirant may conceive Him in his own way as the most perfect and ideal being that he can think of, so as to suit his own capacities and needs, and then love and worship that ideal with his whole heart. Only he should have charity enough to give the same freedom of thought and worship to others, and not to trespass on their individual rights. The aspirant must also not forget that his God is nothing else than his own view of the Truth from his level of spiritual development, and that the God of another is but another view of the same Truth from another standpoint.

The sage Sandilya notes the difference of opinion between Vyasa and Kashyapa on the nature of the Deity to be realised, and reconciles both views in his *Sutras* 29, 30 and 31 thus: "Kashyapa declares that realisation refers to Iswara or the Lord, because God is immeasurably superior to the worshipper. Vyasa says it refers to the *Atman*. Sandilya says that it refers to both, for ultimately both are the same, because of Scriptural authority and reasoning." The *Chandogya Up.* III, 14, 1-4 shows that *Brahman* to be worshipped and realised is the same as the *Atman* seated in the heart. The great *Mahavakyas* such as *Aham Brahmasmi*, etc., echo only the same truth. So also in *Gita* XIII, 3, Bhagavan Krishna says that He is himself the *Kshetrajna*. *Brahma Sutra* IV, 3 says that the *Sruti* texts acknowledge *Brahman* as the self and also teach

others to realise it as such, and Sankara commenting on the same quotes the Jabala *Sruti*, "I am indeed Thou, O Lord, and Thou art indeed Myself," as showing the nature of real worship. Thus it is a case of a man loving his own higher self or nature, his own real self, which he has forgotten, and which for purposes of *Sadhana* is conceived of in the beginning as something different from but infinitely superior to him. The God thus worshipped is the man's ideal of his own future greatness into which he has to develop himself by effort. *Sadhana* thus begins with separating in imagination the God within from the empirical self and investing Him with all the noble qualities which one would like to develop in oneself but which one has not got at present. The individual gradually acquires all the fundamental characteristics of the ideal, i.e., God, and in course of time feels himself as part of God and finally realises Him as His own self. This is echoed in the famous lines: "When I think of myself as embodied being, I am your servant; when I think of myself as an individual soul, I am part of you; but when I realise 'I am *Atman*,' I am one with you. This is my firm conviction."

The various objective ideals which devotees worship according to their spiritual development may be classified as follows:

1. The object may be a Personal God like Vishnu, Shiva, etc.
2. It may be a concrete representation of such Deity, or a symbol such as a *Pratika* or *Pratima* which would remind him of the Personal God.
3. It may be an actual man in flesh and blood such as an *Avatar*. *Vide Sandilya Sutras* 46 and 55: "Such devotion may be

directed towards the incarnations of God also. The same results from devotion to well-known incarnations also." 4. The object may be one's own *Guru*. 5. It may be not any one special individual, but humanity as a whole. 6. It may not merely be humanity but the whole world conceived as the manifestation of the Supreme Being. 7. It may be the *Antaryamin* or inner controller of all the objects in the world. 8. It may be one's own transcendental *Atman*.

But *Para Bhakti* or the higher Love is possible only if Love is directed towards these, after the realisation of the transcendental experience referred to above, and these objects of worship are loved as the devotee's own self. That the devotee may continue to keep his identity separate even after this transcendental experience is attested to by many authorities. *Vide Bhagavatam*: "Sages delighting in their own self, though they are free from all fetters, still continue to be devoted to the Personal God. That is the special merit of Hari."

There are many persons of the highest spiritual realisation who retain a little of their individuality to enjoy the bliss of the company of God, for they say that it is better to taste sugar than become one with it. Others again desire to serve the world and for that keep their individuality. A third set of *Bhaktas* never cares about keeping their individuality or giving it up but surrenders the will to God and allows Him to make use of it in any way He likes. But in every one of these instances, we should remember that the individuality of the man before and after realisation is not the same. The old natural

man has vanished for ever, and only the divine man remains.

In *Bhagavatam* XI, 2 and 45 to 47 Hari Himself speaks about various grades of *Bhaktas*. "He is the foremost of *Bhaktas* who finds in every being the God that is his own self, and finds all these beings in his own self which is God. He is a middling devotee who cherishes affection, friendly feeling, compassion and indifference respectively towards *Iswara*, to his devotees, to the ignorant and to those who hate Him. He is a beginner who worships with faith Hari in images only and not in His devotees and others." Again in *Mahanirvana Tantra* we read: "The highest stage is to be always living in the consciousness that you are *Brahman*, next comes the stage of meditation on the Divine Being, next in order comes prayer, *Japam* etc. External worship is the lowest of all." In another text we read: "The ordinary man's God is in water, an intelligent man's God is in the heavens, of the children in stocks and stone, but the wise man's God is in his own self." Yet another text says: "The highest is the truly and inherently natural condition of self-realisation, wherein the Self realises its own all-inclusive nature; next comes the meditation of various divine beings, the third is worship of images, and the fourth is worship by offering *Homa* and going on pilgrimages." "The God of the man of ritual is in the fire, the God of the man of feeling is in the heart, the God of undeveloped minds is in images, but the God of the man of knowledge is everywhere." "They who cannot find Shiva, the Supreme God, in their own self, seek for that outside, in holy places. The Yogis see it, not in images but in themselves."

We thus find that the *Bhakta*, according to Narada, is the same as the *Jivanmukta* described in Laghu Yoga-vasishta Ramayana 5th Sarga, the *Brahmana* described in Anusasanika Parva, Chap. 251 of Mahabharata, the *Gunita* described in Gita, Chapter XIV., the *Sthithapragna* described in Gita, Ch. II, the *Bhakta* mentioned in Gita, Chapter XII, and the *Ativarnasrami* described in Suta Samhita, Mukti Khand, 5th Chapter. The identification of all these is made in *Jivanmukti Viveka* Chapter I by Vidyaranya who says :

स्मृतिषु जीवन्मुक्तः स्थितप्रज्ञमगवद्भक्तगुणातीत-
ब्राह्मणातिवर्णश्रम्यादिनामभिः तत्तत्रव्यवहृत्यते ।
The *Jivanmukta* is called in different *Smritis* by various names such as *Sthithapragna* and others mentioned above.

Thus Narada's *Para Bhakti* is something different from what ordinary people understand by it. It is the culmination of all spiritual practice by any or all the *Yogas* whatsoever, manifesting itself in actual life as unselfish love for love's sake towards God in all the creatures who

are seen to be the same as one's own self, and expressing itself in the form of unselfish service in the spirit of worship.

To summarise our discussion, the *Sutra* conveys the following meaning: Divine Love, which forms the topic of this book, is not of a bargaining type, nor an erotic feeling, nor a fanatical zeal. It is not also a remembrance born of hatred. It is of the nature of supreme Love—supreme because it is transcendental and free from all worldly taint, and it is yet called Love because, being inexpressible in a direct manner, some idea of it can be conveyed only through terms connected with well-known phases of worldly love. Its uniqueness consists in that it is directed towards the Supreme Being who is not the God of a creed or sect, but the transcendent and immanent Deity forming the Self of all and objectified for purposes of devotion. The highest love for Him can, however, be had only when the devotee realises Him as his own self, and then objectifies Him as the centre of his devotion.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Srimad Bhagavadgita Rahasya Vol. II :
By Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B.A., LL.B. Published by Tilak Bros., Lokamanya Tilak Mandir, 568, Narayan Peth, Poona City. Price, Parts 1 & 2 together Rs. 10. Pages, 1210.

We had occasion to publish an elaborate review of the first part of this book some time back. The second volume contains the remaining part of the elaborate Introduction, which is not complete in the first volume, and the text of the Gita together with the English translation of it and of Tilak's commentary verse by verse. Since we have already written at length about

the standpoint taken by Tilak in the interpretation of the Gita, we do not add anything more on the subject in this connection. Suffice it to say that the author's main effort is to show that the Gita supports the advaita philosophy, and that, unlike the common notion entertained by Advaitins, it does not find any conflict between an active life devoted to the fulfilment of one's social and civic duties, and the realisation of Non-duality.

In point of erudition and philosophical profundity, this modern commentary on the Gita is in no way inferior to its compeers by the great Acharyas of the past, and the Gita lovers all the world over will

find it immensely helpful to gain a deeper understanding of the great scripture. Since the author has dealt at length with the subject matter of the Gita in his elaborate Introduction, his comments are mainly meant to elucidate the meaning of the text, and for interpretation and discussion of the philosophical problems involved, the reader is given references to the pages and chapters of the Introduction. The value of the present edition is enhanced by the indices of the stanzas and words of the Gita, as well as by those relating to the authors referred to in the book, and to the definitions of technical Sanskrit terms used.

The translator especially requires a word of praise for the very lucid rendering he has made into English of this book of first rate importance.

Dasopanishads : With the Commentary of Sri Upanishad-Brahmayogin. Vol. II. (Sanskrit). Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Price Rs. 5.

We had the pleasure of introducing to our readers through our review columns the special features of this edition of the Dasopanishads while noticing the first volume of the book in our October issue for 1936. The second part comprises the two remaining Upanishads, viz., the Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka, with the commentary of Upanishad-Brahmayogin. This volume thus completes a set of seven volumes incorporating all the 108 Upanishads uniformly accompanied by the commentary of the same author. As we have pointed out on the previous occasion, although the commentator closely follows Sri Sankaracharya, his work is in no way a replica of the great Acharya's

Bhashya. In many places he interprets in a more concise and lucid way, and sometimes cites parallel quotations from the minor Upanishads. The editors have done their work in a very praiseworthy manner. Unlike many other editions, here the textual words occurring in the course of the commentary are given in a bolder face so that the work may be serviceable even to the beginners. The text units are printed distinctly and without splitting, so that the book will be of use to those who would like to choose this edition for their *Parayanam*. The edition contains also an index of names, a table of detailed contents and a list of significant terms. It is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to studies in the Upanishads.

Brahmavidya : Vol. I, Part 1. The Adyar Library Bulletin, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

With the completion of the Upanishad series, the authorities of the Adyar Library have started the above quarterly bulletin for the purpose of making the priceless treasures of the Adyar Library known to the lovers of Oriental learning all over the world. The first part of this Bulletin, which is before us, gives an earnest of the superior excellence and critical scholarship we may expect in the ensuing parts which promise to be a mine of information not only to professional students of Indology, but also to general students of religion, philosophy and aesthetics. Besides the originals of Madhava's Commentary on Rig-Veda and Asvalayana's Grihya Sutra with the Commentary of Devaswami, we have here for the first time translated into English, Advayataraka, Amritanada, Amritabindu and Kshurika Upanishads.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Swami Avinashananda in Fiji.

Swami Avinashananda, deputed by the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission in response to a long-standing and repeated request made by the South Indian Association of Fiji, arrived at Suva by the R. M. S. Niagara on 21st May, and a public reception was accorded to him at the Town Hall on the next day by the Indian repre-

sentatives of the Colony with Dr. C. M. Gopalan on the chair. The Hall was full with a large crowd brimming with enthusiasm and joyous expectation at the revived memories of the people's deep spiritual link with the mother country. Following the several speeches made by distinguished Indian residents of the place, the Swami rose amidst great ovation to address the

crowded audience. He thanked the general public for the very touching reception and expressed his extreme pleasure to find the Indians living thousands of miles away from India still mindful of their heritage from the mother land. He also impressed on the audience that it was the principle of the Mission which he represented, to eschew all connection with politics, and to serve humanity forgetting all difference of creed, caste, colour, nationality or race. Therefore he requested the Indian residents of the Colony to cultivate among themselves the spirit of unity, brotherly love, co-operation, and above all, of a high, upright, ethical life.

The enthusiasm was as wide-spread as the reception was rousing. Visitors who sought interviews were innumerable, and the excellent services of the Volunteer Corps was highly useful. Next day a car procession with the Swami went through six districts. On the route at more than thirty places the Swami was warmly received and profusely garlanded. In many places he addressed monster meetings in English, Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani. At Nandi he was presented a welcome address. All the Indian community joined hands in this function and thus demonstrated how a spiritual emissary from the mother country can infuse a sense of cultural unity in the minds of Indians hailing from different provinces and living far away from their mother land.

Swami Siddheswarananda's departure to Paris.

At the request of some friends of the Vedanta movement in Paris, Swami Siddheswarananda has sailed to attend the Philosophical Congress that is being held there. Since many friends of India in France desire to have in their country a representative of the Ramakrishna Order who could help in bringing about a closer spiritual contact between Europe and India, it is hoped that the Swami will stay on for some time in Paris to study the possibilities of opening a permanent centre

of service there for the spread of Vedantic ideas.

Sri Ramakrishna Thondar Sangham, Report for 1936.

The main objects of this Sangham are :—
(1) To gather a band of workers whose ideal is service to the poor and the illiterate, and to train them for such service in a spirit of worship. (2) To work among the poor and the illiterate in order to relieve them of their poverty, sickness and ignorance, and spread education and culture among them. The membership of the Sangham is open to all who are ready to devote at least one hour's labour of love. There are at present 20 members on the role as against 12 during last year, states the report which is published in October, 1936. The activities of the Sangham are confined mainly to three poor settlements of Mylapore named respectively as Ramakrishnapuram, Pallakkumaniam and Punthottam. There are three night schools conducted in these three places all the year round. These night schools are attended by 95 pupils of which 26 are girls. Some of them attend day schools and a few others get general training and training in stitching. A small library of 200 books and the Panchayats as well as a Thrift Society are among the other works of the Sangham for the general welfare of the people. Bhajanas and festivals at stated intervals are conducted, and this has a direct influence over the social life of the people. Through lantern slides and other devices propaganda is also made for spreading ideas of hygiene and sanitation among the poor settlers. In co-operation with the Guild of Service the Sangham members visited the hospital over 50 times for distributing books and magazines to patients and for entertaining them with gramophone songs. Fire relief at Bhimanpet and the extended activities at Kattu Koil Cherries are special items of works done this year. The total number of hours devoted to the service by the members during the year is 2,667. The Sangham hopes to extend its work if more hands and means are forthcoming.

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September-1937

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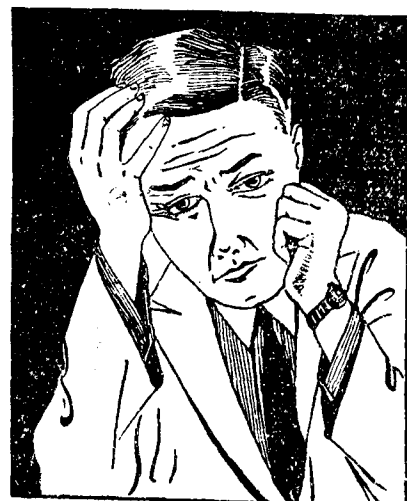
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—*Swami Vivekananda*

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[No. 5

HINDU ETHICS

वाङ्मनोभ्यां शरीरेण शुचिः स्यादनहंकृतः । प्रशान्तो ज्ञानवान् भिक्षुनिरपेक्षश्चेत् सुखम् ॥
यश्चेन परमं धर्मं सर्वभूतसुखावहं । दुःखान्निःसरणं वेद तत्त्वज्ञः स सुखी भवेत् ॥
तस्मात् समाहितं बुद्ध्या मनो भूतेषु धारयेत् । नापध्यायेन्नस्पृहयेन्नाबद्धं चिन्तयेदसत् ॥
अयामोषप्रयत्नेन मनो ज्ञाने निवेशयेत् । सुवाचोऽथ प्रयोगेण मनोज्ञं संप्रवर्तते ॥
कल्कापेतामपरुषामनुशंसामपैशुनीम् । ईदृगल्पं च वक्तव्यमविक्षिप्तेन चेतसा ॥
निःसन्देहमनीहो वै मुक्तः सर्वपरिग्रहैः । विविक्तचारी लब्धाशी तपस्वी नियतेन्द्रियः ॥
ज्ञानदग्धपरिक्लेशः प्रयोगरतिरात्मवान् । निष्प्रचारेण मनसा परं तदगधिच्छति ॥

A monk shall be pure in body, mind and speech. Untainted by the least trace of egoism, he should conduct himself calmly, wisely and contentedly, without looking for anything to turn up. He who understands this highest way of life, which brings about the happiness of all living beings and opens the door of escape from all misery, shall know the Truth and be happy. He should therefore direct his mind towards all beings, having controlled it by his intellect. Never should he think of evil, never covet nor reflect on anything which does not become his high state or which is not right for him to entertain. And then he should engage his mind in the acquisition of wisdom, devoting himself steadily to this work without frittering away his energies. Words of spiritual import bring about the happiness of all. With a perfectly undistracted mind, he should speak sparingly words that are kind and absolutely free from hypocrisy, cruelty and calumny. Devoid of doubts, free from possessions, living away from the company of the vulgar, abstemious in food, given to an austere life, having the senses controlled, with sins burnt by wisdom, applying himself to spiritual practices, and always self-possessed, the monk becomes endowed with an unwavering mind, and gains the Supreme.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 217. Verses 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20 & 21.

UNIVERSAL RELIGION—TRUE AND FALSE

[The doctrine of the validity of all religions rests on our conception of the nature of religious truth. In the following paragraphs we have discussed the nature of religious truth from one point of view.]

I

 F all human institutions that claim to embody truth, religion is perhaps the one that has been most persistent and uncompromising in maintaining such a claim. In fact no attack on a religion is resented so seriously as a denial of its truth. That accounts for the ineffectiveness of the hesitant plea put forward by some modern thinkers on behalf of religion, that religion deserves to be preserved as a means for providing man with certain urgent emotional satisfactions, although its central doctrines are without any truth behind them.

But yet, in spite of the vehemence of conviction that religionists have in this respect, it is to be noted that many of the acute thinkers of the world have been very tardy in giving any serious consideration to this conviction. They point out in justification of their attitude that, by their very nature, religious dogmas and religious sects contradict our conception of truth, and that this can be very easily understood if we compare religion with science. Apart from all logical or metaphysical definitions of it, truth, as common sense tells us, presses itself on the attention of all alike, compelling their attention, and as a consequence whatever embodies vital truths gradually overcomes the passions and prejudices of men, and tends to bring about unanimous acceptance of it on their part. This, for example has been the

case with science. It has placed before mankind as a whole, irrespective of time, culture and climate, a body of truths which find acceptance at the hands of all. No doubt, scientists may differ in their opinions in regard to phenomena at the start of their enquiry, but as their investigations proceed and their experiments are perfected, these differences diminish and tend towards a unanimity of view. The same cannot be said of religion; for though the great religions of the world have been flourishing for centuries, the differences in their dogmas and allegiances continue to be as acute as at any time in the past. In spite of the vast strides that the study of comparative religions have made in recent times, except for a sort of unanimity in point of aspiration, it is doubtful whether any one can cull out a set of fundamental doctrines and practices on which all religionists are unanimously agreed. This irreconcilability of the principal tenets of religions is one of the chief reasons that makes them a suspect in the eye of many a deep thinker of to-day who has been brought up in the scientific way of thinking.

But what is still more damaging to the claim of religions to possess any truth at all, is the way in which religions have behaved in the face of their mutual differences. When scientists differ in their views, they take their difference as an indication of the imperfection of their theories, and

II

therefore experiment and observe more carefully until they arrive at unanimity. But religionists all the world over have, under such circumstances, been noticed to indulge in mutual recrimination, and, if allowed their own way, even burst out into fits of violence leading to bloodshed and forms of cruelties which even animals are incapable of. A thoughtful and cultured mind feels by an instinct as it were that pure truth cannot be where such debasing partisanship is the general order. He looks at science and sees no such hatred and bloodshed indulged in, in its sphere of enquiry after truth. He naturally concludes therefore that concord, harmony and enlightenment form the trail of truth while passion, prejudice and violence indicate the sphere of ignorance.

To those who are convinced of the utility of religion in the life of man, these considerations would seem important in facilitating the religious adjustment that man is seeking to-day. It is sometimes thought that the talk of universal religion is only a pastime of intellectual idlers, having no relation to the everyday religious life of the common man. But the type of criticism referred to above would show the fallacy of such a complacent estimate. It is because the common man has not been led to think deeply on the nature of the religious truth and about the question of its universality that the circumstances favouring the adverse criticisms mentioned before have cropped up. The problem of universal religion is therefore as "live" an issue to-day as that of a World State or that of an equitable distribution of the world's resources among the nations.

There have been two divergent theories of religious universalism. These may be called the Semitic and the Hindu types, according to their origin. The Semitic type is embodied to-day in Christianity and Islam, the two pre-eminently Semitic religions. The religious universalism it upholds is patterned after the universalism of mathematics, tinged with a sense of history. In mathematics the proposition that two and two make four is the same for all. In the same way the truths of religion, and the way of salvation upheld by it, must be the same for all, and as a consequence those who accept that truth and that way alone could possibly gain salvation, while the rest must necessarily be doomed to perdition. Christianity would also maintain that the way of salvation has a historical reference. It traces man's spiritual degeneracy or sinful state to the disobedience of the Divine commandment by his first parents. This original sin has, as it were, been inherited by their progeny, and man can get rid of it only by faith in the atoning virtue of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. It is easy to see that, if the historical events referred to in this doctrine and their relation to man's salvation were inexorable like natural laws, applicable to all humanity, then the religion embodying them is the only true religion, even in a mathematical sense.

Although a doctrine of this type has an appeal to the naive mind because of its definiteness and its appeal to the mathematical sense, yet every thoughtful person feels there is something amiss with it. In the first place, in spite of its pretentious mathematical setting, the conviction a religion

of this type carries is not in any way compelling, except on those who are emotionally open to its suggestive influence. It is this fact that has necessitated the use of either violence or of questionable forms of propaganda to spread the so-called truths of this type, which is never done in the case of scientific truths.

Next, being historical events, their occurrence is always liable to doubts, and even if accepted, they can be interpreted in ways quite different from what the pious mind conceives them to be. And what is more interesting, unorthodox interpretations of the so-called universal dogmas have been given not always by hostile free-thinkers, but by sections of the very pious folk themselves who accept their spiritual significance. In fact every sect, into which the so-called universal religions have split, has its origin in a difference in interpretation of fundamental doctrines. Thus the abundance of the sects, and the horror of heresy and non-conformity so common among the so-called universal religions, is the best refutation of any theory of universalism got up by throwing the cloak of mathematics over purely historical events or documents. Therefore, to a thoughtful mind, nothing more is required than these facts to be convinced that there is some serious flaw in this notion of religious universalism—nay, a very serious psychological misapprehension of the very nature of truth embodied in religion.

III

The alternative conception of religious universalism, which has grown out of the Hindu religious consciousness, maintains that every religion is true and is a path to salvation. The

difference between this and the view discussed till now is very striking, and but for the defects of the former pointed out above, this view might even appear absurd to a mind that is confirmed in a mathematical conception of religious truth. A deeper consideration of the nature of religious truth will, however, show that this is the only sound view of universalism in religion.

When we analyse religions, we find that they consist of systems of philosophy, mythology and ritual devised for giving man an inner experience, and a general attitude towards life on the basis of that experience. In other words, religious ideas and practices partake of the nature of symbols, and are therefore true, not so much in what they are, as in their power to evoke in the mind certain experiences that are fundamental to life.

In this respect they stand in striking contrast to mathematical truths, and reveal their resemblance to aesthetics. The significance of a mathematical proposition is confined to itself; it is not symbolic in this higher sense. The proposition, 'two and two make four' means just that much, and nothing more. It has no deeper suggestion to convey, and it yields no self-transcendent meaning by any further interpretative activity of the mind.

In aesthetic experience, on the other hand, it will be readily perceived how the thoughts, words, marks and other external factors through which one mind communicates with another mind, are all largely symbolic, and depend for effect on their suggestiveness, on their power to evoke in the mind a particular type of interpretative activity and the patterns of experience that accompany it.

That is why aesthetic devices very often become standardised into conventions, and a full appreciation of any system of fine arts pre-supposes on the part of the connoisseur an insight into these conventions, and a full and unreserved openness to their suggestive influence.

This will be very easily seen in the case of music, one of the most popular branches of fine arts. To many Indians, European music appears to be something bizarre, and some of them may even be puzzled to know that human beings derive delight from it. The same will be the case when Europeans hear Indian music. In India itself it is common to come across persons, even among trained musicians, who fail to appreciate the beauties of musical systems prevailing in different parts of the country. In all these cases, especially where there is vast tradition with the works of master minds at the back, the difficulty in appreciation can be explained only on the hypothesis that music consists of systems of sound symbols, and that its appreciation depends largely on one's being educated into the significance of these symbols. By gradually accustoming oneself to the sound symbols, and opening oneself to their suggestive influence, one can learn to appreciate what was difficult for one to do before.

From this example of music what becomes plain is that, where experiences are conveyed through symbols, there can be unity in the experiences realised in spite of the variation in the stimulating symbols, and that therefore any prejudice which one may possibly have against an alien system of music must be entirely attributed to a total misapprehension of

the way in which musical symbols work on the human mind.

Let us now apply this idea to the question of religious universalism and see whether it helps us to understand the Hindu ideal of the validity of all religions. It must be borne in mind that the main function of religion is not to give us an exact description of the topography of heaven, of the number of inhabitants in the nether worlds and other such pieces of information which people curious about things occult are generally after. Its main purpose is to rouse in us a sense of a holy and intelligent will or purpose behind the cosmos which at first sight seems apparently to be governed by mechanical forces, to create an attitude of complete surrender of our little self to this larger whole, and thereby establish in the heart of man a vivid and unyielding experience of harmony, peace, purity, joy, enlightenment and fearlessness. Different religions may have divergent creeds and philosophies, mythologies and rituals, and yet they can all be accepted as embodying vital truths, if we would consider religion from this point of view. For every religion then becomes a harmonious and mutually adapted collection of symbols—intellectual, mythological and ritualistic—with the ultimate aim, not of imparting information, but of awakening in man, in a vivid form, the attitude and experience described before. The symbols used for this purpose may differ. The dogmas, rituals and other items in the theologies of different religions may vary widely and may not even be mutually understandable to a large extent. Yet the religious experience they bring can be the same, even as the aesthetic delight derived from different systems of

music is the same. On the other hand, to look upon different religious creeds and theological conceptions as primarily meant to convey exact information to us would be as absurd as evaluating a musical composition by the meaning of the words used in it. In other words to stand unbudging in defence of a dogma and its exclusive truth, or to insist on any purely objective efficacy in religious rituals, would be the best way of defeating their very purpose. For in the first place we would be reducing them to the position of scientific propositions, demanding proofs of the same nature as all scientific propositions, which it would be impossible to give in their case. And in the second place their exclusive claims would nullify themselves when it is seen that similar inner experiences and attitudes are reached by following dogmas and rituals of an entirely different nature. The only rational position, therefore, will be to hold that every theology is nothing more than a symbol evolved by the cultural genius of people for evoking certain basic experiences in men who are able to enter into their spirit, and that all these symbols are true in the sense that they lead to those experiences.

IV

To illustrate the symbolic nature of religious doctrines let us take a few concrete examples. As we have already said, a symbol has an appeal only to a person who enters into the spirit of its symbology. Thus the picture of Christ on the Cross has played a very important part in the religious experience of the Christian, but one need not wonder if a Hindu or a Buddhist, who depends on his own effort for salvation, turns round and

asks the Christian how he can expect one, who could not save himself from his enemies, to save others. So also the Hindu has for ages dwelt on the personality of Sri Krishna, and found in him the highest manifestation of the Divinity, but an orthodox Christian finds in him only the most debasing character in the world's religious literature. In the figure of Kali, nude and decorated with a garland of severed heads, the Shakta devotee finds the mystery of the Deity revealed, but a pious Vaishnava is horrified at it, and can discover all that significance only in the beautiful form of Krishna with flute in hand and adorned with wreaths of flowers. In the images worshipped in the great temples of India, the Hindu devotees catch a glimpse of the Divine and feel the highest spiritual exaltation, but a Muslim iconoclast would not only feel no such inspiration before them, but would only be inclined to smash them to pieces. The Kaaba is, for the Muslim, an object of great religious significance, but for the Hindu or Christian it is only a black stone, and if he is sufficiently modern, he would recognise in its adoration a relic of phallus worship. The Muslim theologian goes into ecstasies over the inspiring effect of the Quran, but for many non-Muslims the study of it is valuable only as an education in patience—an enterprise which he would not complete except for a strong sense of duty.

In the examples cited above we have included only some of the more concrete types of religious symbols, but it requires no great effort of intelligence to perceive that, even in the case of the more abstract teachings of religions, the same symbolic conception holds good. That is why doc-

trines that look so profound and inspiring to their respective followers like those of Nirguna Brahman of Vedanta, the Trinity of the Christians, the Sunya of the Buddhists, the Allah of the Muslims and so on, have called forth only criticism or scorn from the ardently pious folk of other religions. For so long as people are obsessed with the idea that the definitions and descriptions of religious truths are on a par with those of exact sciences, in other words, so long as they carry the purely material idea of fixed boundaries into the realm of the spirit, they are bound to extend to it also the notion of logical contradictions which is born of a hard sense of the boundaries of things. And so long as men think in terms of contradictions, which is no doubt an excellent way of thought for material sciences, but the least useful and illuminating in the spiritual field—so long they would speak of one set of religious doctrines as true and the others as false, and delay the era of universalism in religion indefinitely.

The alternative way of thinking is the symbolical interpretation of religious conceptions. In that case there is no question of contradictions, and of one religion alone being true and the others false. For diametrically opposed symbols may evoke identical experiences and attitudes, according as the symbol is accepted and responded to in the right spirit. Hence in spite of our incapacity to be inspired by the religious symbols of another culture, it becomes possible to accept their validity, if we would but agree to the symbolical character of all religious doctrines.

V

In the modern age, Sri Ramakrishna is perhaps the only example

of a person who could not only mould his thought in the light of this great idea, but actually live the life of different cults, and experience how their different disciplines and modes of thought, in spite of their divergences, take one to an identical realisation. Hence he could say with full conviction — As many religions so many paths. And when he did so, he had in mind not only the great religions that pass to be respectable, but even cults which are criticised as of questionable moral standard. He used to call the latter as the scavenger's door-way to a mansion, and the former the gate proper leading to it. Both lead to the same mansion, he would say, but respectable people would not enter through the scavenger's gate. Again some ardent moralists used to find fault with certain people of great spiritual attainments, because some of the disciplines they followed seemed to violate the conventional rules of morality. To them Sri Ramakrishna used to reply always, "They are not to be blamed for that. For they had the thorough conviction that the paths they followed in themselves led to God-realisation. Whatever is ardently believed in, and adopted as a means to God-realisation, should not be found fault with. No aspirant's attitude should be condemned, since any attitude, if sincerely followed, is sure to lead to God, who is the consummation of them all. Go on calling upon Him, each in his own way, and don't find fault with another's path, or take that as your own."

Here in this saying is a great lesson in universal religion.

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 as a divine personage 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 everyday life. From this instalment we commence the translation of the second volume of the reminiscences. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the original from Bengali.]

UNCLE Baroda* said to me, "The Mother has sent for you."

I went inside the inner apartments and found the Holy Mother standing at the door of her room waiting for me. As I saluted her, she asked, "Where do you come from?" I told her the name of the District of my native village.

Mother: I suppose you are now reading the teachings of the Master.

I did not make any reply to these words. She spoke to me as if we had known each other for a long time. I still remember her tender and affectionate look.

Mother: Do you belong to the Kayastha caste?

Disciple: Yes.

Mother: How many brothers have you?

Disciple: Four.

Mother: Sit down and take some refreshments.

With these words the Mother spread a small carpet on the floor of the varandah and gave me some *Luchi* and sweets that had been

*Uncle Baroda—The brother of Holy Mother.

offered in the shrine on the previous night.

I had walked all the way from Tarakeswar on the previous day, spending the night in the village of Deshra, to the northwest of Jayrambati, in the house of a young man whom I had met at the railway station of Haripal. The Mother listened to all this and said to me after I had finished my refreshments, "Don't bathe now; you have walked a great deal." Then she gave me a betel-leaf to chew.

She sent for me again after the noon-day worship and offerings were over, and, first of all, served me with food. She gave me the food with her own hands, on a *shal-leaf*, in the porch of her room. "Eat well, and remember, don't feel shy!" she said to me as I was enjoying the meal. Afterwards she gave me a betel-leaf.

I went to the Holy Mother again at three or four o'clock in the afternoon and found her kneading dough for bread. She was seated on the floor, facing the east, her legs stretched out in front of her. The oven stood near her. Casting a benign glance upon me, she said, "What do you want?"

Disciple: I want to talk to you.

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THE REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

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Mother: What do you want to talk about? Sit down here.

She gave me a seat.

Disciple: Mother! People say that our Master is God Eternal and Absolute; what do you say?

Mother: Yes, he is God Eternal and Absolute to me.

As she had said 'to me' I went on, "It is true that to every woman her husband is God Eternal and Absolute. I am not asking the question in that sense."

Mother: Yes, he is God Eternal and Absolute to me as my husband, and in a general way as well.

Then I thought that if Sri Ramakrishna were God Eternal, then she (the Holy Mother) must be the Divine Power, the Mother of the Universe. She must be identical with her divine consort, Sri Ramakrishna—like Rama and Sita, Radha and Krishna. I had come to the Holy Mother cherishing this faith in my heart. I asked her, "If that be the case, then why do we see you preparing bread like an ordinary woman? It is Maya, I suppose, is it not?"

Mother: It is Maya, indeed. Otherwise, why should I fall into such a state? I would rather have lived in *Vaikuntha*¹, like *Lakshmi*², by the side of Narayana.

"But," she added, "God loves to sport in a human being. Sri Krishna was born as a cowherd-boy and Rama as the child of Dasaratha."

Disciple: Do you ever remember your real nature?

¹ *Vaikuntha*—A name of Heaven in the Hindu religion.

² *Lakshmi*—The Divine consort of Narayana, the Supreme God.

Mother: Yes, I recall it now and then. At that time I say to myself, "What is this that I am doing! What is all this about?" Then I remember the house, buildings and children (pointing with the palm of her hand to the houses) and forget my real self.

I used to visit the Mother almost daily in her room. She would lie down on her bed and talk to me, Radhu lying asleep by her side. An oil-lamp would cast a dim light in the room. On some of the days a maid-servant rubbed her feet with medicinal oil for her rheumatism.

One day she said to me in the course of conversation, "Whenever the thought of a disciple comes to my mind and I yearn to see him, then either he comes here or writes a letter to me. You must have come here prompted by a certain feeling. Perhaps you have in your mind the thought of the Divine Mother of the Universe."

Disciple: Are you the Mother of all?

Mother: Yes.

Disciple: Even of these sub-human beings, birds and animals?

Mother: Yes, of these also.

Disciple: Then why should they suffer so much?

Mother: In this birth they must have these experiences.

One evening I had the following conversation with the Holy Mother, in her room.

Mother: That you all have come to me is because you are my own.

Disciple: Am I your own?

Mother: Yes, my own. Is there any doubt about it? If a man is the very own of another, they remain

inseparable in the successive cycles of time.

After some more talks the Holy Mother said, "Yes, we shall meet again in subtle bodies." I understood from her words that we would meet again after death.

Disciple: I wanted to come to you here last *Aswin*¹, and spent the whole night at the Howrah Railway Station. I was at the station till eleven o'clock the next morning, but I could not buy the railroad ticket. The clerks at the station were carrying on a strike in connection with the nationalist agitation. The activities of the station were, therefore, stopped. Then a clerk, an English woman, opened the booking office, and passengers rushed to the window. As it was the time of the *Puja*² holidays, it looked as if the people would break each other's heads. I could not purchase the ticket and returned to my place of residence in Calcutta. Later on I learnt by letter that one of my brothers was seriously ill, and so I returned home. My desire to see you could not be fulfilled.

Mother: One must have all the facilities; then alone he can visit me.

Disciple: All address you as *Apani*³ but I cannot do so. I cannot utter that word. I address you as *Tumi*.

Mother: That is good, indeed. It denotes an intimate relationship.

¹*Aswin*—A month in Bengali Calendar.

²*Puja*—The worship of the Divine Mother (The Durga Puja).

³*Apani*—There are three words in Bengali by which one can address another. *Apani* is used when one addresses his superior entitled to respect. *Tumi* is used to address an equal and is a term of intimacy and endearment. *Tui* is used to address the inferior, the servants, etc.

In the course of our talk I said to her, "You must have taken the responsibilities of those whom you have initiated with the sacred *Mantra*. Then why do you say when we request you for the fulfilment of a desire, 'I will speak to the Master about it.' Can't you take our responsibility?"

Mother: I have, indeed, taken your responsibility.

Disciples: Please bless me, O Mother, that I may have purity of mind and attachment to God. Mother, I had a class-mate in school. I would be grateful if I could bestow upon Sri Ramakrishna a fourth of the love which I cherished for my chum.

Mother: Ah me! That is true, indeed! Well, I shall speak to the Master about it.

Disciple: Why do you only say that you will speak to the Master? Are you different from Him? My desire will certainly be fulfilled by your blessings alone.

Mother: My child! If you can get perfect knowledge through my blessings, then I bless you with all my heart and soul. Is it ever possible for a man to free himself unaided from the clutches of *Maya*? It was for this that the Master performed spiritual austerities to the greatest extent and gave the results thereof for the redemption of mankind.

Disciple: How can one love Sri Ramakrishna without seeing him?

Mother: Yes, that's true. Can one ever have intimate friendship with mere air!

Disciple: When shall I have the vision of the Master?

Mother: You shall certainly see him. You shall see the Master at the right time.

THOU ART THAT

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the Head of the Vedanta Centre of Hollywood, U.S.A. The present article is a section from his forthcoming book on "Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Gita," written under the editorial supervision of Dr. P. H. Houston, Professor in the Occidental College, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.]

BRAHMAN and *Atman*—these two words, as it were, are "the two pillars on which rests the whole edifice of Indian philosophy." They are respectively, the objective and subjective views of the reality behind the world of appearances, which is the constant theme of these early religious writings. *Brahman* was the name given by the *Rishis* to the unchanging reality in the external universe.

The word *Atman* signifies the Self in man, the Self not limited in himself. "Subtler than the subtle, greater than the great, this *Atman* dwells in the hearts of all," says the *Katha Upanishad*; "as fire, being one, assumes different forms according to what it burns, so the *Atman*, existing in all, though one, assumes different forms according to whatever it enters. It also exists without."

Brahman and *Atman*, and indeed the whole teaching of the *Upanishads*, are revealed with a fair degree of completeness in the Great Sayings or the *Mahavakyas*, such as *Tattvam asi*—Thou art That; *Aham Brahmasmi*—I am Brahman; *Sohamasmi*—I am He; and so forth.

There is preserved in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, a dialogue between a certain Uddalaka and his son, Svetaketu, which helps to make clear the meaning and implication of the Great Saying, *Tattvam asi* 'Thou art That'.

When Svetaketu was twelve years old, so runs the tale, his father Uddalaka said to him, 'Svetaketu, you must now go to school to study. None of our family, darling, is ignorant of *Brahman*.' Thereupon Svetaketu went to a teacher and studied for twelve years. Then, after learning all the *Vedas*, he returned home and was full of pride for his learning. His father, noticing his boy's conceit, asked him: 'Svetaketu, my child, have you asked for that knowledge by which we hear the unheard, by which we perceive the unperceivable, by which we know the unknowable?' 'What is that knowledge, sir?' asked Svetaketu. The father replied: 'My dear, as by knowing one lump of clay, all that is made of clay is known, the difference being only in name, and the truth being that all is clay; as by knowing a nugget of gold, all that is made of gold is known, the difference being only in name, and the truth being that all is gold; so, my child, is that knowledge, knowing which we know everything.' The son replied: 'Surely those venerable teachers of mine do not know this knowledge, for if they had known of it, they would have taught it to me. Do you, sir, therefore, impart that knowledge to me.' 'Be it so,' said the father. 'Believe it, my child, That which is the subtle essence, in That has all its existence. That is the true, That is the Self; That is the true, That is the Self;

and Thou art That, O Svetaketu.' 'Please, sir, tell me more about this Self,' said the son. 'So be it, my child,' said the father. 'Put this salt in water, and come to me tomorrow morning.' The son did as he was told.

The next morning the father asked the boy to bring him the salt which he had put into the water. But he could not, for it had dissolved. The father said, 'Sip the water and tell me how it tastes.' 'It is salty, sir,' replied the son. Then the father said, 'In the same way, though you do not perceive the True, That is indeed there. That which is the subtle essence, in That all this has its existence. That is the True; That is the Self; and Thou art That, O Svetaketu.'

'Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.' 'So be it, my child. As a bee, O Svetaketu, gathers honey from different flowers, and as the different honeys do not know that they are from different flowers, so all of us, having come to that existence, know not that we have done so. And as the rivers, when they join the ocean, do not know that they have been various rivers, even so when we come out of that existence, we do not know that we are That. Now that which is that subtle essence, in It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Svetaketu, art That.'

'Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.' 'So be it, my child. As a person may be blindfolded and led away from his home and left in a strange place; and as he would turn in every direction and cry for someone to remove his bandages, and show him the way home; and as someone might loose the bandages and show him the way; and as thereupon he would

walk, asking his way from village to village as he went, and arrive at his home at last; in exactly the same manner does a man who meets a teacher with knowledge, obtain the true knowledge.

'That which is the subtle essence, in That has all this its existence. That is the True, That is the Self; and Thou art That, O Svetaketu.'

In this dialogue between Uddalaka and his son, Svetaketu, we learn, "That which is the subtle essence, in That all this has its existence, and That which is *Sat*—Existence itself—That thou art." This, then, is the fundamental truth of the philosophy of the *Upanishads*—the identity between *Brahman* and *Atman*, between God and man. To a superficial reader, this identification may lead to misconceptions and misinterpretations, that is, unless we resolve to penetrate deep into the mystery of man's soul. The *Upanishads* give us that profounder analysis of the essential nature of man which the people of the Western world seem to have missed, and they also afford the explanation of the unity and identity between God and man.

Man, according to this account of his nature, in the form in which he is known to his fellows, is called *Jiva*, *he who breathes*, denoting the biological and physiological aspects of his life. His individual self is further indicated by the words, *Bhokta*, or the experiencer, the enjoyer, and *Karta*, or the doer. "For he it is who sees, hears, smells, tastes, perceives, conceives, acts, he whose essence is knowledge, the person who dwells in the highest indestructible Self."*

**Prasna Upanishad*.

Again, "When the Self is in union with the body, the senses, and the mind, then wise people call him the Enjoyer."†

These quotations have reference to the psychological or conscious aspect of life. So man is the Self associated with *Prana*, the vital principle, that which expresses itself as breath, and *Manas*, which comprises mind, intelligence, ego; and in addition there are the physical body and the organs of the senses. These *Indriyas*, or sense organs, are, according to the *Upanishads*, ten in number, five known as the senses of knowledge, *i.e.*, the organs of sight, hearing, touch, smell and flavour (taste); and five senses of action, namely, the organs of speech, holding, moving, excretion and generation.

Says the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, in its detailed analysis of man:

"This Self is covered over by sheaths, as it were. First is the physical sheath, this body, which is made up of the essence of food. Therefore it is called *Annamaya* or composed of food. Different from this is another more subtle sheath of the Self, which is made of *Prana*, the life principle. Like the shape of the former is the human shape of the latter, even as water assuming the shape of the vessel into which it is poured. It is known as *Pranamaya* in as much as it is constituted of *Prana*, which manifests as energy. Different from this is the *Manomaya* sheath, which is made up of *Manas*, mind. It, also, is like unto the shape of the man. Different from this, which is made up of *Manas*, is the other sheath, which is made up of *Vijnana*, or intelligence.

†*Katha Upanishad*.

As different from this is the other, which is made up of ego. It is called *Anandamaya*, the sheath of bliss, for it is the innermost covering of the blissful Self."

These sheaths cover the Self. Since the true Self is one with *Brahman*, it can be none of these sheaths, nor can its nature be known so long as it is identified in our consciousness with one or all of them. "Know the body," says the *Katha Upanishad*, "to be the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, the mind the reins, and the *Atman* the Lord in the chariot."

But what proof have we of an *Atman* distinct from the mind, the intelligence, the ego, and the body? Western philosophy declares mind and soul to be identical, with nothing existing behind the mind and the ego. But in the *Upanishads* this something behind the changing forms of our lives is declared to exist, and no need is felt for proofs of any sort. For the Self is the basis of all proofs, and so stands in need of none. "By which one knows all this, whereby could one know that? By what means could the knower be known?"*

All this, of course, is not tantamount to agnosticism. We find again and again the injunction to "know thyself", to seek to "know the knower," to seek to "know not the object seen, but the seer of objects".

The fact is that the existence of the *Atman* is self-evident, since it is the "eternal witness, eternal subject, unchangeable reality" in man. There is indeed a logical proof involved in the utterances of these seers, which has been brought to light by later philosophers. It is very simple. To

**Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

know motion or change, one must know it in relation to something that is less in motion. That less motion, in turn, must be known in relation to lesser motion, *ad infinitum*, until one arrives at something which is not motion, which is unchangeable. Body, mind, everything we know, is a series of changes. There must, therefore, be something beyond them which does not change. Moreover, the subject, the witness, cannot be the object seen or cognized; and our minds, egos, senses, bodies, etc., as the instruments of knowledge are the objects cognized. They cannot, therefore, be the subject, the witness. So there must be a separate something, the *Atman*, which is the eternal witness, the eternal subject.

When the *Atman* identifies itself with the sheaths, it appears as *Jiva*, an individual man. How this identification has come about is an interesting problem in later philosophies. The *Upanishads* declare that *Jivahood* has been effected by the forgetfulness of the *Atman*, and the loss of its essential identity with *Brahman*. Sankara, in the introduction to his commentary on the *Vedanta* aphorisms, considers the problem of how the *Atman* identifies itself with its sheaths, the non-self. This is caused by *Avidya*, or ignorance. He points out that the subject is the Self, whose nature is intelligence, and the object is the non-Self. They are opposed to each other as darkness is to light, and so cannot be identified, much less their respective attributes. And it is wrong to superimpose upon the subject, the object or its attributes. Yet, through some unexplainable cause which has its root in ignorance, man, from a beginningless past, fails to distinguish between the two and their

respective attributes, although they are absolutely distinct, and would "superimpose upon each the characteristic nature and the attributes of the other, thus coupling the real and the unreal. Extra-personal attributes are superimposed on the Self, if a man considers himself sound and entire, or the contrary, as long as his wife, children, and so on, are sound and entire, or not. Attributes of the body are superimposed on the Self if a man thinks of himself as stout, lean, fair, as standing, walking or jumping; attributes of the sense organs, if he thinks, 'I am mute, or deaf, or one-eyed, or blind'; attributes of the internal organs, when he considers himself subject to desire, intention, doubt, determination, and so on. In this way there goes on this natural beginning - and endless super-imposition, which appears in the form of wrong conception, is the cause of individual souls appearing as agents and enjoyers (the results of their actions), and is observed by everyone."*

In this connection, Swami Vivekananda relates an interesting story. "There was once a baby lion left by its dying mother among some sheep. The sheep fed it and gave it shelter. The lion grew apace and said 'Ba-a-a' when the sheep said 'Ba-a-a'. One day another lion came by. 'What do you do here?' said the second lion, in astonishment, for he heard the sheep-lion bleating with the rest. 'Ba-a-a,' said the other, 'I am a little sheep, I am a little sheep, I am frightened.' 'Nonsense!' roared the second lion. 'Come with me; I will show you your true nature!' And he took him to the side of a smooth stream and showed him his own image therein.

*Translated by G. Thibaut.

'You are a lion; look at me, look at the sheep, look at yourself.' And the sheep-lion looked, and then he said, 'Ba—I do not look like the sheep—it is true, I am a lion!' and with that he roared that the hills shook to their depths. That is it. We are lions in sheeps' clothing of habit, we are hypnotized into weakness by our surroundings, and the province of *Vedanta* is the de-hypnotization of the Self."

A beautiful allegory is related in the *Mundaka Upanishad* to illustrate this point. "The *Jivatman* (the individual man) and the *Paramatman* (the universal Self), like two birds of beautiful golden plumage, who are inseparable companions, are perched on the branches of the self-same tree. Of those the one (the individual man) tastes of the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree, and the other (the universal Self) remains immobile, calmly observing. Though living in the self-same tree, the individual man, deluded by the forgetfulness of his divine nature, grieves, bewildered by his own helplessness. And when the same man recognizes his own Soul—the true Self—the worshipful Lord, and beholds His glory, he becomes free from all grief. Thus, as he realizes the self-luminous Lord, the Cause of all causes, he becomes purged of all impurities and realizes his identity with the Universal Self."

In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* the problem of the essential nature of man, his true self, is reflected in the tale of Indra and Virochana, who approached the teacher Prajapati to learn of him the knowledge of the Self. Prajapati commences his instruction with an indication of the nature of the Self. "That Self which is free

from impurities, free from old age or death, from hunger or thirst, whose desire is true and whose desires come true, that Self is to be sought for, that Self is to be enquired about and realized. He who, learning about his Self, realizes Him, obtains all the world and all desire."

Students of logic may condemn this easy assumption of the existence of the Self as self-evident and true, on the ground that what is to be proved is taken for granted. A little deeper reflection on the subject, however, will reveal the fact that all this is not so illogical after all. We have already seen how logically we must accept the existence of an unchanging reality. By the nature of its unchangeability it is free from impurities, old age, and death, which are attributes of the mind and the body, but cannot be of the Self. So the Self itself must be not only unchangeable, but pure, free, and immortal.

Now in the story we are told that Indra from among the *Devas* or Gods, and Virochana from among the *Asuras* or demons, approached Prajapati, and after having served him for years, begged him to teach them the knowledge of the Self. Prajapati, replied to them: "The person that is seen in the eyes, that is the Self. That is immortal. That is fearless and That is Brahman." Then they asked, "Sir, is he the self, who is seen reflected in the water or in a mirror?" Prajapati replied clearly that they might inquire further. Prajapati said, "He, indeed, is seen in all these. Look at your self in the water, and whatever you do not understand, come and tell me."

They looked at their reflections in water, and when asked what they had

seen of the Self, they replied, "Sir, we see the Self, we see even the hair and the nails." Then Prajapati bade them don their finest clothes and look again at themselves in the water. This they did, and when asked what they had seen, they replied, "We see the Self, just as we are, well adorned and in our finest clothes." Prajapati said then, "The self indeed is seen in these; That Self is immortal, fearless, and That is Brahman."

And they went away, pleased at heart. But Prajapati, looking after them, said "Both of them departed without analysing or discriminating, and without comprehending the true Self. And whoever will follow this false doctrine of the Self will perish."

Now Virochana, satisfied that he had known the Self, returned to the *Asuras* and preached the doctrine of the body as Self. But Indra, on his way back, realized the uselessness of this knowledge. So he thought within himself, "As this Self seems to be well adorned when the body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, so will this Self be blind if the body is blind, lame, if the body is lame, deformed, if the body is deformed; in fact, the Self also will die when the body perishes. I see no good in such knowledge." So he returned to Prajapati and asked for further instruction. Prajapati said, "He who moves about in dreams, enjoying and glorified, he is the Self. That is immortal, fearless, and That is Brahman."

Pleased at heart, Indra again departed. But before he had returned to the *Devas*, he realised also the uselessness of that knowledge. Then he thought within himself, "True it is that this Self is not blind if the body

is blind, nor lame, nor hurt if the body is lame or hurt, but in dreams too, this Self is conscious of many sufferings. So I see no good in this teaching."

So Prajapati took his disciple step by step through the long process of thinking for himself. From the realization that the body cannot be the free, immortal unchanging Self, Indra turned to analyse the dreaming Self. For in dreams we attain to a purer state of mind, in that it experiences objects through means other than the body and the senses. In a way the dream self is above the physical self. But the disciple soon discovered that this also could not be the true Self. And he again approached Prajapati with a request for further instruction. Prajapati replied, "When a person is asleep, reposing and at perfect rest, dreams no dreams, that is the Self, That is immortal and fearless, and That is Brahman." Satisfied, Indra went away. But even before he had reached home, he found the flaw in this knowledge. "In reality," thought he, "he then does not know himself as, This is I, while asleep. He does not, in fact, know any existence. That is almost annihilation. I see no good in this knowledge either."

Sir S. Radhakrishnan comments on this statement thus: "Indra was too much of a psychologist for Prajapati. He felt that this Self, freed from all bodily experience, from the shapeless mass of dreams, etc., is an objectless and barren fiction. Peel off layer after layer of an onion, and what remains? Nothing. Bradley points out: 'The ego that pretends to be anything either before or beyond its concrete psychical filling is a gross fiction and a mere monster,

and for no purpose admissible.' On this view, in dreamless sleep there is no self at all. Locke declares that every drowsy nod explodes the self theory. 'In sleep and trances the mind exists not—there is no time, no succession of ideas. To say the mind exists without thinking is a contradiction.' (Berkeley's Works, Vol. 1, p. 34). Indra seems to have been an empiricist ages before Locke and Berkeley. 'If the soul in a perfectly dreamless sleep thinks, feels and wills nothing, is the soul then at all, and if it is, how is it?' asks Locke. 'How often has the answer been given, that if this could happen, the soul would have no being? Why have we not the courage to say that as often as this happens the soul is not?' Indra has the courage to declare it. It is indeed destroyed."*

To explain to Indra that the mind is not the Self, because the Self continues to exist without the mind, Prajapati wished his disciple to analyse the state of deep sleep. And Indra, who had identified the mind with the Self through ignorance, discovered that he had not known the Self—for mind is "almost annihilated" in dreamless sleep, a conclusion like unto that of Western rationalists like Bradley, Locke and Berkeley. But these philosophers failed to inquire further, remaining satisfied with their conclusion—"To say that the mind exists without thinking is a contradiction, nonsense, nothing."

*The Philosophy of the *Upanishads* by S. Radhakrishnan, pp. 31-2.

Indra became so dissatisfied that he sought to know the Self beyond the mind. For though the mind exists not in deep sleep, being contentless and objectless, there must continue to exist something which holds our experience before and after sleep. This something is the unchangeable reality—the Self. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly remarks, however, "Devadatta, after good sleep, continues to be Devadatta, since his experiences unite themselves to the system which existed at the time when he went to sleep. They link themselves to his thoughts and do not fly to any other's. This continuity of experience requires us to admit a permanent self underlying all contents of consciousness."

Indra approached his teacher Prajapati once more and asked to be taught. And this time Prajapati gave him the highest truth of the Self. He said, "This body is mortal, always gripped by death. But herein resides the immortal Self, formless. This Self, when associated in consciousness with the body (the different sheaths), becomes subject to pleasure and pain. As long as there is the association with the body, no one is free from the dual throng of pleasure and pain. But as one becomes free from this association and body consciousness, no pleasure or pain can touch or affect the Self. Rising above physical consciousness and knowing the Self as distinct from the senses or sense organs, or the mind, knowing Him in His true light, one rejoices and is free." "He who knows that Self and meditates and realises this Self, obtains all worlds and all desires."

THOUGHT

By Prof. Nicholas Roerich

[With the help of scientific data Prof. Roerich establishes how thought is a much more potent force than ordinary man supposes.]

GOETHE once said to Eckermann: "Despite my name, I have not acquired the right to say what I really think: I must keep silent—not to disturb people. Yet I have a slight privilege. I know what people think, but they do not know what I think..."

The science of thought at present especially occupies the minds of people. From ancient times there resound commandments about this blessed energy. India is rich with such ordinances. Plato and Confucius and many wise men of various epochs persistently turned the attention of people to the great might which is accessible to all. But in the rush of materialism this panacea was sometimes neglected. Hence it is significant that our age can inscribe upon its seal: "Thought is the law of the universe."

The names of Professor Bekhterv, Rhine, McDougall and other eminent scholars who investigate the energy of thought, shall for ever remain on pages of honour in the history of culture.

Let us record the following remarkable research:

"Two Professors of the Cambridge University have succeeded in making cinema photographs of human thought. One of them is Dr. Adrian, Professor of Physiology and a distinguished member of the Royal Society, the other is Prof. Mathews. Adrian, who had dedicated his whole life to the investigation of the mys-

teries of the nervous system, in 1932 received the Noble Prize and only a few days back was awarded the golden medal of the Royal Society."

"When a person sits quietly in a chair with closed eyes, and his thought is not occupied with anything serious, then his brain matter produces regular electrical discharges at the rate of about ten discharges per second. With the help of very complicated and ingenious apparatus and a photo-electric camera, Prof. Adrian succeeded in registering these discharges on a cinema film. He likewise observed that as soon as his patient opens his eyes and begins to concentrate his attention on something, the frequency of the electrical discharges increases considerably and reaches usually about 2000 per second."

"The rhythmic impulses continue also during deep sleep and also when the person (or animal) is subjected to the influence of narcotics. The professor proved by experimental methods the similarity of vibrations in different persons at the sight of the same object or manifestation. Different thoughts, which arise as a consequence of the action of the visual nerves, give different impressions upon the film."

"Prof. Adrian confined his experiments mainly to that part of the human brain which controls vision. He proved that this region of the brain is extra-ordinarily small. And in general Prof. Adrian established the

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fact with the help of his apparatus, that the greater part of the human brain does not participate in any mental process."

"Prof. Adrian carried his experiments to such a degree of perfection that he can now easily change his photographic records of thought into sound and can broadcast it over the radio for the public. During a public demonstration the audience heard a great variety of sounds, varying with the visual impressions of the patient, who sat upon the stage and opened his eyes at the direction of the professor."

Thus something quite natural and perhaps long ago known is being recorded already by crude mechanical apparatus. Long before these mechanical records were achieved, the great Indian scientist, Sir Jagadish Bose, in similar experiments recorded the pulse of plants, and demonstrated even for a casual observer how plants react to pain, light, etc., and how the appearance of even a distant cloud react upon the pulse. Graphically he showed on a screen the agony of a plant's death, poisoned or transfixed. At the same time, he recorded the influence of human energy upon the life of the same plants, which, not long ago, were in the eyes of civilised people regarded to be but mere lower growths, devoid of any senses.

By the movement of the needle, which records the pulse of the plant, one can notice the influence of human energy of thought. A kind thought, a sympathetic thought, could protect the plant from the action of poison. In the same degree a hostile thought would increase the fatal action.

If only the realisation of the importance and power of thought would penetrate quickly into the minds of even uneducated masses! It is ridiculous and humiliating to subject the lofty experiments upon human thought to the action of coarse mechanical apparatus. But for a coarse consciousness similar methods of investigation are necessary. The realisation alone of the significance of thought would considerably transform our earthly existence.

In the realm of television, purely mechanical improvements of importance have taken place. It has just been reported that during the current year this transmission of vision on a distance will receive new possibilities. This is quite possible since once the field has been entered, the result in this direction will no doubt accumulate shortly. Gradually the reflection of the quality of thought will also become apparent through television, when images of persons are transmitted.

Even some observant photographers point out that the difference of photographs depends not only on purely external conditions, but also on the inner state of the subject. Thus also in this case we arrive at the concept of the reflection of thought.

Discussions about hypnotism and suggestion, that is to say, about the trained methods of influence, have already become common. But the limited consciousness as yet but feebly admits that not only in cases of trained mental influences, but absolutely in all cases of more or less clear thinking, powerful reactions upon the surroundings take place.

This consideration will once more remind us of the concept of respon-

sibility, about which we recently had several evidences. What lofty beauty is contained in the idea of responsibility and service! And there is no such spot on earth, where man would not be subject to these two great pre-destinations.

When we evoke from space, words and sounds, are they not followed also by the ever present properties of the energy of thought? Along tremendous distances the human voice, directed by thought, clearly resounds.

No doubt, across the vast space, together with the outer sound, are also stretched the inner strings of a mighty energy. Someone will sense them quite clearly, another though feeling them, will deny. And in such a negation there will be again present the element of fear. For the fearing consciousness shudders at the very hint that it is surrounded by in-

fluences and energies. Precisely that which should uplift people, casts the weak-willed into fear—fear which is the consequence of something indefinite and chaotic. But fear will not save us from chaos. Fears are the very gates to chaos!

It is beautiful, being clad in valour, to realise the grandeur of thought and of all the energies which it sets into action. Though through mechanical means, nevertheless let people hurriedly approach the thoughts about thought in all its mighty significance. And instead of a chaotic fear, many seemingly complicated problems of life will become illumined by the realisation of all the possibilities of thought. Not without reason was it said: "Act not only in body, but also in thought!"

What a beautiful concept: "Thought in Infinity!"

RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES IN INDIA

By Prof. S. V. Puntambekar, M.A. (Oxon), Bar-at-Law

[Mr. Puntambekar is the Professor of History in the Benares Hindu University. In the present article he gives a running survey of some of the important religious movements in modern India. One would, however, note that there are important omissions like the movement associated with Sri Aurobindo, the influence on religious thought exerted by Mahatma Gandhi, etc.]

INDIA possesses a large and varying tradition of religious beliefs based on the experiences, interpretations and utterances of her revered sages and seers who had led a noble life of contemplation and service in order to experience and realise the supreme end of life and the *summum bonum* of existence. To these indigenous traditions and declared paths of spiritual life were added early in her history, experiences, interpretations and utterances of religions coming from abroad. Their contact and on-

slaught irritated our orthodox minds, puzzled our common minds, and opened a path of new experience and search to our inquiring minds. Consequently a set of new heresies and harmonies, creeds and credulities, arose and have made the religious life of India a confusion worse confounded.

In order to give this rich but confused heritage of religious tradition and treasure a proper perspective and interpretation, and in order to make the common man understand the rela-

tive value of religious experiences embodied in them, Indian saints and sages like Namdev, Nanak and Kabir sang their divine songs.

In the wake of these interpretations and valuations there came the new learning, secular and scientific, from the West in the nineteenth century. Its material, positive and worldly tone, and its secular and scientific achievements created a feeling of resentment, distrust and doubt in us, about a number of our religious, social and moral ideas, and led to the rise of atheists, agnostics and sceptics in the country. Thus the nineteenth century developed a complex atmosphere of personal doubt and uncertainty, social orthodoxy and fanaticism in religious matters, and led to conflicts and conversions.

The religious problem of India has become a vast, complicated world problem. The approach to it is not easy. It has to find a way out of the difficulties of traditional loyalties, rational doubts, scientific attacks, secular needs, materialistic objections, fanatical conflicts and humanitarian protests. The problem has presented itself in the form whether there is one right path or many paths, whether the indigenous religion or the foreign religions are true, whether there should be any religion at all, and whether religious life requires any external authority or organisation such as priesthood, church, Samgha, caste or a set of doctrines and disciplines.

In the past Indian sages always adopted the method of synthesis in understanding the various religious experiences which were gained. The Bhagavadgita and the Mahabharata have tried in this way to appreciate

the value of various approaches to right religious life, and of the varied experiences garnered by our great seers in the past.

Indian religious thinkers have not developed any unitary and exclusive conception of one spiritual path for human salvation or happiness, though its various exponents and followers have, no doubt, preferred the one or the other according to their temper or experience or understanding. In purely religious matters it has no social system or political ambition to preach or impose, no religious hatred or exclusiveness to be sounded. It leaves every individual absolute freedom to take to any path which suits his walk of life, his strength of understanding and his keenness of intuition, inspiration or search.

In the nineteenth century the religious problem in India was approached, understood and restated by a number of great men. Some of them tried to study it comprehensively, to appreciate intellectually its highest religious experiences and disciplines, and to understand their moral and social implications. Some tried to understand and reinterpret a part of our ancient scriptures, taking it to be the highest, on rational and moral grounds, comparing it with other religious traditions and systems and setting the rest aside as deficient, misleading or heretic. Others tried to experience by personal contemplation and intuition the experiences and disciplines of all religions and to find out the nature of their quest and their underlying purpose. Others still appreciated intellectually the value of each religion as the most suited for the time, place and people among whom it was manifested and evolved. And lastly a few rejected completely

all forms, traditions and beliefs as hindrances to spiritual life, leaving the individual to know himself and to be his own guide and saviour. A different set of secular thinkers, rationalist and naturalist, attacked all religions and their beliefs as being contrary to scientific knowledge or natural impulse, while others adopted a sceptic or agnostic stand. The old conservatives adopted a *fundamentalist* attitude and were called Sanatanis, as against the secularists and scientists who were, and may be, termed modernists. The Liberals did not reject the one or the other extreme but tried to reform and adjust their life according to the needs of the time.

The attempt of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj to study the manifold religious life of India and to grasp it intellectually was based on the old but eternal teachings of the Upanishads. He applied them rationally to the working out of religious practices and social behaviour of his Samaj. It was a rational reconstruction of religious and social life of India based on her highest religious experience and philosophy of life. His Samaj no doubt borrowed some foreign forms but they were not its essence. It accepted the Upanishadic idea of God, condemned image worship, sacrifice and priesthood. There was to be a direct communion with God and an emphasis on hymns and prayers in His worship. Its leaders did not revile other religions. But by its exclusiveness in belief and eclecticism in methods of worship it left a large amount of religious experience and life unexplored and uninterrupted, and soon it developed into a number of sects.

Swami Dayananda Saraswathi and his Arya Samaj attempted to study the overgrown religious life of India. But it also developed an exclusive attitude. It based its faith on the Vedas and rejected all historical and contemporary developments of Indian religious thought and foreign religious systems. It was purely a restatement of the value and authority of the old Vedic religion of the Aryas and its supremacy over all systems or faiths and practices. It advocated a reconstruction of society, polity and religion on Vedic basis. Thus this Samaj has revival and reform as its ideal and method. It is not for synthesis or eclecticism. It however opens its doors to all. It is thus proselytising. It rejects idol worship but adopts Vedic forms of sacrifice and prayer for worship. It no doubt studied all other sects and systems in India but only to reject them as false or heretical. It has largely contributed to the vigour and organisation of our life.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's message and gospel are based on a personal experience of spiritual life in its manifold or universal aspect. He acquired by Yogic intuition and contemplation the highest spiritual experience. His gospel has no exclusive and unitarian aspect. It discloses a penetration into the universal mind and spirit through different paths of experience and realisation. It is neither monotheistic nor polytheistic but theistic and transcendental.

It accepts many paths to the realisation of the spiritual happiness. It sees many aspects and faces of the one Reality. The Paramahansa's search was for understanding the purpose of life and the nature of all religious experience, and for seeing the

vision of God. He tried to live fully according to the various religious disciplines and came to the conclusion that all religious experience is true and one. Swami Vivekananda, his great disciple says, "To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master." He left every religion undisturbed because he realised that they are all part and parcel of the one eternal religion.

The message of his mission is humanitarian, not sectarian. Its work and service are intended for spiritual awakening and guidance. Its emphasis is on the spiritual values of life. It is synthetic in its interpretation, harmonising in its outlook and humanitarian in its spirit. It does not apprehend any conflict between religion, philosophy, science and humanity in their highest pursuits and teachings. It is universal in tone, tolerant in belief, humble in service, chaste in action and pure in thought. It represents and interpretes most remarkably the foundation of Indian religious thought, expression and aspiration evolved in its long history.

It preaches that through the process of Yogic meditation and discipline man can know himself and the Highest, and transcend the utmost bounds of his humanity and reach a state of undivided union with the highest reality where the individual is completely merged in the Infinite. It asserts that spiritual values are not merely incidents in the experience of individual men, realised and achieved by them in various degrees, feebly and dimly by the common man, more intensely and richly by the highly endowed or developed natures who represent the peak of humanity. It also states that in such experiences

man makes contact with an aspect of the universe that is real and supremely important, an aspect which takes precedence of the physical realm.

In these teachings the sanction for a man's conduct is not a particular authority or discipline but self-knowledge, self-experience and personal service. Sri Ramakrishna was primarily a mystic, not a reformer or a philosopher. His experience was "an overwhelming consciousness of God and of his own soul, a consciousness which absorbs all other centres of interest." His experience and outlook far transcended the symbols among which he lived. The credal forms which he employed were only a scaffold by which he ascended. His communion was a personal one with a living Reality or Presence, as an object of love, capable of response and demanding total self-surrender, in spite of his idea of the Absolute or Impersonal one.

His teachings and personality really satisfied, as it does even to-day, the inquiring minds of that age who had felt a great dissatisfaction with their life, moral, social and religious. The Paramahansa's majestic personality and the force of his teachings swept away the doubts, dissatisfactions and questionings of the inquiring youth of India. But they had to undergo a certain discipline to understand it. It was not easy and accessible to all. It had its mystic side. Hence its interpretations and visions could not be grasped or seen by every secular or scientific mind, though its noble messages and moral precepts would touch the heart of every one.

The Theosophical movement though foreign in origin took strong root

and prospered in India. It was not a sectarian movement. Its aim was an international brotherhood. Its main object was to show that the development of humanity and the world is based on a Divine plan of evolution, and that all religions are a manifestation of that plan, and that there can be no antagonism between them. It emphasized the belief that "the redemption of any nation should come through its own self-evolved leaders, not from without." Its teachings increased the respect and reverence for indigenous religions and led to the study, appreciation and tolerance of different religions. It studied them scientifically, but sympathetically and showed that there was no conflict between religion and science and philosophy, and that science was not a danger to religion but supported its truths and laws. Men from different sects and religions joined it without having to give up their own religion. It was really an international brotherhood of followers of different religions. They came to understand better their own religions after reading the Theosophical expositions of them.

The scientific spirit of the modern West is antagonistic to religion, to its supernaturalism and transcendentalism, to its ethics of rewards and punishment, to its hell and heaven. The Theosophical Society tried to get over it by using science to explain these religious ideas and beliefs.

There is another tendency in our religious life of to-day represented by Krishnamurthy. It is the anarchistic tendency to exalt the natural man, the man of pure feeling, with his emotions, intuitions and urges coming

from the depth of his inner self, and expressing themselves in a variety of wayward ways. The school which accepts this adopts the gospel of self-expression and the law of natural divine urge as guides of conduct. It does not believe in any code of right and wrong. Every one is to go by personal preferences and understandings. There is to be guidelessness in matters of conduct and belief, and indifference in regard to particular or set values. According to Krishnamurthy the ultimate goal of mind is the purification of the self, which means the development of individual uniqueness. There is no God except the man who has purified himself. When you bind life to beliefs and traditions—to codes of morality—you kill life. For the understanding of life you must have revolt, dissatisfaction and great discontentment. To follow another, whoever he may be, is the very negation of what is true. In order to attain liberation it is not necessary to join any organisation, any religion, because they are binding, they are limiting, they hold you to a particular form of worship and belief. Authority is antithesis of spirituality.

Because one's mind and heart are bound by traditions and beliefs, by the sacred books of the past, by the dark shadows of temples and remembered gods, one does not understand either the present or the future. If one is looking constantly backwards, one will never discover Truth. Therefore one should not follow, obey or be loyal to any person except to oneself.

These are some of the tendencies in religion or approaches to religion that we note taking place in our

country. There are other people like Dr. Rabindranath Tagore or Sir S. Radhakrishnan who are studying and stating the problem of religion in India in their lectures, addresses and books. Besides, there are some living saints and sages whose messages we have dimly heard, or do not hear be-

cause they have not given expression to it in public and their followers have not been able to make them available to us. But there is no doubt that any one who studies religious life in modern India would feel the quickening impulse that is actuating it at the present day.

MORALITY OR RELIGION?

By Prof. H. D. Bhattacharya, M.A., B.L. (P.R.S.)

[Mr. Bhattacharya is the Professor of Psychology in the University of Dacca. In the present article he discusses some aspects of the relation between religion and morality.]

(Continued from last issue)

BUT the question is whether there would ever come a time when men would not feel the necessity of a religious bulwark to buttress the citadel of morality. It has been the dream of all secularistic movements that a day would arrive when men would be moral without being religious, that men would preserve the social relations of life without supporting them on transcendental assumptions. Freud in *The Future of an Illusion* describes religion as an obsessional neurosis of humanity, which, like most neuroses, is removeable by proper treatment. When mankind would know that the worship and fear of a heavenly father are reactions against, and compensations for, the unconscious sense of rebellion against the earthly father, from which none of us is free, it would see through the illusion and be rid of religion altogether. Grown-up humanity would as surely get rid of the fear of the heavenly father as grown-up men do of their earthly father. Then the relations of men would be dictated not by any emotion caused by unconsci-

ous factors but by conscious and utilitarian considerations. Men would be moral because they would find it to be the best method of living together; and if they choose to be immoral, they would be haunted not by any fear of Divine wrath but by a fear of social reprisal. Then the most moral injunction would be the Golden Rule that one should do unto others as one wishes to be done by them, and that, not from a sense of the brotherhood of man but purely from secular considerations of social equilibrium and social security. Self-sacrifice would not be ruled out, for very often the individual would see that ultimately such abnegation of the self brings in a greater good to himself, or to those in whom he is interested than a direct self-seeking; but all such acts would be dictated by cool calculating reason, and not by the impetuosities of an emotional life whose roots are in the region of the unconscious.

It would be idle to deny that there is some justification for an expectation of this kind. The bonds that hold society together are rooted deeply in

the nature of man. Our instincts of gregariousness and sympathy, our imitative habits and proneness to social suggestion all play a part in keeping us together; and even our instinct of self-preservation prompts close co-operation with others for safety and succour. Sex and parental instinct form the first social unit, and hunger and fear drive us to seek the aid of our fellowmen. Even enjoyment has a social reference. We unconsciously crave for company even when we seem to enjoy our solitude. Even Diogenes wished to be in a market place to show that he did not care for others' company and to exhibit his cynicism. Now, into this social feeling religion need not always enter as a factor. Men in the most primitive state might indeed celebrate their crude rites in company; but it is not the rites that made them into a social group. If, therefore, morality is rooted in those tendencies of the mind that keep men within proper bounds to make society possible, it is conceivable that with the advance of culture those extraneous factors that are imported into social relations from the side of religion would progressively diminish and that ethical movements designed to free morality from religion would assume greater proportions, and ultimately morality without religion would be the creed of mankind. In the past religions have not always been patterns of moral science, for not infrequently they prescribed or prompted courses of action that later generations have found unworthy of humanity in its ideal form. Even to-day social legislations are necessary to prevent customs and ceremonies that religions prescribed in the past as parts of human duty. The delay in bringing

about the desired consummation is due to the fact that the culture necessary to abandon religion is not so widespread in any community as is requisite for the establishment of morality without religion. But we may all live in hope, it is held, for that day when men will live in amity and peace without bothering themselves about the powers that would be offended or pleased by certain lines of human action and would punish or reward men for their conduct.

This raises the question whether religion is a superfluous luxury of the human imagination, whether individuals and races people the unseen with mysterious powers just as they write novels and compose poems. No one denies that in the delineation of the unseen and the supersensible a good part is taken by imagination, especially when divine acts and utterances are conjectured and portrayed or heavenly and hellish scenes are painted. But human reason too plays a part in laying down the probable details of the other world, especially where Heaven and God are viewed not in terms of imagination but in the light of the requirements of reason. We omit from consideration the cases of those who claim to speak in terms of their own experience—who regard religious events and entities not as matters of hypothesis or conjecture but as veritable revelations from a realm beyond or within. Their number unfortunately is so few that unless they are given full credence for their experiences and expressions like experts in other fields, there will always remain a suspicion that they are deluding both themselves and others by their so-called revelations from another realm. While, therefore, there is no reason to suspect the exist-

ence of religious geniuses (for musical prodigies, born poets and artists are equally matters of experience), there is this difference between them and secular geniuses that the object with which they deal are withdrawn from the realm of ordinary verification. The world has neither the time nor the mind to tread the tedious path of spiritual culture which a religious genius demands of the ordinary man, and very often the latter feels that after all the whole thing might be barren of spiritual results.

But happily there are other considerations to test the possibility of the disappearance of the religious attitude. If we find that religion serves certain needs of the spirit which no other form of consciousness can ever serve, there will necessarily remain something analogous to religion at all times in human experience. Possibly, the old idea, that whenever human ignorance and incapacity yawn their portentous mouth we shall see inside the face of God, bases His existence on very insecure foundation; for the rapid development of human knowledge and power would soon seem to banish God from the lives of men. But if it so happens that religion stands for that call of the ideal from which at no time the human mind is free, then the decay of religion is sure to usher in other forms of ideals to replace the religious form. The development of national and party ideals in recent years all over the globe shows that the need of an ideal is an indispensable condition of social existence. The divine fetishes have been thrown away, but new fetishes have taken their place. The cult of the fatherland or the motherland rouses as much enthusiasm in many minds as the

cult of the father-god or the mother-goddess used to do in the past. Brotherhoods, based more or less on the religious ideal but professedly secular in their doctrines, have been established in many countries, and unions and guilds are replacing the communities based on religion in more advanced countries. There is some truth in the Freudian proposition that religion is a neurosis; for like the latter it gets hold of new expressions when its primary manifestations are checked. In the past religions have not been noted for the uniformity of their contents; they rather represented certain attitudes of the mind towards principles and powers whose assumption was necessitated by certain types of experience or exigency. These attitudes still remain although the contents are to-day not supernatural but pertain to earthly existence. The same irrationality and impatience that religious fanaticism evinced are to be seen in the zeal of present political and economic groups. We may believe, therefore, that men will continue to derive emotional satisfaction in the future as in the past from certain types of ideas and images which are akin to religious beliefs of the past.

In fact, all past experiments with mere morality seem to have signally failed. Confucius attempted to base society on five social relations, but not only were the elements of national religion retained and preserved by him, but they were extended by creating new deities, including himself. Buddhism started with protest against transcendental cravings but ended with being a religion which promised solace and salvation to its adherents. The Stupas replaced the temples and the human Buddha

became the nucleus of a whole host of divine beings called after his name. Jainism rejected the Vedic gods but the adoration of the Tirthankaras practically became a religious cult, and latterly many Hindu gods managed to effect an entrance into Jainism itself. Possibly, in better times to come, these revivals of religious symbols would be less in mere morality; but the precedents are rather disappointing and show how the human mind is always in search of a much stabler basis of conduct than social equilibrium and personal good. Culture has probably killed for all times the possibility of founding a religion without morals; but whether it would succeed in establishing morality without religion is doubtful. Possibly, in religion we are face to face with certain innate propensities of the human mind, and unless human nature is radically altered, religion, or something akin to it, is bound to persist. In fact, the moment man begins to speculate about the foundations of his own behaviour (including the pursuit of selfishness) he is driven by irresistible logic to formulate a theory of reality and end in some sort of religious belief. Even if morality and religion are rooted in different aspects of the spiritual life, they are insensibly drawn together with the advance of culture; and if latterly culture itself effects a dissociation between the two, it always sets up new ideals to back up morality in place of the discredited religious ideal. Possibly, in future, the religious element will recede a bit into the background; but any attempt to found morality on social convenience will soon find that without an invisible tether in the realm of the super-

sensible it will ultimately come to grief.

This is not a plea for sticking to outworn creeds or refusing to think out new solutions to the complicated relations of social, national and international life. The narrow morality which looked upon the alien in faith as the legitimate target of inhuman treatment, or the outcast as God's damned, would disappear in future, and a new morality based on the recognition of the value of the individual as such would evolve with culture. But along with it would also arise a conception of the ultimate principle adequate for the justification of the new morality. All the existing religions of the world were evolved at a time when the world was much smaller and the relations of life much simpler and the knowledge and power of man were limited in all ways. Any theory of human relationship which is not capable of application to new situations and problems would soon be exploded. But man would never remain contented with mere morals, for he is speculative and curious, and the problem of the necessity of living at peace with others and seeking and offering help in distress is bound to raise transcendental issues. Man lives for all times, if not in all spaces, and any social understanding that man evolves has reference to that larger sphere of existence where the duration of his own life is an insignificant factor.

We may, therefore, look without concern at the growing secularity of social relations and a certain laxity in the old moral bonds. Released suddenly from the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline, humanity is indulging in the inevitable orgies of new-found freedom. After the efferves-

cence of the novel life has subsided, the conservative elements of human nature would again assert themselves and man would evolve a new religious basis of his social duties and preach a new gospel. I have never believed in a last revelation, and I trust to the inscrutable ways of the Principle that holds men together to compel men to find out the hidden roots that nourish the moral life of man. To most of us those roots would for ever remain hidden; but we have no right to foist our own imperfections on others and to imagine that to others gifted with larger spiritual visions they would not be transparent. We must admit the possibility that many more in future would probably prefer not to think of ultimate issues but would still be moral. But we have no reason to think that religion which touched men to finer issues at all times in the past would cease to inspire future races, of men, and that the subtle, the supersensible and the supernatural would be banished from the realms of human thought in some future time. What would happen is that religion would cease to meddle with concrete practices, which are bound to be infected by the temporal and the spi-

ritual, and would limit itself to those fundamental principles that are capable of infinite application. Religion would discover formulae and not facts of noble life, and the greater the advancement of reason and culture, the greater is the possibility of spiritual discoveries being of universal appeal. We are still ignorant of the method by which some of the most ignorant men of the world saw into the mysteries of existence far deeper than the learned men of their times; and although we believe that there will never be a last revelation and a last prophet, we may still believe that some of the religious discoveries of ancient prophets are so universal that they are not likely to be altered by any later revelation. We believe also that human nature being unitary in character, conduct and faith would mutually influence each other, and that man with his present capacities and tendencies would always be in tune with the Infinite, feel the call of the ideal and the supersensible in the inmost fibre of his being, and develop a religious attitude to the world in extension of the moral relationship to other sentient creatures, to which he is committed by his social life.

(Concluded.)

THE UNSEEN HAND OF GOD

By V. A. Suryanarayana, B.A.

[Mr. Suryanarayana gives in these lines his reflections on a tragedy that is still fresh in the mind of India.]

DAY after day, we see around us many of our brethren and fellow beings sinking into the grave. Every day we meet with some accident or other which sets our minds at un-

rest. The death of a dear friend or relation, the sight of a distressed being, the sudden collapse of a commercial firm, or the thought of an approaching disaster—anything of a

stirring nature is enough to awaken us to the reality of things and the unseen hand of God. When anything unusual occurs before us, or whom anything untoward happens to us, we are thrown into a mood of melancholy for a moment, and in the intensity of our grief or suffering, we swear to give up our frivolous pursuits and feverish activities from that moment, and solemnly determine to take to a life of piety and devotion to God, whose existence we seldom feel when we are in the height of our prosperity and when everything goes aright with us.

In moments of despair and danger we feel the awesome presence of God before us. We recognise the omnipotence of God and the frailty of our physical being, which counts most when the unseen Power withdraws from our fold. We revolve on the deep problems of life and realise the evanescent nature of earthly things. We are impotent when the combined forces of Nature rage over us with all their petulance. We feel our helplessness when we are faced by the devastating demon of death, which is busy in snatching away day by day hundreds of thousands of our fellow-beings. We wonder at the playful sport of God in creating millions of creatures to fill the earth every day. But how often do we feel and recognise His Presence? How many souls actually experience the real joy at the sight of the unseen Hand that is guiding our destinies? How few of us are privileged to feel God-consciousness in our every-day life — a privilege given only to a select few, who are the salt of the earth, the exalted souls on earth, the selfless ones who strive for the good of humanity.

Most of us rush through our daily routine of life in a mechanical way and discharge our so-called duties of life in a perfunctory manner, feeling always the presence and dictates of the belly and never the existence and exhortations of the soul, which in ninety per cent. of humanity lies in a dormant state. How few of us are really doing our duties conscientiously, earnestly and without injuring the interests of our fellow-beings? Everywhere we see the hard struggle for existence, the strife and contention to promote our welfare, and the cut-throat competition into which we enter with one another to exploit, to increase wealth and to enhance our prospects in life. Why this constant warfare for a three day's existence? Of what avail is this deadly struggle to destroy each other? Wherefore is this worry, hurry and scurry to earn a pittance and to attain prominence in life? The process of construction and destruction, construction by destruction and destruction by construction, is ever going on in this world. We carry on this monotonous strife and struggle for existence, for exploitation and for self-aggrandisement, never thinking even for a moment why we are born in this world, where we are going and what we have to live for. The day of judgment will come at last when we will have to render a precise and full account of what we have done to ourselves, to our neighbours, to our country, and to humanity and God at large. The solemn determinations that seize our beings in moments of peril and powerlessness, leave us after a few days, and we again plunge our beings in the mire of materialism and man-munism, and merge our souls in the mud of mechanical life, in the dull

and dead routine of mundane life. All the philosophical speculations, pious resolutions, and penitent proclamations, flee from our minds, the moment we resume our suspended activities with redoubled vigour. We wish to have a permanent or at least a prolonged life to build our fortune, to make a name, and to mar the prospects of our competitors or fellow-workers. There comes the warrant from the Court of God Yama, suddenly and unexpectedly, and we cannot refuse the summons; we have not the courage to answer the call. We are thrown into the abysmal depths of despair, into the sea of sorrow, and into the jaws of death. Then we again remind ourselves of the visitations of divinity into our midst, from time to time, and of our solemn promises and utter forgetfulness of those awakening thoughts, and we bewail the utter futility of our belated penitence and persuasion. Therefore is it enjoined in every Scripture in the world that we live this life to the best of our advantage in future.

The unseen and omnipotent hand of God is nowhere more clearly manifest than in the recent terrific tragedy at Bihta near Patna. The shocking news of the sudden and instantaneous deaths of over a hundred persons, including women and innocent children, and, the dangerous situation of nearly two hundred persons lying on beds in the Dinapore hospital, drive deep into the heart of every one that has heard this heart-rending news, the lesson that life is but momentary, and human beings are helpless creatures when the forces of destruction prevail in all their fury. The tragedy is too terrible to be easily forgotten. It leaves a permanent im-

pression on the minds of all truth-seekers, philosophers and philanthropists. It has created a great convulsion in the minds of those that cling to life with all their hopes of making the best of it. But how many souls have seriously thought of the operations of the unseen Hand that has decided the destinies of so many souls by causing their destruction in a minute bringing forth a huge tragedy by the simple derailment of a railway train? The hopes of hundreds of souls are blasted in a minute. The whole scene is one huge mass of blood and broken bones, of shattered brains and powdered skulls, of pounded hearts and parted limbs. Oh! the woeful day that has brought forth misery and sorrow to the parentless children and widowed women in this calamitous cataclysm.

Who can reconcile himself to the ideas of divine justice and retribution unless he be a heartless being? But who can account for the inevitable and instantaneous end of over a hundred souls consequent upon the conspiracy of human and divine agents? Who can explain the motives behind the action that has come to pass by the will of the Universal Spirit? The tragedy is as inexplicable as it is unbearable. Frail man! Why wail over a thing that is not within your power of understanding and which is beyond your power to prevent or escape! Make the best of this momentary life by always trying to live in, and enjoy, His presence, which alone can redeem you from sin and suffering, and from sorrow and slavery. Seek the unseen Hand of God that can save you from the chains of birth and death and take shelter at the lotus-feet of the Lord, the power of chanting whose sacred names enables men

to cross the sea of Samsara. May the visitations of divinity, in the form of these terrible tragedies be a lesson and blessing in disguise to all those living, by awakening them to the

mysteries of the workings of the will of God, who always intends maintaining the balance of the cosmic and the Atmic forces in everything that comes to pass in His Kingdom.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Gnani* as well as a *Bhakta*. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

अमृतस्वरूपा च ॥ ३ ॥

(सा भक्तिः That Bhakti) अमृतस्वरूपा whose intrinsic form is *Amritam* च and (भवति is).

3. And in its own¹ intrinsic nature, *Bhakti* is nothing less than the immortal² bliss³ of freedom⁴ *Mukti* itself, which comes unsolicited⁵ by the grace of God and by self-sacrifice⁶.

Notes 1.—*Own intrinsic nature*—This sense is conveyed by the force of the adjective 'sva' added on to the word 'rupa'. Note the absence of this adjective in the previous *Sutra*. While that *Sutra* was meant to be a description of *Bhakti* from the relative standpoint, this *Sutra* purports to give a description of the same as it is in itself.

2. *Immortal*.—The word *Amritam* in the *Sutra* has various shades of meaning, all of which are important in the context, and it is to suggest all these meanings that Narada has used this word in preference to other words, such as *Mukti*, *Kaivalya*, *Apavarga*, etc. Accordingly our translation of the expression is not merely literal but brings out all these suggested meanings.

First of all, *Amritam* is freedom from death or change, i.e., to put it positively, it is immortality. But the permanence or immortality alluded to in our text is not the permanence vouchsafed to us by the physical laws of conservation of energy or by the biological law of the continuity of the germ plasma as the carrier of life from generation to generation. Nor is it mere life continued in another birth on the principle of transmigration, believed in by all religions, primitive or civilised, except the organised form of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Neither does it refer to the survival of the individual in an astral or etherial body as advocated by the spiritualists. It does not also mean the comparatively permanent life of ease and pleasure for eternal aeons in any astronomical region or any subtle world, variously called Heaven, Paradise, *Brahmaloka*, *Vaikuntha*, etc. The ordinary Heaven or *Svarga*, which all popular religions offer as a reward for good conduct and orthodox performance of rites and ceremonies, is really not permanent, nor is it a place of unalloyed happiness. The Hindu scriptures always emphasise the impermanence of *Svarga* and celestial pleasures. In fact our *Rishis*

paint a glowing picture of heaven only to attract to spiritual life those slovenly minds who refuse to move unless some recompense is promised to them in the shape of sensual happiness. As the *Bhagavatham* XI, 21, 23, says, "The Vedic passages treating of fruits of work, do not set forth the highest well-being of men, but are mere inducements like those for taking medicine, spoken with a view to lead people to their highest good." The *Upanishads* therefore assure us that everything which is an effect produced by an action must pass away and cannot be permanent.

On the other hand, spiritual bliss, once it is achieved, is never lost. Vide *Sandilya Sutra*, 8, which promises eternal happiness to *Bhaktas*. Speaking of the eternity of the fruit of self-realisation, the *Chandogya Upanishad* concludes with the words, "He never returns from that state," and this is echoed in the *Brahma Sutras* also in its last *Sutra*, "No returning according to the words of the *Sruti*." All *Acharyas* agree in this, except Swami Dayananda Saraswati. He says that even *Mukti* is not eternal for the following reasons:—1. As the soul is finite, it cannot have eternal enjoyment. 2. If there is no return, the other world becomes overcrowded, and this world depopulated. 3. Happiness, if prolonged too much, would cause satiation and a longing for change. 4. There is no man who would prefer life imprisonment. Vide *Satyartha Prakash*. It has only to be remarked that this view entirely misunderstands the nature of the immortality and bliss of *Mukti*. *Br. Aranyaka* I, 2, 7 points out emphatically, however, "The realised man conquers further death. Death cannot overtake him. It becomes his self."

Cf. the famous lines of Tondaradi-podi Alwar in his *Tirumozhi*, Verse 1: "Whom do we fear now? We are so well protected by His holy name that even death flies from our door." Cf. also the *Puranic* story of how Death had to flee away from Markandeya when he sought protection of Lord Siva. See also St. Luke XX. 36: "Neither can they die any more."

3. *Bliss*.—*Amrita* is also a synonym for nectar or bliss. *Bhakti* or supreme spiritual realisation is a supremely joyous experience, an unadulterated and unalloyed state of absolute felicity and beatitude. Worldly pleasures, as well as celestial joy, pale into insignificance in comparison with the joy of spiritual bliss or *Ananda* which the *Upanishads* designate as *Brahman* itself. All sense pleasures, mundane or celestial, are pale reflections or partial manifestations of this *Ananda*, through a temporary predominance of the Sattva Guna, and all craving for the same is only an unconscious groping in the dark to gain *Ananda* or spiritual bliss, our birth-right. Every desire is a veiled prayer, and every satisfaction, a concealed and confused taste of *Ananda*. The extremely sweet nature of the spiritual experience is recognised by the *Vedic Rishi* when he prays thus in *R.V.* I, 154, 5: "May I attain to that beloved mansion of His, where those men that are devoted to God are happy, where flows the perennial fountain of nectar, just by the mighty striding feet of *Vishnu*, in His Supreme Abode." The *Br. Up.* II, 15, 4, characterises the Atman that is realised as honey which is itself *Amritam*. Yajnavalkya in *Br. Up.* II, 4, tells Maitreyi that every one and everything in this world is loved only for the sake of Atman.

Again in IV, 3, 32, the same *Upa-nishad* says: "This is its supreme attainment, this is its supreme glory, this is the highest world, this is its supreme bliss. On a particle of this very bliss all other beings live." The *Tait. Up.* II, 7 says, "This indeed Bliss itself. Having attained this Bliss, man becomes happy. Who would have lived and breathed if this sky of bliss had not existed? This is verily that which bestows Bliss." In *Ch. Up.* VIII, 23 Narada himself is taught by Sanat-kumara, "The Infinite is Bliss. There is no happiness in the finite." The *Katha Up.* IV, 5 calls *Atman* as enjoyer of honey, and in V, 12 and 13 it says that "eternal happiness and peace are possible only for the realised man and to none else." The *Svetasvatara Up.* calls us all "children of Immortal Bliss". *Gita* V, 21 says that the realised man finds happiness that is in himself, and being in union with God, enjoys undying Bliss. In VI, 21 it describes the state as one of boundless joy beyond the senses, and in VI, 27 and 28 it describes the realised man as experiencing the infinite joy of union with the Lord. *Bhagavatham* XII, 12, 51 speaks of the state as delightful and as a constant feast to the mind which sucks up the sea of sorrow of mortals.

One of the beautiful names by which Nammalwar addressed God is *Aravamuda* which means 'Nectar endless'. The word *Azhvar*, which the *Vaishnavites* use to denote *Bhaktas*, itself means those who are immersed in bliss. *Tiruvaymozhi* II, 8, 4, speaks of *Vaikuntham* as the country where joy is endless. Pillay Lokacharya's *Mumukshupadi* III says, "Love pursued even after bliss

is gained adds zest to the bliss." Parasara Bhatta in his *Sringara Stava* speaks of 'love and bliss as one truth'. The *Mukundamala* says that the author 'is not aware of any other bliss equal to the nectar of the blessed feet of Hari; and he invites us to drink the nectar called Krishna, for that is the supreme panacea for all worldly ills and what gives eternal Bliss! The *Bhakti Rasayanam* of Madhusudana Saraswati says in its very first *Sloka* that 'Bhakti is the supreme goal of man's endeavour and is incomparable and unalloyed bliss.' The *Narayaniya* says that devotion to God, which is sweet in the beginning, in the middle and in the end, gives the highest bliss'. Tayumanavar's famous *Ananda Kalippu* is justly noted as an attempt by a comparatively modern saint to describe the joy of spiritual experience. Cf. also Jesus saying, "My joy I give unto you and your joy no man taketh from you." Cf. also Mathew XXV, 22 and 23, where Jesus, speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven, says, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". Cf. also *Quoran* Part XVIII Chap. XXI, 101 and 102 which the commentator explains as referring to the bliss of communion with God; also Part XXIII, Chap. XXXVI, where the happiness of heaven is described in one word, 'Peace', corresponding to the *Santi* of the *Upanishads*.

Plotinus calls the spiritual state as a 'divinely ineffable harbour of repose'. Fawcett calls it 'joy eternal, and Eeregina, the state whose delight is perfect'.

The beauty of this spiritual bliss is never adulterated with even the least trace of misery. "Every sweet has its sour," says Emerson, but the

bliss of realisation is above it. *Gita* speaks of sensual pleasures in V, 22, as only sources of pain, and as having a beginning and an end.

It must also be realised that there is no loss of individuality in this highest experience. Once Sri Ramakrishna said to Narendra (Swami Vivekananda): "God is like a liquid sweet, would you not dive into the sea? Just think of a vessel with a wide mouth containing syrup of sugar, and suppose you are a fly anxious to drink of the sweet liquid. Where should you sit and drink?" Narendra replied that he would prefer to sit at the edge of the vessel, for if he came to a point beyond his depth, he was sure to be drowned. Thereupon Sri Ramakrishna said, "You forget, my son, that by diving deep into the Divine Sea you need not be afraid of death. Remember, *Satchi-ananda* Sea is the Sea of Immortality. The water of this Sea never causes death but is the water of everlasting life. Think not like some foolish persons that you may run to excess in your love of God." *Bhakti* is thus no loss of individuality but only a supreme transcendence of the limitations of individuality and regaining of the true status of the Self. Cf. Lotze's statement, "Perfect personality is in God only. To all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof. The finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of personality, but a limit and hindrance to its development."

4. *Freedom*.—*Amrita* is another name for *Mukti* or *Moksha* (freedom from the round of births and deaths). It is conceived of both positively and negatively by various schools of thought both in India and elsewhere.

Thus the *Apavarga* of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* schools is described negatively as release from pain, and not as enjoyment of positive bliss. It is a complete cessation of effort, activity, consciousness, and an absolute detachment of the soul from body, mind, etc. It is an abstract existence without knowledge and happiness. Vatsyayana is emphatic that *Apavarga* cannot be a positive manifestation of soul's happiness and Udyotakara supports him. The *Samkya* and *Yoga* schools speak of *Kaivalya* as an eternal isolation of the seer from the modifications of *Prakriti* or *Chitta*. To them even *Mukti* is only phenomenal, since bondage does not belong to the *Purusha*. It is an escape from suffering and not a manifestation of bliss, since *Purusha* is free from all attributes. Among the *Mimamsakas*, *Jaimini* and *Sabara* never concern themselves with *Mukti*. *Prabhakara* conceives of it negatively as a total disappearance of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and consequent escape from re-birth. It is to him a cessation not only of pain but also of pleasure, and not a state of positive bliss. Kumara Bhatta also asserts that liberation cannot be eternal unless it is negative in character. So also Parthasarathi. The Buddhist Schools conceive of the final end or *Nirvana* as a complete extinction or 'blowing out' even of the *Atman* itself, and to the Jains, *Nirvana* is a disintegration of the *Karmic* body.

Alone, among the religious and philosophical systems that flourished on the fair soil of India, Vedanta, in all its schools, has emphasised the positive character of the state of *Mukti* along with its negative aspect. To the Vedantin, whether he is a

Jnani or a *Bhakta*, the *summum bonum* is regaining of the natural bliss of the Atman, as well as of freedom from the miseries of *Samsara*. Narada emphasises this double aspect of *Vedantic Mukti* by identifying the positive *Bhakti* (described before as of the nature of Supreme Love) with the negative *Amrita* or freedom from death. In the previous *Sutra* the positive aspect is emphasised, and in this the negative one. The emphasis of the *Bhakti* schools is always on the positive aspect.

Some minor difference among the various schools of Vedanta may be noted here. While Sankara insists upon a complete identification of the individual with God in ultimate experience, the *Bhakti* teachers, Ramanuja and Madhva, are afraid of such identification, and posit the retention of individuality. A point of difference, more important in connection with the present *Sutra*, is that the *Bhakti* schools do not admit of *Jivanmukti* or liberation in this very life. Their *Mukti* is always post-mortem or *Videha . Mukti*. This is the view of Christianity and Mohammedanism too. While the Hindu *Bhakti* schools thus deny to the most perfect state attainable in this life, the right to call itself *Mukti*, there is not much difference between the *Para Bhakti* (Supreme Love) of these schools and *Jivanmukti* of Sankara. If the sense of freedom from all misery and a sense of eternal bliss are not possible before death, then there is no meaning in saying that *Bhakti* is *Amrita* or immortality. It will be a contradiction in terms to say that immortality can be attained after death. If *Mukti* is freedom and immortality, it can justify itself only by the experience of the soul, of

its being above death and limitations, in this very life. Hence Sankara and Narada both accept immortality before giving up the body, in this very life. And they are supported by the *Upanishads*. See *Katha* VI, 14, "Then the mortal becomes immortal, and attains *Brahman* here." Also *Tait. A.*, "Realising Him thus, one becomes immortal here."

5. *Unsolicited by the Grace of God*.—*Amrita* also means unsolicited alms. The *Bhakta* never craves for *Mukti*; he is quite satisfied to enjoy the love of God for love's sake, and to serve Him for the sake of service. Still *Mukti* comes to him by the grace of God. Cf. *Narayaniyam*, I, 8, "Unlike the *Kalpataru* which has to be approached and solicited if it should satisfy anybody's wish, Thou art always in front of the *Bhaktas* wherever they are, eager to bless them, even without their asking for any favour, and finally gives them eternal bliss." Without His grace *Mukti* is not possible. See *Katha* II, 22, "It is attained by him alone whom God chooses." Cf. also *Swet. Up.* I, 6, "Blessed by Him, it attains immortality." Also *Mahabharata* XII. 337, "Only he can realise Narayana to whom He is gracious." Also *Ibid.* XII, 348, "He who has the grace of Narayana realises Him. He cannot be realised by mere self-effort." Sankara, too, in spite of his being a great advocate of self-effort says in his commentary on *Brahma Sutras* II, 3, 41 and III, 2, 5, "Attainment of *Moksha* comes from intuition arising by the grace of God."

6. *Self-sacrifice*.—The word *Amrita*, in application to Vedic sacrifices, also means the holy food left after sacrificial offerings. In this sense *Amrita* is described as *Yajnesha*. By the

clever selection of the word *Amrita* to describe the nature of devotion, the author of the *Sutra* also means by implication that just as *Amrita*, in the sacrificial sense, is associated with self-effort—for sacrifice which gives rise to *Amrita* is born of self-effort—so also *Bhakti* is associated with self-effort. Supreme devotion, of the nature described before, no doubt comes only by the grace of God, but does it come even if a man kept quiet, and did not deserve such grace by his self-effort. It never comes until the mind is purified by continued acts of self-sacrifice. God's grace descends on man always like the blowing wind, but if he wants to take advantage of it, he must do *Sadhana* or spiritual practices, as the boatman must unfurl the sails before he can catch the blowing wind. Thus complete freedom of the will and self-effort are recognised without any prejudice to the doctrine of the grace of God. Cf. *Brahma Sutra*, II, 3, 42 and II, 1, 34, which show that God's grace depends upon man's actions. The *Yoga*-

vasishta III, 6, 14 says that there is no way to bring about the end of misery than through one's own self-effort, and the same book II, 6, 27 says that he who relies upon fate, or believes that God will throw him capriciously into heaven or hell is a fool. The *Gita* also in VI, 5, says, "Let a man raise himself by himself, let him not debase himself. For he himself is his friend, and he himself is his foe."

Thus Narada is very happy in his choice of the word *Amrita* to describe the intrinsic nature of *Bhakti*, for in that word is contained in a nutshell the whole doctrine of *Bhakti* in all its implications. Immortality, bliss, and freedom as the end, and the grace of God and self-effort as the means,—these are the various ideas which Narada, by his explicit statement and by the indirect implications, wants us to have in mind when we contemplate the intrinsic nature of *Bhakti*. In short *Bhakti* in its intrinsic nature is nothing less than *Mukti* (liberation) itself.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A True Highway towards Christian Reality: By T. Wiglay, M.A. (*Cantab.*). George Allen Unwin Ltd., Museum Street, London. Price 8sh. 6d. net.

The author has striven through this work to maintain how all people, who can believe only in a God who reveals Himself to-day as in any previous age, need not be disturbed at all by the devastating attack dogmatic theology had to suffer consistently at the hands of science. The New Testament data and the dicta of Church Fathers no more occupy the old place. Analysing the modern mind, Mr. Wiglay points out in the opening chapter how the life-giving properties have long departed from the church, and how the cheap introductions to scientific knowledge through the press and the radio have moulded the scientific out-

look of the masses creating a sharp antagonism between the creeds and dogmas of the church on the one hand, and the assured results of modern thought on the other, so much so the great masses are contented to remain outside the churches. Therefore the need of expressing Christianity in terms acceptable to the modern generation "without treachery to their scientific conscience" is urgently felt. This can be fulfilled only if we discard the theological superstructure and come down to the ground of genuine religion.

Discussing about our ideas regarding Nature he summarises the matter in these pithy words of Lord Balfour: "We now know too much about matter to be materialists." "Viewing the world of Nature in all its degrees of reality and modes of expression

....," states the author after carefully sifting the up-to-date views in philosophy and science, "we discover that every element in it exists only for a conscious knowing mind. If, as we claim, the self with its experiences is implied in every act of knowledge as the unifying principle of it all, and granted that our knowledge of ourselves is partial and incomplete, is it not possible to conceive of ourselves as limited and intermittent manifestations of a Mind Universal which gives being and meaning to the whole universe?" Man is a personality, a living, moving continuum of experience, a unitary whole interpenetrated by feelings, thoughts and purposes. This fact alone could give us the clue to knowledge and interpret the realm of ends or the realm of nature. The known has no existence apart from the knower, and in so far as the personality constantly reaches out to the Universal, maintains our author, it is justifiable to assign a lower reality to the physical order of Nature than that to the spiritual. The Mind Universal alone gives meaning and value to particulars. The chapter on 'Our Idea of Law' is a suggestive one. It is contented that the laws

of Nature can never fully describe an event but only a selected aspect of it. Hence they cannot be hypostatized and regarded as things in themselves existing by their own right. The mode of behaviour and being in Nature, which we describe in terms of law, cannot have an absolute existence apart from the mind which feels, thinks and relates. The universe is law-abiding because it is the expression of an immanent God who is its ever-present Ground. The universe is a process of timeless determination inseparable from a perpetually active, incessantly creative God revealing Himself right through. God is no more the clock-maker watching his wound-up Nature from a distance.

The fourth and the fifth chapters deal with man and God respectively.

The remaining chapters deal with 'Jesus', 'Immanence and Incarnation,' 'Miracle and Miracles,' 'Faith and Knowledge,' 'Sin and Salvation,' 'Personal Survival' and 'The essence of Christianity.' These chapters, although written with much thought and insight, do not carry at places the same general appeal to the seeker of religious fundamentals as the previous ones.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A Letter from Paris

We give below extracts from an interesting letter received from Swami Siddheswarananda. In our last issue, we had already announced the Swami's departure to Paris to attend the Philosophical Congress and to study the possibilities of starting a Vedanta Centre there. The letter runs as follows:—

1-8-37. Through the grace of Sri Thakur and good wishes and blessings from you all, I had a very happy voyage and came here by train from Marsuilles yesterday morning. Rev. S. Maharaj who came the previous day to Paris with Mons. J. H. had come to the station.

The ship was berthed at the harbour by 2 p.m., and getting our French visas we came to the customs. These people did not give us any trouble. We sent wire to Paris and came to Cook's and got my money changed. One pound is 131 Francs. Thus it is very favourable to us. Next we sought out a vegetarian hotel and had our meals. We got our usual boiled vegeta-

bles and bread. But French preparations are entirely different. As Mr. B. was not with us for a few minutes, I had much difficulty to make the landlady understand I wanted milk coffee. Not understanding my language she brought a bottle of rum to mix with black coffee. Then I used the kindergarten method, just showed the shape of a cow and pointed out the way of milking. Then with a loud laughter of understanding, she went to search if there was milk and gave me the disappointing news of 'no milk'.

The train from Marsuilles was overcrowded, and as Cook's had arranged for our seats, we got the accommodation. Owing to the International Exhibition now going on, I get as a tourist 50 p.c. concession for 3 months in all French railways and permission to see the exhibition at half rates for ten visits.

We had much desire to see round Marsuilles—a very lovely town perched on hillocks, and the ocean on one side. It

has a population of 8 lakhs and is the 2nd city in France. We were much impressed by the hospitality of a policeman who came from the streets, stood in the middle of a heavily trafficking road, and stopped the traffic and permitted us to cross. In Paris, there is not much difficulty in crossing. In definite places lines are put across the road and when the signal light glimmers green, we can cross, and then the pedestrian has priority over vehicular traffics and these signals are automatically worked. We have to get accustomed to "keep to the right" habit.

I am now temporarily lodged in a room belonging to the flat of Mme. G. sister-in-law of R.R. In this very room which I occupy Rev. S. Maharaj stayed a couple of years back, and some time before Mahatma Gandhiji also stayed. The lady is now in England, but has written that I can ever use a room in her flat whenever I am in Paris.

2-8-37. This flat is a very old fashioned one—may be a hundred years. But it is very well situated. The Paris Observatory is only a few yards away and just behind there is a church gate with a garden. The Sorbonne University is very close too. We take our breakfast, lunch and dinner in a vegetarian hotel near by. The French lodgings do not make provision for bath-rooms, and a bath in a public bath hotel means 8 annas. But yesterday I had a very good one. They keep these bath-rooms so neat and clean, and we get plenty of hot and cold water. The weather is very much like Bangalore. But it will soon get cooler and Mons. J. H. is ordering more warm clothing.

On the very day of my arrival was the opening of the Philosophical Congress. Bergson, being ill, sent a message. The University buildings are constructed with great artistic taste. The auditorium, so tastefully decorated with paintings on the wall, has also many fine sculptured statues of master minds of French thought and life. The President of the Republic, the Minister of Education and many prominent men of Paris were present. It was a strange sight for me to note that the President sat only with the common public. He took a seat in the first row. On the platform only the delegates sat. It was very pleasant to see the democratic spirit—

where the President of the Republic and the citizens of the Republic are all on the same footing. But the President was shown all honours. When he entered the hall, the French National Anthem "La Marsaillais" was playing and all the audience stood. Mons. Paul Valery who is considered to be the Tagore of France made a long speech, followed by the reading of Bergson's letter, and then Sir (now Lord) Herbert Samuel from England made a very impressive speech. Lord Samuel was continuously cheered. The French are very emotional and boisterously clap hands as we do. Lord Samuel made constant references to the advancement of the Philosophic thought of the world by French thinkers, and this Mons. J. H. said was the cause of such loud acclamations.

As all speeches were in French, we came out and had a long walk, seeing the Pantheon, Notre Dame, Nepelean's bridge, the place where he is entombed, the Louis Palace of the Bourbons (it is a mile in length or perhaps more), Les Tuilleries, etc.

Yesterday we all dined along with Dr. E.—s. Both are allopathic doctors. The wife is very devoted, and belongs to the close circle of Sri Guru Maharaji's devotees here. They have discovered another devotee whom even Mons. J. H. did not know till yesterday personally. It is about this Mons. M. S. and his wife that Mons. J. H. wrote to me to Port Said telling that I would be very comfortably lodged. They have got very fresh quarters and they received us yesterday with great feelings of joy. They have been anxiously expecting to be in company of some of us. They are now remodelling a room and bathroom to suit my convenience, making special adjustment of electric lights. They have purchased a fresh bed for me. They seem to be very pious. The husband is very good, and the wife, still better. They are about 60 years old. They have got about 6 rooms. The lady does not know one word of English. She told Mons. J. H. that she must herself do all the washing of clothes for me, and would never permit it to be given to the laundry. As she is hale and hearty she wants to do the service. In this house there is a bathroom, and it is in modern style. There is also extra electric heating arrangement. The

husband has good intellectual tastes, so also the lady perhaps. Mons. M. S. told me that the French are highly intellectual and logical, and at the same time emotional, and that they have not found a method of approach to integrate these two aspects of their character. Vedanta and the Life of Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) and Swamiji will be the best method to solve their problem. This gentleman has been attending the Bhuddhist group meetings. But he says all these groups dwindled away for want of a full time worker. Mons. M. S. told me so touchingly in broken English that if at any time I found Paris life dull, I can easily go to a fine country house they own fifty miles from Paris, near the mountains. He said that he has written to the keeper of the house to keep one room ever ready for me. Sri Guru Maharaj's hand I feel everywhere, and may He guide me and make me fit to accept all this hospitality in His name. I was very much touched when Mons. M. S. told Mons. J. H. in French, to be communicated to me, "In the physical plane we will treat the Swami as our son, and in the spiritual plane, as our teacher."

Yesterday morning we had an invitation for tea from Mme. M., who came to Mysore and Bangalore in 1934. I saw her at Bangalore twice. She is a very cultured lady, and lives in a decent flat. That place and the house I now live in are the places for every Indian. No Indian will get stranded in Paris. Mme. M. puts on Indian dress at home. The note of confidence in her face is the challenge to the modern world.

Just to move round the Exhibition grounds, and see from outside the buildings put up by each nationality, it took us 3 hours. I have got a free ticket to move round for 10 days more. It is very taxing to walk round and study, and I mean doing it bit by bit. It seems they had to spend 10 million pounds to put up the pavillions and arrange the exhibits. It has surpassed the Chicago Fair of 1936. Coloured fountains as in Kannambadi play in the middle, and on both sides there are sky-scraper pavillions, and at the head of the fountains there is a huge tower like the Oeterlony monument. That is the tower of Peace. That looks like a moc-

kery when bombs are exploding in the neighbouring country. But to have conceived this idea of peace when Europe is being threatened with *Ashanti*, is a marvel of French imagination.

The Exhibition is a tremendous affair. To take one round means more than four miles. Each country has a huge pavillion. Please look into any of the European magazines and you will have an idea through pictures. The exhibition centres round Eiffel Tower. I only saw yesterday the building put up by Egypt. There I saw many old curious relics of the past, as well as the modern developments that country is making in its quick march towards modernisation. But the most impressive building is put up by U.S.S.R. There are two colossal statues on the top of a sky-scraper building, representing a peasant man and woman with hammer and sickle in hand.

By 3 we came to the 'varsity' but found that Mr. V. S. will speak only at 5 p.m. So we moved round. Almost all the proceedings are in French. I found in one section a famous professor speaking like an orator with much effect on Biology, Causality and Determinism. In each section there were 30 or 40 or 50 people attending, besides a floating population.

Flood Relief in Orissa

The Acting Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission has issued the following appeal:—

In connection with the flood relief work in Orissa, we beg to announce that our workers have opened two centres at Delang and Pipli. In the first distribution from Delang, there were 794 recipients from 394 families of 25 villages, and the amount of rice distribution was 35 maunds, 33 seers. Hundreds of poor villagers, having lost their huts, are passing days on embankments in rains. Help towards hut-building will be necessary as soon as flood completely subsides. Failure of crop is also apprehended, and then there will be severe scarcity of food. We therefore appeal to the generous public to contribute their mite and thus save thousands from starvation and death. Any contribution, however small, will be received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O., Belur Math., Dt. Howrah.

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