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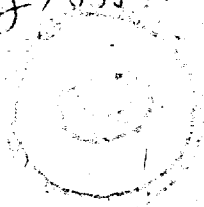
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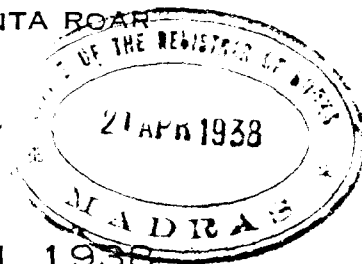
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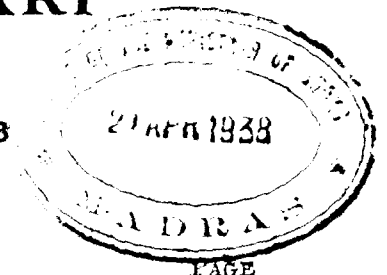
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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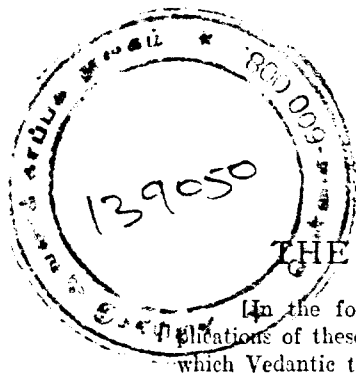
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HINDU ETHICS

न चरित्रनिमित्तोऽस्याहङ्कारो देहपातनः । अभिन्नश्रुतचारित्रः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
अध्यात्मविधितत्त्वज्ञः क्षान्तः शक्तो जितेन्द्रियः । ऋजुश्च सत्यवादी च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
सुशीलः सुखसंवेशः सुभोजः स्वादरः शुचिः । सुवाक्यश्चाप्यनीर्घ्वश्च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
कल्याणं कुरुते दाढं पापमस्मिन् न विद्यते । न प्रीयते परानर्थैः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
नार्ये धने वा कामे वा भूतपूर्वोऽस्य विग्रहः । दोषाश्चास्य समुच्छिन्नाः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
दृढभक्तिरनिन्द्यात्मा श्रुतवाननृशंसवान् । वीतसंमोहदोषश्च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
समाधिर्नास्य कामार्थे नात्मानं स्तौति कर्हिचित् । अनीर्घुर्नृदुसंवादः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
लोकस्य विविधं चित्तं प्रेक्षते चाप्यकुत्सयन् । अमेता परगुह्यानां तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
नामूयत्यागसं कं चित् स्वनयेनोपजीवति । अवन्ध्यकालो वश्यात्मा तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥
कृतश्रमः कृतप्रज्ञो न च लज्जः समाधिना । नित्ययुक्तोऽप्रमत्तश्च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥

Why the sage Narada is adored everywhere is evident from the following characterisation: The deadly pride of having a high character never entered his mind, although he possessed sacred learning and noble conduct to perfection. He was quite at home in the science of self-knowledge, and was habitually forbearing, controlled in the activities of the senses, straightforward, truthful in speech, good in conduct, conversation and deportment, habituated only to pure food, loving, clean of body and mind, and devoid of malice. It was certain he acted always well. He was sinless and never felt glad at others' woes. He never picked up quarrel with any one for the sake of gain or pleasure. He had no defects and his devotion to God was deep and firm. A taintless soul he was and his mastery of the scriptures was supreme. Pleasure was never his motive, and he was not given to boasting. Cruelty and delusion were utterly absent in him. He was jealous of none and communicated with great softness. Without a word of disparagement he used to observe the infinite ways in which the minds of men worked, and never divulged the secrets of other people. He was not regardless of other faiths, but lived according to his own. He wasted no moment and ever remained a master of himself. He was hard-working, and acquired vast wisdom. He had no satiety in devout contemplation. Constant application and great vigilance marked his life.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 238.



THE PERSONAL AND THE IMPERSONAL

[In the following paragraphs we have discussed some of the philosophical implications of these two doctrines regarding the Deity, and have indicated the lines along which Vedantic thought seeks to reconcile them.]

I

THE most remarkable contribution that the Hindu mind has made to the spiritual heritage of mankind is in regard to the conception of the Deity. The human mind works along two lines in the contemplation of the Divine. In the first place it wants to commune with Him, to grasp Him and possess Him like any other thing. It feels unsatisfied unless the Deity is human—of course infinitely more magnified than any man and without any human imperfection—and unless He can be thought of as the cause of the universe and as entering into intimate relationship with man as the determiner of his destiny. And this is quite natural. For man is led to think of God chiefly because the human longings of his heart demand fulfilment in an infinite human personality, or because the troubles and tribulations of life drive him to seek shelter in a power that can shield him from them, or because his intellect requires for its support a final cause of the vast universe in which he finds himself placed in so mysterious and unaccountable a fashion. All the conceptions of the Deity that the mind of man evolves in response to needs and questionings of this kind are identical in the sense that they can all be called 'personal'. By the term 'personal' we do not of course mean that the Deity, from this point of view, should necessarily be conceived as a gigantic man or as a despotic

king sitting on a throne surrounded by a host of underlings. Indeed, the Personal God may be thought of as with form or without form; but He is spoken of as personal not so much for this difference in conception, as for the fact that He is the answer that the human being gets in his quest, so long as he thinks himself to be a person and consequently seeks for an explanation of things, which must necessarily be in personal terms. For, whether our quest is for a God who heals the wounds of our heart, or gives rest to our intellect by taking the responsibility of creation; whether we think of him as endowed with a form of exquisite beauty, or merely as a power without a body but none-the-less possessing all the virtues of an exalted human being—the conception continues to be personal because it is still clothed in the garb of human values, it being the response we get to some of our felt needs in our emotional and intellectual life.

The personal conception of God, therefore, comes within the field of what is called anthropomorphism. The ancient scripture of the Hebrews said that God created man in His image, but modern scholars who have made a study of religion in all societies have reversed the saying, and shown that man has created God in his image. For the Vedantic philosophy based on a Personal-Impersonal God, it is however unimportant whether the higher ideas of God are developments

from the primitive notions regarding spirits or whether the primitive spirits are perversions of a once exalted conception of the Deity. Whatever the origin and history of the idea may be, the one fact that comes out prominently is, that the various conceptions of Personal God reflect the intellectual, moral and aesthetic attainments of the people who have developed the conceptions. The procession of Gods is a never-ending one, and we have got all grades and levels of them, from fighting and wine-drinking Gods who often espouse human brides, up to the conception of the one God of the universe who is endowed with the most sublime attributes that the human mind can think of and who forms the highest explanation of the universe that the human intellect could arrive at. Often, as the worshippers become more and more refined with the progress of culture, the old Gods become too low for them from the moral point of view, and then they either reject them in preference to higher conceptions, or they elevate the very same old Gods by giving allegorical interpretations of their questionable features and thus reconciling them to the current higher standards of society. All this belongs to the sphere of anthropomorphism, and the highest achievement of man in this sphere is reached when he has arrived at the conception of a God of the universe who saves him from the tribulations of life and guides the destinies of this universe. This God of the universe may be thought of as with form or as without it; in either case it belongs to the highest limits in the sphere of anthropomorphism.

All these various ideas, from the crudest to the highest, deserve to be

brought under the conception of Personal God, because they are all alike sprung from man's attempt to grasp the Deity while himself remaining a man in full possession of his ego—in other words, from his attempt to establish a point of contact between his limited self and the Supreme by capturing Him in the net of his own human needs, intellectual and emotional.

II

We have stated before that the human mind works along two lines in the contemplation of the Deity, and of these, we have till now dealt with what goes ordinarily under the name of the personal conception of God. The essence of it, we saw, is that the consciousness of the world and the sense of his own ego are the most dominant experiences moulding man's conception of the Deity. But side by side with it, the human mind feels a lurking suspicion whether a God in human terms is not in Himself a limited being, however much the heart may need Him for satisfaction, and however much the intellect may require Him as a resting place. The cosmos may be unthinkably vast in dimensions, and the One who is its creator and sustainer may be endowed with powers so great that it stupifies the imaginations of poor human beings like us, even as the power and majesty of the ruler of a mighty empire overawes an ignorant peasant. But is not the conception of Him yet that of a limited being, depending as it does on the experience of the universe and of our own individual ego? If our God is only the creator of the universe and the saviour of man, then our very conception of His existence is dependent

on these two factors of experience, namely, the universe and our individual problem of life. And a Personal God, by the very genesis of that conception, is, as we have seen, a relational being, and unless we can know Him, at least in some other relation than that of the creator and the saviour, we cannot even take His absolute existence for granted. To make the matter more clear, even in our common experience of the things of the world, we find that all things having real existence, a self-identity apart from other things, can exist in more than one relation. A fruit, an existent thing, can, for example be perceived in relation to the tree, to the ground, to a table, to a basket, to a plate, and so on and so forth. When we thus perceive, or understand the possibility of perceiving, it in different contexts, we are convinced that it has an existence of its own, relative it might be, apart from these relations. But take the case of a rainbow. It is seen only when sunlight and clouds conspire together to bring it into existence, and we can never separate it from this one relation. We therefore conclude that it has no identity or self-existence of its own apart from the particular conditions in which it appears. Now if our God is only the creator and saviour, in other words, if He is known only in reference to the universe and the human standpoint it implies, we cannot be sure of the absolute self-existence of God; for He may be, like the rainbow, merely a concept dependent on our experience of the universe. To be sure of His existence, we must, therefore, have an assurance of his complete independence from the world and our own individuality.

As against this it may be said that the conception of God as creator in itself carries with it the implication of His existence apart from the creation, just as that of the potter from the pot. But there is, however, a difference in the conceptions which makes the analogy inappropriate. We see the potter independently existing and making the pot, but no one has seen God creating the universe. In fact we infer the existence of God—if such inference is legitimate at all—from our experience of the universe and our individuality which forms a part of it, and as long as we know Him only as creator, that is, in contrast to the universe and our individuality, the doubt is bound to persist that His existence is bound up with that of the universe. Hence, when we say that God as creator implies His self-existence, we are only assuming that He exists independent of the universe and our individuality. In that case we are taking the concept of the creator as a self-transcendent conception, admitting its inadequacy if it is bound up with the world. Now this is in no way different from the point we have been urging.

Now the Impersonal God, of whom the Vedanta speaks, is this assurance of the self-existence of God, which a merely anthropomorphic conception of Him cannot convey, however exalted it might be. In other words, as long as we do not grant that God is, even in the absence of the universe and our individualities, our Personal God is in danger of being merely the projection of our desires—an image of man's hopes and fears. Now the philosophy of God as the Impersonal, unrelated to the universe and unconnected with our destinies,

and ending finally in complete acosmism, is the only sound and substantial basis for a conception of Personal God to stand upon. It is not hereby meant to say that we are to derive the Personal God, the universe and so on as entities successively born of an unrelated and Impersonal Absolute; for that goes against the very idea of an unrelated, Impersonal Absolute. What the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute warrants is this: in the spiritual quest of man, when the highest level of anthropomorphism is reached in a creator and saviour God, there is felt a natural tendency to transcend that very idea in the experience of an impersonal type, that is, an experience in which the question of individual destiny or of the origin and explanation of the universe does not arise at all. In other words, the Impersonal Absolute is the self-transcendence of the Personal God, without taking which into consideration the ontological question regarding the existence of the Personal God is not finally set at rest.

III

If the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute is viewed in this light, much of the abhorrence which pure theists feel against it can be remedied. The reason for this hostility of theists and dualists is to be attributed largely to a faulty way of presenting this philosophy, in addition to their own narrowness and theological prejudices. Many an exponent of the doctrine of the Impersonal Absolute maintains that the doctrine implies a negation of all attributes and, along with it, necessarily of all the highest values and the Personal Deity who is the conservator of them all in the light of

the most refined anthropomorphic conception. This way of procedure, it would seem, is both wrong philosophy and faulty religion. The distinction between attribute and substance is a philosophical fiction unwarranted by experience. In the first place, we can think only of the removal of one set of attributes from another set of attributes, not of all attributes from a so-called substance. If at all we arrive at anything this way, we arrive at only a non-entity, which surely is not the Impersonal Absolute. From the practical point of view, it is impossible for any sober man to think that, by merely imagining in his mind, he can rid all experienced things of their attributes. What in fact he can do is to refine his ego and discover its secret. When this is successfully done, a stage comes when thought takes a leap from its conditioned state, shedding thereby its anthropomorphic slough and gaining thereby a non-individual view of experience which is devoid of the distinction between the seer, the seen and the relation between them characteristic of knowledge at the individual level. It is illegitimate for a logician to come forward and interpret this as denuding things of their attributes or of experience of all value. If language can express it at all, it can be spoken of neither as affirming nor as denying attribute and value, but only as transcending them in the sense that the bursting of the shell of anthropomorphism and individuality reveals them in a new non-objective and impersonal light. It is not a denial of attribute and value, but a transcendence of the conflict between substance and attribute, between fact and value.

Another misinterpretation of the philosophy of the Impersonal Abso-

lute is to represent it as teaching that the Personal God is a lower God, and thereby reducing His worshippers to mere idolaters. There can perhaps be no caricature of a great doctrine worse than this. Even its logic is defective. Comparison is a way of relating things and when we speak of the Impersonal Absolute as higher than something else, we are putting it in the scale of relations and reducing it again into an anthropomorphic entity. What is worse, this anthropomorphised Absolute entity of the relational scheme is reduced to something lesser than personality, that is, by such comparison the Absolute becomes at best an undifferentiated inertness or a shadowy negation, and the theistic theologians are right in abhorring such a conception and refuting it with all the power of their logic. God, as the great Christian thinker, Anselm put it, is the highest being we can think of; the very constitution of the mind dictates this. And as we have shown, anthropomorphism being the very texture of human thought, this highest object it can think of is only the Personal God. To call Him a lower God is therefore as illogical as it is to describe the Impersonal Absolute as the higher God by bringing Him into the relational scheme. If He is thus only a lower being, He ceases to be God and an object worthy of worship. For worship is due only to God, the highest of beings; to offer it to any lesser being is idolatry and a prostitution of the highest faculty of man. Sometimes people wonder why many a theistic thinker has violently opposed the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute. This attitude of theists is generally ascribed to fanaticism and narrowness, and there may be some

truth in this. It is, however, to be attributed more to this slur that some champions of the Impersonal Absolute in their zeal cast on the Personal God and His worship, and to the illogical and odious comparisons they indulge in between the Personal and the Impersonal.

IV

What then is the proper attitude in regard to this question? The problem may be approached from two points of view—that of the mind that has realised the Impersonal Absolute, and that of one who is in some level or other of anthropomorphism. To a mind that has realised the Impersonal Absolute, there cannot possibly occur the idea of comparing the Personal with the Impersonal. For, comparison and evaluation are possible only when there is individuality. But in the state of realisation of the Impersonal, there is no longer any individuality. For what realises the Impersonal is the Impersonal Himself, not the individual. In Sri Ramakrishna's words, it is Brahman alone that realises Brahman, not the Jiva. And where there is no Jivahood or individuality, the question of comparison between the relative merits of the Personal and the Impersonal does not arise at all.

From the other point of view, namely, the anthropomorphic, the Personal God is the highest that can be thought of, and there can therefore be no question of a higher being than Him. The human mind can therefore think of the Personal God and the Impersonal Absolute not as a lower God and a higher God, but as two aspects of one and the same Being. Between a man in His office dress and the same

person in His home dress, there is no question of superiority or inferiority involved. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, the distinction between Brahman and Sakti, that is, between the Impersonal Absolute and Personal God, is a distinction without a difference, even as that between milk and its whiteness, a gem and its brightness, or a snake and its zig zag motion. "When the Supreme Being is thought of as actionless—neither creating, sustaining nor destroying—I call him by the name of Brahman or Purusha (Impersonal Absolute)," says he, "but when I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying, etc—I call Him by the name of Sakti or Maya, or Prakriti (Impersonal Absolute)." Thus a worshipper of Personal God should understand that the doctrine of the Impersonal does not in any way contradict or disparage the Personal. It is, as we have

shown, only an assertion that God is independent of the world and our individualities—that there is a state of experience which reveals Him as the sole being without any reference to Jagat (creation) and the Jivas (individual experiencers). In place of weakening the position of the theists, such a doctrine only gives a greater assurance, a better ontological certainty, regarding the conception of Personal God, and as such it deserves to be welcomed by all true devotees.

To put it briefly, the doctrine of the Impersonal Absolute does not imply a negation of Personal God nor a dethronement of Him into the position of a lower Deity. It only emphasises the existence of God apart from His creation, and the possibility of an acosmic experience of Him which comes when the anthropomorphic outlook changes and individuality becomes merged in impersonality.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Devotee

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also 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. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

THE Mother was engaged in a conversation with me in the morning.

Disciple: Mother, if there exists someone called God, why is there so much suffering and misery in the world? Does He not see it? Has He not the power to remove it?

Mother: The creation itself is full of misery and happiness. Could any one appreciate happiness if misery did not exist? Besides, how is it possible for all persons to be happy? Sita once said to Rama, "Why don't you remove the suffering and unhappiness of your subjects? Please make all

the inhabitants of your kingdom happy. If you only will, you can easily do it." Rama said, "Is it ever possible for all persons to be happy at the same time?" "Why not?" asked Sita, "please supply from the royal treasury the means of satisfying everyone's wants." "All right," said Rama, "your will shall be carried out." Rama sent for Lakshmana and said to him, "Go and notify everyone in my empire that whatever he wants he may get from the royal treasury." At this the subjects of Rama came to the palace and told their wants. The royal treasury began to flow without stint. When everyone was spending his days joyously, through the Maya of Rama the roof of the building in which Rama and Sita lived started to leak. Workmen were sent for, to repair the building. But where were they? There was not a labourer in the kingdom. In the absence of masons, carpenters, and artisans, all buildings went out of repair, and work was at a standstill. The subjects of Rama informed the king of their difficulties. Finding no other help, Sita said to Rama, "It is no longer possible to bear the discomfort of the leaking roof. Please arrange things as they were before. Then we shall be able to procure workmen. Now I realise that it is not possible for all persons to be happy at the same time." "Let it be so," said Rama. Instantaneously all things were as before and workmen could once more be procured. Sita said to Rama, "Lord, this creation is your wonderful sport."

No one can suffer for all time. No one will spend all his days on this earth in suffering. Every action brings its own result, and one gets one's opportunities accordingly.

Disciple : Is everything then due to Karma?

Mother : If not, to what else? Don't you see the scavenger carrying the tub on his head?

Disciple : Where does one first get the propensity which leads him to an action, good or bad? You may say, as an explanation of the propensities of *this* life, that they are due to the actions of the previous life and the propensities of that life to the preceding one. But where is the beginning?

Mother : Nothing can happen without the will of God. Not even a straw can move. When a man passes into a favourable time, he gets the desire to contemplate God, but when the time is unfavourable he gets all the facilities for doing evil actions. Everything happens in time according to the will of God. It is God alone who expresses His will through the actions of man. 'Could Naren¹ by himself have accomplished all those things? He was able to succeed because God worked through him. The Master has predetermined what He is going to accomplish. If anyone surrenders himself totally at His feet, then the Master will see that His purpose is accomplished. One must bear with everything because all our facilities are determined by actions. Again actions can be cancelled by actions.

Disciple : Can action ever cancel action?

Mother : Why not? If you do a good action, that will counteract your past evil action. Past sins can be offset by meditation, Japam, and spiritual thoughts.

I had heard that a boy in the Mirjapure Street was possessed by a ghost.

¹Swami Vivekananda.

Some members of the Udbodhan Office had visited the boy on the previous day. I asked the Mother, "How long does one live in the spirit body?"

Mother : All people, excepting highly evolved souls, live in the spirit body for a year. After that, food and water are offered in Gaya for the satisfaction of the departed souls and religious festivals are arranged. By this means the souls of the departed are released from their spirit body and attain God; or they may go to other planes of existence and experience pleasure or pain, and in the course of time, they are born again in human forms according to their desires. Others attain salvation from those planes. But if a person has some meritorious action to his credit in this life, he does not lose spiritual consciousness altogether in his spirit body.

Here the Mother again referred to the priest of the Govinda Temple in Brindavan.

Disciple : Is it possible for one to reach God if his Sraddha ceremony is performed in Gaya?

Mother : Yes, that is true.²

²In this connection I am reminded of another incident. The Holy Mother was in Benares. I had left a day or two before for Gaya to perform the Sraddha ceremony for my dead ancestors. I had said to the Holy Mother before my departure, "Mother, please give your blessings that my ancestors may attain heaven." On the very night of the day I offered food and drink in Gaya for the gratification of my departed ancestors, Bhudeb (Holy Mother's nephew who had accompanied her to Benares) saw the Holy Mother in a dream engaged in Japam with a crowd of people around her, saying, "Please give me salvation! Please give me salvation!" The Mother sprinkled them with the holy water kept in a jar and said, "Go away, you are saved." Then they departed in great happiness. Then another man appeared. The Mother

Disciple : Then what is the necessity of spiritual practices?

Mother : These dead souls, no doubt, go to God and live there for sometime, but afterwards they are again born into the world according to their past desires. After their birth in a human body some of them obtain salvation in this life whereas others take inferior births to reap the results of their Karma. This world is moving around like a wheel. That is indeed the last birth, in which one gets completely rid of all desires.

Disciple : You just referred to the dead souls going to God. Do they go there by themselves or does someone lead them?

Mother : No, they go by themselves. The subtle body is like a body made of air.

Disciple : What happens to those for whom no Sraddha ceremony is performed in Gaya?

Mother : They live in the spirit body until some fortunate ones born in their family perform the Sraddha ceremony in Gaya, or some other obsequy.

Disciple : We hear of ghosts and spooks. Are they the attendants of Shiva or simply spirits? Are they the spirits of dead people?

said to him, "I cannot continue like this any longer." He begged of her a long time and at last received her grace. The next day Bhudeb narrated this dream to the Holy Mother and she said in reply, "R— has gone to Gaya to perform the Sraddha ceremony of his ancestors. Therefore all these people have obtained their salvation." In fact, while offering oblations for my departed ancestors with great sincerity, I also offered food and drink for the salvation of all persons whose names I could remember at that time. I prayed for the salvation of all of them.

Mother: They are the spirits of the dead. The spirit-attendants of Shiva belong to a special group. One must live very carefully. Every action produces its result. It is not good to use harsh words towards others or be responsible for their suffering.

Disciple: Mother, a Neem tree does not produce a mango nor does a

mango tree produce Neem. Everyone reaps the result of his own Karma.

Mother: You are right, my child. In the final stage there is not even the idea of God. After attaining wisdom one sees that Gods and Deities are all Maya. Everything comes into existence in time and also disappears in time.

VEDANTA WORK IN CENTRAL EUROPE

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[The following is a report by Swami Yatiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Order on the Vedanta work in Europe during 1933—1937. It is, however, more than a report and gives one an idea of how the spiritual principles of Indian culture are receiving appreciation in Europe. In his Presidential address at the last session of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Subhas Bose drew attention to the need of India establishing cultural contact with foreign countries. The present article will show how Ramakrishna Mission has been doing this work, though unrecognised by Indian politicians.]

SPIRITUAL yearning cannot be limited to any particular country or people. It is a universal phenomenon and is manifest more or less in all parts of the world in some form or other. In the midst of great economic and political unsettlement on the European continent, a large number of souls are longing for a new spiritual order and are eager to get the proper nourishment for appeasing their spiritual hunger.

More than four years back the sincere yearning of a section of such hungry souls found expression in a remarkable letter addressed to the Head of the Ramakrishna Order, as may be seen from the following extract:

"It is with the greatest hesitation that I am addressing myself to you..., requesting you to send us one of the Swamis of the Order to work with us and instruct us. I really cannot tell you how thankful we should be for

personal spiritual instructions, as life seems terribly worthless under the present circumstances.... We are getting older every day and never getting even nearer the real goal of life, that is, never growing to the full stature of a real human being.

"I do not know whether any one of us would be worthy to be blessed with the company of one of your Swamis, but I cannot tell your Holiness how thankful we should be for it. Theoretical knowledge can never bring the realisation of the Truth, and it is extremely difficult for ordinary people to find the right way alone, without the help of a living guide.

"I hope you will forgive me for this letter. It might so very easily seem arrogant, and I am afraid the only excuse I can offer you is the great admiration and love we have for your Holy Order and its Master.

"Besides, we see no other way of getting direct spiritual instruction as

we cannot go to India for lack of funds."

The ring of sincerity, expressed in this letter made a direct appeal to the hearts of the elders of the Order. And they deputed me to Europe in November 1933 and thus led to the inauguration of regular Vedanta work on the Continent.

VEDANTA BRINGING LIGHT AND SOLACE TO MANY

During the last four years and more I am in Europe, I have come in close touch with many a liberal-minded and sincere seeker after Truth in Germany and Switzerland where I have spent most of my time, in Poland and France which too I visited on invitation, and also in Holland where I have come at the earnest request of some students of Vedanta.

In all the countries I have visited, there is an ever increasing number of persons, both inside and outside the institutional religions, who have become tired of religious dogmatism and have even revolted against the anthropomorphic conceptions of God and worship of personality. Many of these, who have been looking for new light, are responding to the universal message of the Vedanta. With their appeal both to reason and feeling at the same time, the teachings of Vedanta are satisfying the hopes and aspirations of many and are giving them a definite path of spiritual culture, which they are trying to follow in a systematic way. Some of these earnest souls are being strengthened in their faith in Vedanta as they are witnessing its transforming power and are even getting a clearer and clearer expression of the teachings in their practical life.

The following extracts from a few of the many letters received from highly educated and cultured devotees—both ladies and gentlemen—of different countries of Europe speak for themselves.

"We all want to express our thankfulness that we had the privilege of receiving the teachings of Vedanta.

"I know what a great blessing it is to come in touch with these highest ideas. I am so thankful to have now got a definite path to follow.

"I am so deeply grateful to have come in living touch with the spiritual movement of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, to have the opportunity of following the high ideas of Vedanta in a clear definite way.... Before, I was in such a nervous state full of restlessness and despair. I hated to live. Now, having known that the Divine Being dwells in me, I am coming to attain peace.

"There is, for the moment, a feeling of infinite peace, but I fear it will not be everlasting, and sooner or later there will be again a turmoil of feelings and ideas, and the equilibrium will be lost. But I feel that there must be a sort of 'trick' that would enable us to come consciously in contact with the 'Real I', so that the reality of that may never escape the mind. Then only will real peace be attained and I can laugh at all difficulties and illusions of ordinary life.

"During and after meditation I sometimes feel a great calmness, but then again I become so much conscious of my inefficiency that meditation in most cases ends in tears.

"Words are not enough to speak of the boon I received. I got a new, deeper, purer conception of life. I can see how poor I was without this

message. I now know what I have got to do in life.

"I try to do some meditation. I do not believe that I succeed, but I try to do it nevertheless. Then I pray to God to help me in getting better and to show me how I can do my everyday work as perfectly as possible.... The teachings have changed my whole outlook on life and I can never express how grateful I am....Nothing can take me onward if it is not the teachings. They are the clearest and the most direct I ever heard of."

ABSTRACT OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS' REPORT

In my previous reports covering a little over two years beginning from November, 1933, up to the end of 1935, I spoke of my work at Wiesbaden (Germany) with different individuals and groups, of my visit to some of the university towns in Germany, and later on to Switzerland and Poland, where I was able to establish points of contact with some of the prominent Indologists and many other spiritually minded persons. I also mentioned therein my lectures and regular classes at St. Moritz and Geneva in Switzerland and also of my visit to Zurich in Switzerland, where I did some pioneering work, met some intellectuals and also came in contact with some seekers after Truth in different walks of life.

WORK IN 1936 AND 1937

At Wiesbaden (Germany): During the year 1936 I spent nearly three months—partly in winter and partly in summer—at Wiesbaden where I first came on invitation in November, 1933. I conducted intensive studies as before with new people and also

with the devotees who joined the study circle on my arrival there. From that time up to the summer of 1936, with different groups I studied Swami Brahmananda's Spiritual Teachings, Narada Bhakti Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and the major portion of Sri Krishna and Uddhava, also gave various readings from the Upanishads, Raja Yoga and other religious works. I also held special classes for individual aspirants and gave interviews to many who came for personal instructions. All the class notes, taken down by one of the most prominent devotees, helped to take the message also to persons outside the groups and would form the materials for books on practical spiritual life in future.

Up to the summer of 1936 I had my headquarters practically at Wiesbaden. After this I made Switzerland the base of the Vedanta work in the countries of Central Europe.

At Geneva (Switzerland): At the beginning of February, 1936, I went to Geneva for the second time and stayed there for nearly four months as the guest of a kind friend, who years back was drawn towards the message of the Vedanta and came to be intimately known to me during my last visit in the spring of 1935.

At Geneva I held regular meetings four times a week at two places in different parts of the town. I also spoke there under the auspices of the International Theosophical Society on the Synthesis of the Eastern and Western cultures. In the course of the lectures I pointed out the necessity for both the Easterner and the Westerner to preserve the best in the culture of each, and assimilate what is best in the other, thus maintaining

their respective individuality and special characteristics, without attempting at any thoughtless uniformity which would mean the cultural death of both.

During my stay at Geneva, I spoke in connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary on the Message of Ramakrishna and also gave illustrated lectures on the Ramakrishna Movement both at Geneva and the 'Institute Monier' at Verzoix. I also held several religious classes at the school for the benefit of students.

I paid a short visit to Geneva both in the summer and autumn of 1937 and also met the members of the group, who have been continuing their readings with a remarkable steadiness. I was greatly delighted to see how the various translations of Swami Vivekananda's works and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna so enthusiastically published by Monsieur Jean Herbert and his friends, as well as his radio talks (and articles, published in the French Quarterly *Action et Pensee*) on the great teachers of modern India, are creating a remarkable interest amongst many, some of whom I had the pleasure of meeting there.

At Lausanne (Switzerland): In March, 1936, I went to Lausanne at the invitation of the local Theosophical Society and spoke there on the 'Message of Vedanta and the Ideal of Spiritual Evolution and Self-realisation.' In connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary I also gave an illustrated lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna and his Movement' under the auspices of the 'Societe Vaudoise d'Etudes Psychiques.' Dr. Ed. Bertholet, the President of the Society, spoke in French on the life and teachings of the

Master, beautifully introducing the subject and referring to the celebrations that were being held in connection with the birth Centenary in different parts of the world.

At Lausanne I conducted several group meetings in the home of a prominent devotee, in which I spoke on the spiritual ideal and practice, and also held many discussions with those who came.

I visited Lausanne both in the summer and autumn of 1937. Besides holding many group meetings, I spoke twice on the theory and practice of meditation at the request of the 'Societe Vaudoise d'Etudes Psychiques'. All previous lectures as well as the present ones, which I gave in English were translated into French. They created an amount of interest amongst those who listened.

At St. Moritz (Switzerland): Ever since the group was started in January, 1935, at this small town famous as a summer and winter sport resort in the heart of the Alps, the members of the group have been conducting regular classes with a wonderfully sustained enthusiasm. I visited St. Moritz in 1936 and 1937 both during summer and autumn, and had readings twice or more every week. The universal message of Vedanta and the inspiring teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda have given a new meaning to the life of some of the aspirants.

A quarterly magazine—*The Vedanta*—was issued both in English and German during the year 1937 and reached many readers in different countries in Europe. It is the product of the labour of love of some of the devoted students of Vedanta who are working in a spirit of co-operation, with a view to share the

spiritual ideas with their fellow truth-seekers. *The Vedanta* with its universal tone is bringing light to many and is being highly appreciated. At present the copies are made with the help of a duplicator. If sufficient support be forthcoming, it may some day appear in a more dignified form in print.

In Paris (France): At the very end of March, 1936, I visited Paris in connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary meetings organised there. Prof. Masson-Oursel who holds the chair of Indian Philosophy at the University, delivered a lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna' at Musee Guimet, and another on 'Swami Vivekananda—the Disciple of Ramakrishna' at the Institute of the Indian Civilisation at the Sorbonne, the great university of Paris. I went from Geneva for taking part in the second meeting and spoke at the end, pointing out the relationship between the Master and the Disciple, which was in a certain sense like that between the silent and the thundering clouds,—both being two-fold manifestations of the same power. In Ramakrishna the ancient ideals of Vedanta were realised in a silent and quiet way, while in Vivekananda they became very dynamic and thundering. It was through the disciple that the message spread all over India and even to Western lands, bringing a new awakening and inspiration, stimulating the life of spiritual aspirants and urging them not only to live a life of silent worship and meditation, but also to serve their fellow beings through different forms of creative service.

In the course of my stay for more than two weeks in Paris, I spoke at the Society of Friends, met also the

Friends of Buddhism, conducted several group meetings and also gave interviews to many. In my talks I tried to point out the universal aspect of Vedanta and the practical illustrations as given in the wonderful lives of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, who held before all the great ideal that religion is realisation.

The French translations of the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, brought out by Monsieur Herbert and others, mainly with the help of Miss MacLeod—the great American friend of Swami Vivekananda and the Movement bearing his Master's name—are fast disseminating the message which was first brought to the French-speaking people through Romain Rolland's epoch-making works on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. A field for future activity is thus being prepared, and the time is not far off when a French-speaking Swami of the Order will be in great demand for working amongst those drawn towards the teachings. Being informed of the growing interest in France by Monsieur Herbert and others, the authorities of the Order anticipated the future needs. With the financial support given by Miss MacLeod, they sent Swami Siddheswarananda, a well-tried and fully qualified worker of the Order, to Paris for getting himself prepared for the work.

My second visit to Paris took place at the end of July, 1937, when Swami Siddheswarananda arrived there in the company of Mr. V. Subramanya Iyer of Mysore, the esteemed friend of our Movement, who came on invitation for taking part in the Philosophical Congress, held this year in Paris. Both the Swami and myself

attended the Congress and also came in close touch with Professor Monsieur Foucher, who is in charge of the Institute of Indian Civilisation at the Sorbonne, and other professors and scholars.

During the short period of my third visit to Paris in November, 1937, I was delighted to see how Swami Siddheswarananda is fast progressing in his study of the French language and culture, and is also establishing points of contact with some of the spiritual movements and aspirants there.

At Zurich (Switzerland): During my visit to Zurich towards the end of 1935, I came to know a number of spiritually-minded persons and found the possibility of starting Vedanta work there in future. In 1936, I went there towards the end of November and stayed on till the end of June, 1937. During these months I came to have a close contact with many highly cultured persons including professors, clergymen, university students and business people. With the invaluable help of Herr Rudolf Muller of Reformhaus Muller, a sincere friend and admirer of the Ramakrishna Movement, I began my activities at Zurich. In the lecture hall generously placed at my disposal by Herr Muller, I first gave a few public lectures on the 'Spiritual Message of Vedanta', 'Soul's evolution and the Yogic Paths', 'Yoga and Self-realisation', 'Ramakrishna—the Modern Indian Prophet', and then started regular classes twice a week. I gave general talks on spiritual topics and also numerous readings from the Upanishads, the Baghavad Gita, Raja Yoga, the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, etc. Illustrated lectures on the Ramakrishna Movement were also

given to select audiences. As the result of all these some earnest souls—both ladies and gentlemen—came to form a study circle, which may develop into a society in future.

A small Vedanta library has also been started for the benefit of those interested in spiritual matters, and both books and periodicals are being freely circulated amongst them. Persons greatly drawn towards the message, are holding group meetings regularly and are thus keeping ablaze a little Homa-fire, which is expected to grow with the flow of time.

I visited Zurich again in October, 1937, for two weeks, gave regular talks, held discussions and had interviews with a number of devotees and friends.

Somehow or other Zurich, the most important business centre in Switzerland, has become the central place for the publication of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in the German language. The German translation of the Life and Message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda by Romain Rolland was brought out by a publishing firm located near Zurich. The same publishers also issued an admirable edition of the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, translated into German by Mrs. Emma von Pelet. This noble lady, along with Mrs. Alwine von Keller, has taken up the translation of our publications as a labour of love and that in a spirit of whole-hearted consecration.

December 1937 saw the publication of Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga in German—the first two translated by another devotee, but edited by Mrs. von Pelet and the third one translated by Mrs. von Pelet herself.

The books have been beautifully published by a well known publishing firm at Zurich through the generosity of Miss MacLeod already referred to, who also financed the publication of these and other works translated by Monsieur Herbert into French. There is no doubt that all these publications are bringing the Message within the reach of many and are sure to have far-reaching effects in future.

At The Hague (Holland) : I am writing this report from The Hague, where I came in the middle of November, 1937. Here, too, I have been instrumental in just starting the Vedanta work. The original move was made by Mrs. Agatha Liefrinck, who was previously one of the most devoted members of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, California, U. S. A. Eager to share with others the teachings which have brought a new light and peace to her soul, she came in touch with some spiritual seekers and has been lending them books from her private library which she has freely placed at the disposal of others. Immediately on my arrival here I came in contact with these aspirants. Later on, I spoke publicly and also to select audiences on the message of Vedanta and the ideals lived and preached by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. I am now giving regular readings to those drawn towards the teachings, and as its result a good study circle is in the process of formation. After having consolidated the little work already started, I propose to give some public lectures in the near future at The Hague, to establish cultural contact with many spiritual persons and Societies, and also extend the work to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and other neighbouring towns in Holland.

[THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

During the past four years and more, many individuals and groups have been closely drawn towards the rational and universal message of the Vedanta and the practical and inspiring teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda at Wiesbaden in Germany, and also at St. Moritz, Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich in Switzerland, in Paris—the great capital of France—at Warsaw—the chief city of Poland—and at many other places in different countries. As already mentioned, the beginnings of the Vedanta work have been made at The Hague and is also expected to be made in other towns of the country.

There are many persons who previously came to know of the message from books. In the course of the last four years and more many of them and also many new people have come in closer contact with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Movement through lectures, talks, classes, interviews, correspondence, circulation of class notes and through our literature and journals in English and other languages. The small libraries started at different places have been slowly and steadily helping in the quick spread of the message. The number of persons, coming within the sphere of influence of the Movement, is fast increasing through all these.

The pioneering work was begun and is still being conducted in the midst of many great difficulties. Economic uncertainties, cultural exclusiveness, political unsettlement and psychical restlessness have hampered the work. But still, through Divine grace and the support of friends the Movement is growing steadily

though slowly, and its circle of devotees and admirers is fast increasing. The teachings of Vedanta are bringing new hopes and solace to many a depressed and weary heart.

The pioneering work is still to be conducted by us without being burdened and hampered by the immediate starting of any formal centre. Voluntary offerings for maintaining such a centre have not been forthcoming yet. Even the expenses for carrying on the present work are being borne mainly by two or three self-sacrificing friends of the cause in the West. The generous contributions of H. H. the Maharajah of Mysore, a great lover of the Vedanta, have twice enabled us to tide over the difficulties. For this we express our grateful thanks to His Highness, who takes

a personal interest in the Movement both in India and Europe. We offer our sincere thanks also to the other friends of the cause, who have helped the work and contributed to its success in different ways.

Our immediate task is this. The message is to be propagated far and wide. The circle of devotees and supporters must be made to increase. Then alone will arise the question of starting a regular centre. The future lies in the hands of Him who is the Divine Inspirer and Guide of all.

“May He, the Indwelling Spirit, the remover of all evils, the Presiding Deity of all sacred undertakings, be pleased. For, He being pleased, the whole universe is pleased; He being satisfied, the whole universe is satisfied.”

DURANT DRAKE AND VEDANTA

By Anil Kumar Sarkar, M.A.

[Mr. Sarkar is a fellow of the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. In this article he draws attention to the points of similarity and contrast between the theories of knowledge propounded by Durant Drake and the non-dualistic system of Indian philosophy.]

THE Vedanta philosophy defines this world as a creation of Maya, and ascribes our knowledge of it to ignorance (Avidya or Ajnana). This peculiar position of Vedanta philosophy at once leads us to consider whether our perceptual knowledge has any value or not. It has a value in the sense that it is a realm of appearance and ignorance, and we have to escape from this apparent world by gaining a right knowledge of it. So we find that non-dualistic Vedanta does not tell us to examine the world as it is, but it tells

us to go beyond the common sense, realistic view of the universe so that we shall understand this world of multiplicity and change to be nothing but the outcome of the self-shining character of the Universal Consciousness or Caitanya. The Advaitic theory of perception is an attempt to interpret how the self-shining Caitanya appears as subject and as object, and how their identity is to be determined.

The philosophy of Durant Drake is a sad contrast to this position of non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy. It also

posits that we have a knowledge of a 'world of appearance', for our knowledge is mediated through 'data' or 'essences' which are but the 'psychic fusions' of the cerebral processes at the time when the organism tries to adapt itself to psychical or physical events. These 'data' or 'essences', although they have bases in the cerebral processes, are not mental; they are not even physical; for the physical events are highly complex, and these are simplifications or summations of the cerebral processes. They are used for understanding physical or mental events. They have their own realm, they are used by consciousness as 'data'. Without these 'symbols' consciousness cannot operate.

From this it follows that our knowledge of the mental and physical worlds is 'symbolical'; we cannot rend the veil of 'data' or 'essence'; we have to live in a world of appearance, and an escape from this world is never possible.

This attitude has been boldly maintained by Santayana in his famous book entitled 'Scepticism and Animal Faith.' In this book he shows enough grounds for his scepticism and warns us not to put absolute confidence in our 'animal faith'. The human being naturally relies on the 'animal faith.' He takes the world as revealed to him by the 'essences' to be real; but with the appearance of the higher faculty of 'intuition' he is ushered into the land of 'scepticism.' Santayana, therefore, boldly points out that 'nothing is ever present to me except some essence; so that nothing that I possess in intuition, or actually see, is ever 'there' (p. 99).

But this does not point out that the 'essence' never indicates real existence. The 'existences' are 'given' to intuition, but the warning is not to take the 'existences' as such. We are to be sceptics. It gives us humility, but at the same time it gives the right attitude towards the 'real things'.

From this we can conclude that this world of existence as it appears to us must be tested by intuition, for it is not what it seems. We have to battle against our 'animal faith' by our 'scepticism'. We might say after Vedanta that this 'animal faith' is our Ajnana, inducing us to believe in what we see. Santayana is milder; he says scepticism is the right attitude. To think that our knowledge of existence ought to be literal, is nothing but the height of folly. Our knowledge is 'symbolical'. We must believe in our intuition which welcomes scepticism as its guide. It is then we can say with Santayana that 'intuition, when it is placid and masterful enough to stand alone, free from anxiety of delusion about matters of fact, is a delightful exercise, like a play' (p. 103). Elsewhere in the same book he says, "The life of reason as I conceive it is a mere romance, and the life of Nature a mere fable; such pictures have no metaphysical value, even if as sympathetic fictions they had some psychological truths" (p. 101).

This sounds like the Advaitic view. But Advaita Vedanta goes further. It not only says that our faith in this world is due to 'ignorance', but it says also definitely that an escape from this world by a right knowledge of the relation of objects to the self is all

that is necessary for a man. We shall find, therefore, in the theory of perception as propounded by this philosophy, not an attempt to point out the truth and error that are found in this world of appearance, but an attempt to show that the 'world of appearance' only points to a 'world of reality.' The reality manifests itself in the world of appearance. It is not, therefore, concerned with the right adaptation of our data to the existences that are mental or physical as Drake supposes, or with the 'scepticism' regarding the existences as reported to us by our data. It is interested only in the right knowledge of things. It boldly points out its one truth—i.e., not to rely on this world of appearance; we are all to go beyond this world to find the one self-shining Brahman.

Let us now consider the three theories of perception as propounded by the non-dualistic philosophy. The aim in each case, as far as perception is concerned, is to establish a relation between the self and the object.

According to the first view the individual self is finite and the objective world is independent of it. We shall have to find out their connection. The connection is established by mind or Antahkarana. It is said that Antahkarana or mind, which is but a function of the knowing self, goes out with the senses and assumes the 'form' of the object. This 'going out' or again the assuming of the 'form' of the object should not be taken as fantastic. Really speaking there is no absolute separation between the subjective and objective realms, for the same Caitanya or Consciousness underlies both. This tendency to go out appears like the 'ideas' of Bradley

which have constant tendency to meet with their 'others' or 'facts'. The underlying relation alone accounts for the going out of Antahkarana and the assuming of the form of the object. The neo-realism of Alexander removes the gap between the mental and the objective world when it says that they are all evolutes from the same original stuff of 'space-time system'. The Gestalt school of psychology holds that in perception we perceive the 'figure' or the 'form' that bobs out of the 'perceptual situation'. The 'figure' is the result of the dynamic relation that exists between the percipient mind and the physical environment. So we should not be startled by this theory of the Advaitic school of thought. The critical realism of Drake points out that the self with its function of consciousness projects the 'datum' out in space and time in the act of perception. The datum only reveals to us the features of reality. So the function of mind or Antahkarana, as is seen here, is a rational theory.

This is the terminus of the relation between Advaita Vedanta and the Western Philosophy. Here the Vedanta takes a further step. It asks further the question, viz., how the 'going out' and the 'assuming the form' of the object are to be explained. This takes us to the heart of this philosophy. The object, being independent of the individual self, shines not through the light of the self, but through that of Brahman itself that underlies both. It is the same consciousness that reveals itself now as pot, now as tree, etc., to the individual self. The self and the object appear different due to two different modes that determine the same consci-

ousness that underlies them. "The determining factor in the case of the knowing self is the Antahkarana, and in the case of the object the particular group of properties which qualify it into that peculiar object."¹ Both of them are creations of Ajnana. The Antahkarana or mind, by going to the object, removes the distinction between the two sets of differentiating factors peculiar to the subject and object, and establishes identity between the Consciousness as subject and object. The function of Antahkarana here is the revelation of identity (Abhedabhivyakti). This view is supported by the author of the Vedanta-paribhasha.

The second theory holds that the individual self is not finite, it is infinite. But from this we cannot conclude that it is always conscious of all objects. The individual self lights up only those objects which appear to it through the medium of Antahkarana or mind. In the act of perception, the self, being identified with the Antahkarana which assumes the form of the object, receives the tinge of the object. In other words, the Antahkarana gives the objective tinge to the self. So this theory is known as Chiduparaga. The author of the Vivarana and some others hold this view.

According to the third view the individual self is infinite and also the ground of this world. Everything has its being in the self. But this gives rise to the difficulty, viz., why the objects are not perceived all at a time.

¹D. M. Datta: Six Ways of Knowing, P. 76.

To this the following answers can be given. All the ideas may be present, but they are not manifest to it at once. This is due to the forces that prevent them from coming up to the surface of consciousness. These forces are the forces of ignorance or Ajnana. This veil or force of ignorance is removed by the mind or Antahkarana. It rends the veil of ignorance. This theory is called, Avaranabhibhava.

From this we conclude that perception is not mere perception. It is not merely "seeing the 'apparent world' as of Drake or of Santayana, it is establishing identity between Consciousness as subject and as object, or imparting to the subject the tinge of the object, or the rending of the veil of ignorance hanging between the subject and object. All these are done by Antahkarana or mind which is a function of the self that is transcendent, the witness of all that goes on in our ordinary experience due to ignorance.

Drake is concerned with the problem of successful or unsuccessful 'adaptation' of our data to mental or physical events. He is concerned with truth, error, illusion and hallucination; or again with our varied imaginations that make up our mental life. But the Vedanta philosophy does not worry itself with all these. They are only facts. The aim of Advaita philosophy is to point to the path of reality that is necessary in every act of perception. The need for an 'apparent world' can very well be denounced if we simply reflect on the high-soaring thoughts of this school of philosophy.

MEDITATIONS

By E. E. Speight

[The following passages in prose and verse are from the diaries of a writer and teacher who has now been thirty years in the East, half of that time in Japan and half in India. As a professor in various colleges in Japan, and the successor to the post of Lapcadis Hearn in Tokyo and as professor in charge of English at the two colleges in Hyderabad, Mr. Speight has constantly been in intimate association with young men of the East, and he has written much on Oriental subjects for the periodicals of various countries in the old and new worlds. He is now in retirement, but on the basis of his long experience he is preparing books to help students in the East in their struggles with the intricacies of the English language.]

1

WHAT has gone we must strive to make good, otherwise we pass away like smoke. Ritual may help us, and prayer and other forms of discipline; but something more is needed,—and that is constant effort to widen the horizon, to break the net of circumstance. There must be poetry in our lives, not mere repetition of pattern, but creation and so ascension.

2

Hearken not too often unto the wise,
The trusty ancient shepherds of mankind,
Lest they should cast a dark veil over the eyes
Of the young, the joyous creatures of their day,
Wiser than the wise have yet divined,
Wiser even than they.

3

A Japanese friend said to me: If we wish to be happy, we must bid even the humblest servant good-morning.

4

As I walked home in the moonlight with my friend, he told me that his

old mother in the South still worships the new moon, and therefore whenever he sees it he thinks of her.

5

When the moon came forth, snow had given the temple a strange purity, as though One had said: All things thought here shall be forgiven.

6

Only realise that a man can give what he himself has not,—such great gifts as hope and happiness,—and many another miracle becomes credible.

7

There is a great truth underlying the old Chinese veneration of writing: it is the truth that writing, like every form of human action, is part of some divine ritual whose purport no one can even imagine, some mystic ceremony that transcends the vision of mortality.

8

Song is the flash of a sword
Made keen by joy to shear
The tangled web of life.
Song is the incense rising
From altars whereon lies
The wealth of loyal hearts.

Song is the wine that flows
From the press of human souls
When sorrow treads them down.

9

In the dark trees around the shrine
the planets are hanging, magic fruits
of night, and the southern horizon
quivers with lightning as the flank of
a grey deer in deadly fright.

10

Errors, like withered leaves, fall
away from a spirit that is reaching
to the sunlight, and it is generous to
let them lie and cover the roots.

11

How different are the visions of the
eye and those of the heart. That
flowers fade, love dies, and life comes
to an end,—all these tidings of our
senses are transformed in the alcmbe
of faith into their very contraries, and
we know that it is into life and beauty
that all things move,—into eternal
life and everlasting beauty of spirit.

12

The wings of his soul were not given
to their form in Arden woods. The
flash of auroral visions, the glitter of
midland seas, the cloud-storms of
Himalayan fastnesses,—these had not
been for him in vain, long ere his race
arose.

13

The melancholy of man is a sign
that power is concentrated in the
heart and waiting its release in crea-
tive activity.

14

The Sun that drives the oceans
of the world
Doth not disdain
To flash in splendour on the
spider's toil
Through drifts of April rain.

15

Ever the greater part lies in the
unknown. The proudest nation in the
world has still its Atlantis to discover,
and that within its own borders.

16

When shame overpowers a man,
Wisdom hides her head and is silent,
but Love, with the tears starting,
holds forth her healing hands.

17

Across the Unknown
I cry to Him who made me
That He answer why,
And out of utter silence
Cometh the wonder of dawn.

18

We who had lost him called him
renegade,
As though he sought the night.
We could not see
The shadows he would flee.
He left the world and passed
into the light
From which all worlds are
made.

19

A tiny kitten, the colour of sea-sand
and foam, laying her little head
among a company of rosy apples,
and strangely stirred as the wild frag-
rance,—and no one in the whole world
saw it but myself.

20

You spoke to me in pure and
beautiful parables,
Yet you never opened your heart
to me.
In my hands you laid the things
you had written,
Yet I could not read through their
clear and virgin candour.

For the years in their thousands
are gathered between us,
And your shining palace towers
beyond the pathless moun-
tains of sullen doubt.

21

In even the most beautiful lines the
change of the mouth in reading them
may be very little, but let these vowel
sounds swell out into the universe and
they become sonorous and fateful as
the voice of the elements,—just as the
temple bell fills the mountain valley
with ancient sorrow.

So poetry is at times the soul of
the world singing through the heart
of man.

22

I dance, and know not why....
ages ago
Upon a mountain ledge I killed
my foe.

23

I am the lord of a vast domain of
light and shade. Forests of centuries
ago, high waterfalls in deep mountain
gorges, bridges innumerable, and
summits inaccessible to me,—all these
are mine, together with the loyal
service of more vassals and vavasours
than I have ever been able to count.
For I let them go their way, even as
I go mine. From far and wide, from
all the world over, come pilgrims to
the shrines that nestle in my misty
woods, and on their offerings live the
men and women who guard the wind-
ing ways of my delight. And when
none are aware of it, often by night,
I wander from place to place, listen-
ing to the fireside talk of the wood-
folk, touching the smooth red pillars
or the bosses of old bronze on the
dark portals, or drinking of the deep

wells in the wild moonlight. Huge
woodcutters roam the secret ways of
my forests. Dark clouds are their
mantles, and very swiftly do they
wield their flaming axes. They are
feared of the folk, and such as have
seen them speak of the vision with
halting breath and strange eyes.

24

In my dark chamber starlight
through one chink
Brings near the heavenly regions
and the deep
Eternity beyond, the while I think
Dim thoughts of waters lulling
flowers asleep.
I would be free from ghosts of
space and time
That walk familiar regions of the
night,
In my dark chamber, to a simple
rhyme
The world is rolling onward into
light.

25

Friedrich Lange assures us that
behind the two corresponding worlds,
—that of matter and that of consci-
ousness—there is an unknown third,
which is their common cause. Of
course it is so, and is not this un-
known third staring us in the face?
Is it not all around us and could we
not see it but for our fated and fatal
propensity to analysis? This un-
known third reveals itself in man in
his completeness, man as he moves
across his allotted section of eternity,
man as the centre of eternity for the
moment, man viewed in the light of
the immeasurable, with fate looming
around him. After three centuries of
analysis do we not need a creative
epoch? And must we not prepare for
this by viewing the world and all its

attributes as a whole, thankful to those who have probed and so made our knowledge deeper and wider? Nature nowhere teaches us to take to pieces and set asunder; even in her states of decay she is fostering new life.

26

In the sweltering heat of the classroom I stepped to the open window, and looked out into a green cave of trellised foliage. And suddenly came a little breeze from some distant roll of frolicsome sea. The willow roof parted, and I caught one moment's

glimpse of a far peak lighted with gleaming snow. Its name is not known beyond the frontiers of this northland of Honshu, but it dwells in my memory with sun and moon and stars.

27

In the tear that rolled from the eye of the waggoner's bull
An ancient shrine was mirrored,
sunset shone,
And mighty trees and woodland
hollows full
Of darkness dwelt a moment and
were gone.

WHO IS A TRUE SRI VAISHNAVA?

By A. Srinivasachariar, B.A., L.T.

[Mr. Srinivasachariar is the joint editor of *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam*, the Tamil organ of the R. K. Mission. A good Sri Vaishnava himself and a scholar of eminence, his writing is remarkable for accuracy, fervour and suggestiveness. In this and other essays he will give an exposition of the spirit and principles of Sri Vaishnava faith—one of the two most influential forms of religion in South India.]

(Continued from previous issue)

THE ROOTS OF HIS GREAT FAITH

HOWEVER noble, rational and consistent a philosophy may be, it is of little avail in practical life, unless and until it is backed up by a living faith in the assurances of those great saviours of souls and Divine personalities who are the exemplars and embodiments of the doctrines of that philosophy, and who redeem men by their mere look or touch. The faith of the Vaishnava in the doctrine of self-surrender and the adoption of God as the means—a means which is no longer under his control but which controls him completely—rests on a few promises of God Himself in His incarnations; and these exercise a

sway over the minds of Vaishnavas, more potent than mere verbal assertions of truths revealed through man by God. For after all, the Vaishnava lives more by his faith than by his intellect, which plays only the subservient part of supplying a rational basis of his faith. The first of these great promises is that of Bhagavan Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita: "Giving up all Dharmas, seek refuge in Me only; I shall liberate you from all sins, fear not." Again elsewhere in the Gita, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: "You better promise on my behalf that my devotee never comes to grief." The second great promise is that of Sri Rama on the occasion

of the surrender of Vibhishana on the sea-shore in the following words: "I protect him who surrenders himself to me once for all, saying, 'I am for thee alone'—this is my vow." Again in the Varaha Purana, the Bhagavan gives the following assurance to His Divine Consort: "Let a man, while possessing a sound mind in a sound body and in a state of equilibrium, think of Me, the birthless; then in his dying moments of agony, when he lies down like inert wood unable to think of Me, I shall think of that devotee of mine and lead him to the highest goal." Consistently with this assurance the great Alwar prayed to God in a hymn, "I cannot think of Thee in that hour of death when my mind and senses would get out of my control; so, Lord, even now I have reminded Thee of the necessity for showering Thy grace on me at the final hour." The last great promise is that of God to Sri Ramanuja at Srirangam, where one day the Lord in His great condescension and out of His love for Ramanuja was pleased to grant the following boon: "It shall be our pleasure to confer on you and all your followers everlasting bliss in my eternal Abode." It is an imperative duty of every Vaishnava to remind himself of these great Divine assurances every day and on every possible occasion with a view to keep his faith living and glowing and to provide an incentive for fulfilling on his own part the necessary conditions implied in the promises.

THE SOURCES OF HIS INSPIRATION

As in the life of every man, so in the life of a Vaishnava there are three main aspects, intellectual, emotional and volitional; and each aspect of

his life is moulded and inspired by the thoughts, feelings and lives of mighty personages who shine like luminaries in the firmament of Vaishnavism.

The key-note of his intellectual life is an implicit faith in Divine revelation through Incarnations, seers or Rishis, Alwars and Acharyas. The chief sources of inspiration for his intellectual life are the Sanskrit Vedas and the Smritis, (which are the commandments of God), the Vedanta Sutras, the epics, the Puranas (the most important of which are the Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana), the four thousand hymns of Alwars, and the erudite commentaries and other works written by the Acharyas for the sole benefit of devotees wishing to pursue the path of the Vaishnavas. The Vedas are regarded as the ultimate source of all the teachings of the Rishis, the Alwars and the Acharyas; and its two portions—the Karmakanda or ritualistic portion and the Jnanakanda or knowledge portion—in the view of the Vaishnavas, deal respectively with the performance of Karmas as a mode of worshipping the Supreme Being, i.e., with work as worship, and with the goal of all work and worship, namely, the Supreme Being. The first part of the Vedas is expounded in detail by the Smritis written by the great Rishis, and the other part is interpreted elaborately in the two epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, primarily, and in the Puranas secondarily. The Ramayana, depicting the life histories of Rama (the Incarnation of God) and of His Divine Consort Sita, is looked upon as an embodiment of the doctrine of self-surrender or 'Prapatti', each canto furnishing some concrete illustration of the doc-

trine and its efficacy. It furnishes also a clear and convincing demonstration of the power of meditation and grace exercised by Sita, the Divine Mother of the universe, and Her vicarious suffering on behalf of mortals immersed in sorrow. The Mahabharata sets forth in detail the infinite condescension of Sri Krishna, an Incarnation of God, in placing himself on a par with the poorest and the humblest of mankind and in playing the role of an ordinary messenger for kings and also in preaching the Gita. Sri Krishna, the eternal means for attaining Himself, is worshipped as the Supreme Teacher of all teachers, who both by his precepts in the Gita and by His example, established the ideals of Karma Yoga (the path to salvation through work), Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion and self-surrender to Divine Grace), and Jnana Yoga (the path of discrimination and knowledge). The Brahma Sutras of Vyasa are considered as a succinct epitome of all the Upanishads and the Sri Bhashya of Ramanuja, the commentary on those Sutras, as the only correct and consistent interpretation of the philosophy of the Upanishads as presented by Vyasa in his aphorisms. The four thousand hymns of the Alvars and the commentaries on them provide even the masses devoid of a knowledge of Sanskrit with the quintessence of the Vedas and a popular version of them in Tamil. In addition, these hymns excel the original Sankrit Vedas in their power of kindling the fire of devotion in the minds of lay readers.

The key-note of the Vaishnava's devotional life, as also the chief source of inspiration for it, is the worship of a Personal God with attributes, coupl-

ed with the worship of His devotees—the Alvars and the Acharyas. The Divine images of God in the sacred shrines of India are, in the eyes of the Vaishnavas, the hallowed abodes where God, in response to the earnest and persistent entreaties of pure and ardent devotees, has manifested Himself as divine, living forms, and continues to live as a Divine Presence that can be felt by all true devotees. Hence those visible representations of the Divinity are looked upon as channels for the flow of Divine grace to anyone who would commune with God through them. Many are the instances of men and women who at the very sight of these living manifestations of God have been blessed with intense devotion, renunciation, peace and joy. No image is deemed to be endowed with sufficient sanctity, if it has not been consecrated by the living touch of God invoked by a man of realisation; and its sanctity increases in proportion to the number of saints of realisation who have seen the living God therein and communed with Him. The temples of Conjeevaram, Tirupathi, Srirangam and Srivilliputtur stand supreme among the temples of South India, and even residence in the vicinities of such temples accompanied with devotion and faith is productive of much spiritual merit. It is believed that even mighty personages of the type of Alvars owe their Divine inspiration, intuition and ecstasy to the living God in such temples.

Another important aspect of the Vaishnavas' devotional life is their intense faith in the Guru-parampara or the chain of Gurus. The practical aspect of every true religion necessarily involves the transmission from

Guru to disciple of the living spiritual power that has its source in the very fountainhead of all spirituality, God. God is the ultimate teacher of all teachers and the very first Guru who reveals Himself to His chosen disciples. To them he vouchsafes a flood of spiritual power, thereby making them the teachers of humanity. They communicate this power to the disciples and become teachers in their turn, and thus the power flows through a continuous chain of teachers for several centuries, for the benefit of humanity at large. The vivifying touch of that power is indispensable for an individual, both for attaining the goal of realisation and for kindling spiritual fire in the hearts of others, and the Guru in whom the power is vested is looked upon as God. The line of Vaishnavite Gurus has been figuratively described thus: "The Alvars rise up from above the ocean of Godhead like heavy black clouds that have drunk deep of its Divine essence and attributes. They pour forth their contents and empty themselves on the Himalayas of Sri Nathamuni, the great teacher; the fertilising stream descends down along the two big waterfalls of two great teachers, flows into the mighty river of Yamunacharya, branches off along the main channel of Maha Purna and fills to overflowing the great lake of Sri Ramanuja, from which the waters gush forth through the sluice gates of our own Gurus and thus the fields of Samsara are irrigated. Every Vaishnava, to save himself from sorrow and bondage must irrigate the soil of his mind with the fertilising currents of Divine power flowing through the chain of Gurus.

The key-note of the volitional aspect of a Vaishnava's life is the merging of the individual will in the Supreme Will through love and annihilation of self; and this merging is sought to be achieved through service rendered to God or His devotees with a spirit of renunciation and devotion. The chief sources of inspiration in this direction are lives of the great Alvars and the Acharyas, each of which is revealed to the discerning eye as a mighty uninterrupted stream of joyous loving service done to God in His various manifestations and to His devotees. Some of these have served more with the intellect, some others more with their heart, and others again more with their hands; yet in all of them, service for its own sake, motiveless and selfless, has been the predominant characteristic. Lakshmana in the Ramayana is the ideal servant-devotee who was born, bred up and lived for the service of his Divine Master, Sri Rama, in His presence and by His side, and for that only, as he himself expressed once: "Sri Rama looks upon me as His younger brother; but my attitude towards Him is only that of a devoted servant who serves his master out of the infatuation produced by His Divine qualities." Bharata, the younger brother of Sri Rama, typifies the ideal of extreme dependence like that of inert matter on Sri Rama in as much as he, for the sake of realising the state of unquestioning submission to the will of Sri Rama, suppressed even his keen longings for service in His presence and preferred to rule His kingdom in accordance with His will like a humble tool in His hands. Satrugna, the last brother, exemplifies the ideal of service to devotees in preference to that of

service to God. Among Alwars a few have been conspicuous for service in the temples in the form of the construction of temples, their renovation, the cultivation of flower gardens for temple use and the like. Yamuna-charya and preferably Ramanujacharya stand as symbols of apostolic fervour and for the ideal of missionary service to humanity. Sri Anantalwar is the personification of that indefatigable and uncompromising zeal for absorption in service to the Lord in the temple, that would not mind physical, mental or other privations,

however severe, would not brook the participation of others in the work entrusted to one even under critical circumstances and would regard the presence of God before his eyes only as a distraction and as a hindrance to his service. These and other patterns of service which are the sources of perpetual inspiration for the Vaishnavas abound in the epics, the Bhagavata, the Puranas and the biographies of Vaishnavite saints and Gurus, a knowledge of which is considered important for ardent aspirants.

(Concluded)

MODERN THOUGHT AND VEDANTA

By Swami Pranaveshananda

[Swami Pranaveshananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, makes in the following article, a review of some of the important conclusions of modern science on topics like matter, life and consciousness, and presents side by side the strikingly similar conclusions of the Vedantic thinkers. The contrast also is drawn wherever necessary.

In the March issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, the writer of this article was by mistake introduced as the head of the Mission in Ceylon. It needs correction as given above.]

(Continued from previous issue)

VI

LIFE

ACCORDING to modern scientists, earth is estimated to have existed two thousand million years ago. Life is calculated to have made its first appearance on earth some three hundred million years ago. Man seems to have come into existence first on this earth about one million years ago from the generalised stock common to him and the anthropoid ape. Sir Arthur Keith, the British Anthropologist, says: "We who believe that man has been evolved are certain that

the power which moulds and modifies the human mind is not situated outside the body but is an inherent quality of its living flesh."

The modern scientists cannot, however, say how life itself came into existence.

As against this view of modern science that life came into existence at a definite point of time after the formation of the earth, Sankara, the Vedantic philosopher holds that the embodied being (Jiva) is the reflection of the Supreme Being in the body-mind combination. Thus life has no existence apart from God. All great

men of India have declared that our life is but a stage on the way towards infinity which is beyond. In the Bhagavad Gita (XV, 7) it is said that an eternal portion of God has become the soul in this world of life. Life is a continuous struggle between a principle within and Nature outside. It is sustained by food and air. Starting from the lowest protoplasm, it has developed slowly and steadily to man, and ultimately it will be merged in God, thus completing the circle of its progress. While thus the modern scientists have not been able to define what life precisely is, the Indian sages have been able to give us a clear idea about it.

V

EVOLUTION

Modern Western thinkers are divided in their opinion about evolution. In the first place there are those who accept the Darwinian theory of natural selection. Darwin bases his theory of evolution upon the facts of heredity, of variation and of struggle for existence. He says that if all, or even half, the younger ones of the animal with the lowest fecundity, namely, the elephant, were to come to maturity and themselves breed, the whole globe would in a limited time become packed with elephants. So naturally there arises struggle for existence in which the weak are exterminated by the strong which reproduce their own species in turn. This theory of the survival of the fittest, i.e., survival of such organisms as are best adapted to their environment, was subsequently felt unsatisfactory as it did not explain certain facts, and investigations have led to the formulation of a new theory called emergent evolution. The

author of this theory is Prof. Lloyd Morgan. He attributes the evolutionary process to an independent spiritual principle entering into association with matter. He uses the word 'emergence' to describe the appearance, at particular stages of evolution, of new properties and qualities and faculties in living organisms. These qualities are not present in the germ, or at the embryonic stage, or at any stage of development, until they emerge in the course of evolution. This is purely a non-mechanistic process as it is attributed to a spiritual agency. There is a third theory called the creative evolution. Henri Bergson, the French Philosopher, is the author of this theory, and he ascribes the evolutionary process to some original vital impulse—'Elan Vital'. This vital urge is not confined merely to animal life but belongs to the creative activity of the whole universe and is seeking in different ways to realise itself along definite lines. Bergson says: "The essence of reality is becoming, that is, it is a continual and active process, a creative evolution." Bergson denies that this evolutionary process has anything to do with natural selection.

The Indian evolutionist Patanjali says that evolution applies only to matter and not to spirit. The process of evolution, starting from amœba to man, is not in the spirit; it is only matter that evolves. The potential power of the amœba in trying to express itself against circumstances and environments which are trying to hold it down, takes new body after body in order to fight against them. So the lowest protoplasm in this struggle takes up another body and so on,

until it becomes the Divine Man in whom the spirit fully manifests, conquering all environments of Nature. The bodies, from that of the lowest worm to that of the highest man, are really one series. The differences in bodies are but different expressions of the same series, one body changing into another until perfection is reached. In Patanjali's analysis of evolution, there is no absolute necessity for competition or natural selection as propounded by Darwin's theory. Infinite power lies in the lowest protoplasm as well as in the highest Divine Man, and it is the very nature of that infinite power to manifest. The same power lies in animal as in man, and when fitting circumstances appear, animal becomes man and man becomes divine. Struggle and competition, at least in the case of man, and especially in the higher stages of his development, is not at all applicable, whatever may be the case in the lower animal kingdom. Man, by the power of proper education and culture, through renunciation and sacrifice and meditation and concentration, can overcome all obstacles. Struggle and competition only abet and encourage crime, and perhaps a few in order to save themselves are likely to kill a large number under cover of this horrible Western theory of struggle and competition. Proper education and culture are sure to root out all evil propensities in man and smooth his path to highest manifestation.

Prof. Lloyd Morgan no doubt attributes the evolutionary process to a spiritual principle but it is quite independent of matter with which it becomes associated. Again he says that the new properties, for example, life and mind, have emerged in the

course of evolution. His theory is quite untenable, firstly because according to him an outside spiritual agency coming from the void, as it were, causes the evolution. If the spirit were not in the protoplasm itself, no outside power can ever change its course of evolution. And secondly something cannot come out of nothing. No life or mind can emerge at any stage of the animal, if it is not already inherent in it. If the principle of continuity in evolution is accepted, then there should be no gap between the living and the non-living. There is a growing body of belief in the West that the non-living matter and the living beings differ only in degree but not in kind, and the same laws are at work among them both. This exactly corroborates the view of the Indian seers who attribute the presence of God in all animate and inanimate objects of the universe, be it an atom or a grain of sand or dry grass or a log of wood.

VI

MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Wells and Huxley in their book entitled "Science of Life" very lucidly express the view that some degree of consciousness cannot be denied even to amœba, the lowliest of all animals. The degree of consciousness no doubt varies according to the complexity of organisms. The authors of "Science of Life" hold that the brain is the organ bringing mind into effective activity. By observation we find that consciousness has a material substratum; it is always seen only in association with bodily life. Western scientists cannot definitely say what exactly is the relation between matter and mind on the one hand, and mind

and consciousness on the other. The American philosopher Santayana says: "That matter cannot by transposition of its particles, become what we call consciousness, is an admitted truth, that mind cannot become its own occasion or determine its own march, though it be a truth not recognised by all philosophers, is in itself no less obvious." To the Western thinkers, the problem of mind is rather baffling. All that can be known about the nature of mind is dependent on inference and the behaviour of men and animals. The inter-action between mind and body, they say, is beyond dispute but their relation is an unsolved riddle. So all attempts of the Western scientists at explaining the relation between mind and matter on the one hand, and mind and consciousness on the other, have been unsuccessful so far. Some thinkers, however, assume the existence of an essence more primitive than mind and matter which they call 'neutral stuff', and mind and matter seem to be a sort of composite of this stuff. But the materialists or mechanists believe that brain is the mind and mind is the brain, but no proof of any kind has been adduced by them to show that mind is the by-product of matter. The trend of modern thought, however, is towards the belief that mind is essentially free or creative, a *Vera Causa*, and that consciousness is not a mere function of the brain but rather uses the brain as an instrument. Here are some of the views expressed by eminent scientists as to what consciousness is. Sir James Jeans says: "I incline to the idealistic theory that consciousness is fundamental and the material universe is derivative from consciousness, not consciousness from

the material universe." Max Planck, a prominent German Physicist, says: "Consciousness cannot be explained in terms of matter and its laws. I regard consciousness as fundamental. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness." Sir Arthur Eddington says: "There is no question about consciousness being real or not. Consciousness is self-knowing, and the epithet 'real' adds nothing to it." He also says that the physical world has no actuality apart from its linkage. Prof. Einstein holds to the view that consciousness is fundamental.

The problem of relation between mind and matter and consciousness has been solved by the Indian thinkers long ago. According to the psychology of Samkhya, from the Mahat or the Universal Mind, down to the five elements including the individual mind, all categories are different modifications of one primordial matter called Prakriti in Sanskrit. Throughout it is all one. It is like the column of atmosphere, in which there are dense and rarified strata of one and the same stuff, air. All existence is the manifestation of one substance, so that mind is body and body is mind; mind is only a finer part of the same substance, of which the body, the grosser part, is also made. The material food that we eat is changed into mind. If we do not eat for some days, mind becomes weak and does not function, thereby proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that matter is mind. Mind is subtle as its vibrations are rapid and if the rate of vibration is lessened, mind itself becomes gross matter. And this mind is only an in-

strument in the hands of the Atman which is Consciousness Itself, through which It perceive the external world of matter.

VII

LAW OF CAUSALITY

All scientists until recently have unanimously adopted this principle of causality as a fundamental plank in their scientific research. Now they are not of one mind in this respect. Eddington is now firmly convinced that this law of causality has broken down entirely. He says: "I do not agree with Determinism. It seems to me contrary both to our intuition and the scientific evidence. Everybody, in practice, has an intuition of free-will. We find it difficult to believe that all our future actions are, as it were, already written down. And in the latest theories of matter we have had to introduce a principle of Indeterminacy. An electron does not seem to obey strictly determinate laws. We cannot predict exactly what it will do. And this does not seem to me to be a temporary difficulty due to our imperfect technique but a revelation of an inherent characteristic of the universe. Of course scientific determinism may come back. But I see no reason to believe that it will. Determinism is opposed both to our intuition and to all evidence. Why not drop it?" Prof. Lindemann also says "Causal Law fails completely when applied rigidly to the behaviour of the ultimate particles of which reality is composed." Although Prof. Einstein believes with Eddington that in the ultimate analysis of the physical world causal sequence does not hold good in the present state of scientific knowledge, and that

in quantum phenomena the behaviour of electrons is not determined, he is not, unlike Eddington, of opinion that determinacy has gone for good. He opines that with more knowledge the time will come when the law of causality will have to be re-introduced in physics. Max Planck, the author of quantum theory, is also of the same opinion.

While thus the Western scientists are divided in their opinion about this law of causality, the Indian thinker Gaudapada had long ago proved to the hilt by means of irrefutable arguments in Chapter four of the Mandukya Karika that this law does not at all hold good ultimately; for he establishes by Ajatavada or the theory of non-creation that the Brahman or Reality has never become this universe. Law of causality plays its part when we believe in creation and its evolution. Gaudapada says that the universe exists only in the imagination of the seer who is ignorant and untutored.

VIII

ULTIMATE REALITY

Almost all the modern scientists have come to the conclusion that mind is fundamental and that matter is derivative from it. Even when they talk of atoms, electrons, etc., they are talking about things that depend upon their minds. All the chain of events and everything that are perceived by the senses are mental. And since they are mental Sir James Jeans postulates the existence of a "Universal Mind" in which all these have their being. So it is mind that has built up this objective universe of matter wandering through space and time. But the reality behind is quite differ-

ent from what it appears to the scientists and they say it is inscrutable and indescribable. If anything at all exists apart from mind, it is, according to the theory of relativity, that vast unimaginable four-dimensional continuum whose inmost activity is hidden from us. This world of space, matter and apparent movement in time is only an interpretation of one's own mind. Jeans says that the last traces of materialism have vanished and that we live in a world of pure thought. To him the one ultimate reality is mind or consciousness. The universe is more like a thought than a great machine, and in the mind that existed originally, perceiving and thinking are all the expressions of that mind's activity. He puts it as follows: "We need find no mystery of the nature of the rolling contact of our consciousness with the empty soap-bubble we call space-time, for it reduces merely to a contact between mind and a creation of mind, like the reading of a book or listening to music." It is probably unnecessary to add that on this view of things, the apparent vastness and emptiness of the universe and our own insignificant size therein, need cause us neither bewilderment nor concern. We are not terrified by the size of the structures which our own thought creates, nor by those that others imagine and describe to us. So the modern scientists have come to the conclusion that mind or consciousness is the one ultimate Reality.

Mind, as has already been described, is only a modification of matter according to the Indian philosophers. It is never consciousness. It is only a determinative faculty. The Indriyas or the senses convey the percep-

tion of the external objects to the mind, which in turn sets the Buddhi or determinative faculty to react, and along with this, the Buddhi flashes the idea of Aham or ego and the external object. If the mind were in itself conscious or self-luminous, as the Western thinkers claim it to be, it should have been able to cognise itself and the external objects at one and the same time, which it cannot. Therefore mind is not in itself conscious or self-luminous. Patanjali says: "The essence of knowledge (God) being unchangeable when the mind takes its form, it becomes conscious." When the mind comes in contact with God through Buddhi and Ahamkara, it becomes knowing for the time being and seems as if it were itself consciousness. On one side of the mind there is the external world—that which is being seen—and on the other side there is the Seer or God, and due to the presence of God who is the Supreme Consciousness itself, the power of knowledge comes to the mind. Indian philosophers, knowing that the study of the external world is insufficient datum for the establishment of the existence of God, turned their gaze inwards and became introspective, and analysing their own minds and going beyond, arrived at wonderful results. When the powers of mind are concentrated, mind becomes a powerful instrument to observe what is actually going on in the internal world and becomes self-controlled. When thus the mind's function is completely controlled, the Ultimate Reality becomes manifest. This is how the Indian sages came face to face with the Ultimate Reality which they called Brahman or God. So the knowledge gained by the analysis of

the external world alone would remain limited and one-sided so long as mind also is not studied and analysed. No doubt the Western scientists posit the existence of something like 'mind stuff', or as Bertrand Russell calls it 'neutral stuff' or as Einstein calls it 'four dimensional continuum' but they have arrived at this conclusion only as a hypothesis. Jeans says: "Primitive cosmologies pictured a Creator working in space and time, forging sun, moon and stars out of an already existing new material. Modern scientific theory compels us to think of the Creator as working outside time and space, which are parts of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvass." He also says in another place that this universe has been designed by the 'Great Architect of the universe' from the intrinsic evidence of his creation. He believes not only that the universe is designed by the Great Architect or Great Mathematician, but that it actually consists of thoughts in the mind of God, just as the terrestrial pure mathematician does not concern himself with material substance but with pure thought. Jeans thus arrives at the same conclusion as Bishop Berkley whom he quotes with approval "All the choir of heaven and furniture of earth, in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any substance without the mind.... So long as they are actually

perceived by me, do not exist in my mind, or that of another created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some Eternal Spirit." Thus the Western scientists and philosophers hypothesise about the existence of an Eternal Spirit or God through the analysis of the external world; but as a matter of fact, because they have not seen Him face to face as the Indian sages have done, their doubts have not yet been cleared as regards the real existence of God and in many other instances, viz., in regard to the nature of life, consciousness, the relation between mind and matter, the survival of bodily death, the relation between man and God and so on. For the solution of these intricate problems, then, they have to proceed on the method of the Indian Yogis or the Yogic method by which they can turn their gaze inwards, dive deep and analyse both mind and matter at one stretch in a detached way and go beyond them both as the Indian sages have done long long ago before the dawn of the scientific era, and with them they will be able to proclaim to the world that the existence of God is an established fact and that by knowing Him, everything becomes known, i.e., nothing further remains to be known. Then, indeed one can say, "All the knots of heart are cut asunder, all doubts vanish and all actions come to an end by seeing Him who is both high and low."

(Concluded)

COURTS OF JUSTICE IN ANCIENT INDIA

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

[The following essay by Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History and Economics in Madura College, briefly deals with the kinds of courts and system of administering justice in ancient India.]

I

"A COURT of Justice," says Sukra, "is a place where the science of practical life in the varied interests of men are enquired into and decided according to the dictates of the Dharma Sastras." Says Narada: "That is not a judicial assembly where there are no elders. They are not elders who do not pass a just sentence. That is not a just sentence in which there is no truth. That is not truth which is vitiated by error." With regard to its location, Brihaspati says, "In the middle of the fortress, he should build a house with water and trees adjacent to it. Let him use for a Court of Justice a room situated on the eastern side of it, properly constituted and facing the east—the Judges facing the north and the Scribe facing the south. The King should cause gold, water and codes of sacred law to be placed in the midst of them."

Numerous were the Courts in Ancient India. Brihaspati divides them into Moveable Courts, Stationary Courts, Courts deriving authority from the King and the Courts presided over by the King himself. Bhrigu goes a step further and thinks of 15 kinds of Courts. But all these could be conveniently classified as State Courts and popular or arbitration courts. The State Courts themselves were three in number—the Court of the

Royal Bench, the 'Court of the Pradvivaka and the Court of Subordinate Judges.

The Court of Royal Bench was the highest court. It was presided over by the King himself and was the highest court of appeal. This had no particular location, for it moved along with the King. But he acted only as its president. He was assisted by a number of other Judges. In fact to the ancients, the exercise of any judicial power by a single man was repugnant. "No deliberation by a single man will be successful" (Visalaksha). Manu lays down that the number of Judges should at least be three, while Brihaspati says that it should be five or seven. But the King's influence was considerable in arriving at decisions. Brihaspati says that it was the function of the King to decide whether the case before him was true or not. As the status of the King depended upon proper administration of justice, the kings were particularly anxious to be available to the people at all times. Says Asoka, "So by me has this been arranged, at all hours, when I am eating or in the harem or in the inner apartments or even in the ranches or in the place of religious instruction or in the parks, everywhere Prativedakas are posted with instructions to report on affairs of my people." The 'chain of justice' during the time of

Jahangir also reminds us of the same enthusiasm of the monarch to be easily accessible to the people. The members of the Judicial Assembly were known as Sabhyas. The Sabhyas were chosen for their knowledge, experience and integrity. Besides the Sabhyas, there were always present in the King's Court several wise men whose advice the King could take if necessary. The Chief Priest, for example, advised the king in the exercise of his prerogative of mercy. Says Narada, "As a hunter traces the vestiges of wounded deer in a thicket by the drops of blood, even so let him trace justice."

In South India the King was advised by several Councils, among which the Judicial Council was the most important. According to the Puram, the observance of Dharma was the very basis of administration. Failure to administer proper justice meant death to the King. The Kural prescribes :—

Search out, to no one favour show,
with heart that Justice loves

Consult, then act ; this is the rule
that right approves.

Hard of access, nought searching
out, with partial hand

The King who rules, shall sink and
perish from the land.

A just King was looked upon with great reverence as a representative of God on earth. It is said, "If the King who is easily accessible to his citizens and acts in accordance with the established Law of the land would but desire, rains will instantaneously pour down."

Such was the position of the King as the head of the State's judiciary. Though his was the highest court of appeal, it had also original jurisdic-

tion. As pointed out earlier, justice was not delayed by formal regulations. If a man was injured near the palace, he had every right to proceed directly to the King and report the matter. No Judge could say that a particular case was beyond his jurisdiction. Nor could he insist on a particular case being tried by him. In fact in Karikala's time we have the incident of two Brahmins withdrawing their case from the King's Court on the ground that he was too young and inexperienced to try the case.

Next only in importance to the Court of Royal Bench was the court presided over by the Chief Judge. While the King's Court could be held wherever he was, this court was stationary. Says Manu, "If the King does not personally investigate the suits, then let him appoint a learned Brahmin to try them." The Pradvivaka naturally occupied a very high position. As an experienced surgeon extracts a dart by means of surgical instruments, even so the Chief Judge must extract the dart of iniquity from the law suit. His counterpart can be seen to-day in the Chief Judge of every High Court. He was also assisted by other Judges and also by assessors. Generally the King delegated his authority to the Pradvivaka by handing over to him the royal seal. We are not sure whether there was any appeal to the King from the Court of Pradvivaka. But seeing the extreme indulgence given to the accused in the matter of appeals, it is likely that appeals were allowed now and then from his courts.

Numerous were the smaller courts created by the State and controlled

by the Mantri-parishad. These were known as Janapada, Sanohi, Sangrahana, Dronamukha and Sthaniya. Each of these courts was presided over by three Ministers of Law and three Directors. These would resemble our Munsiff and Magistrate Courts, and were located in important cities. Most of these courts appear to have been public and in fact Brihaspati defines the court as 'four faced Brahman'.

The courts enumerated above had both civil and criminal jurisdiction. To them the difference between a civil court and a criminal court was unknown. Kautilya¹ speaks of two classes of courts in his Artha Sastra, namely, Dharma Sthaneya and Kantaka Sodhana. Both these had criminal and civil jurisdiction. The former administered civil and criminal justice in respect of ordinary matters. The Kantaka Sodhana which consists of three Commissioners exercised special jurisdiction over matters of commerce, industry and preservation of peace. Even to-day it is sometimes found that it would be better in the interest of justice if the same judge had both the powers. Many civil cases are found on careful analysis to be based on motives criminal.

II

More important than the State Courts were the Popular Courts which were numerous in number and varied in kind. Owing to lack of means of communication, the State Courts were not easily accessible to the people. Naturally a major portion of the judicial work was done by these local courts which met either in a temple

¹ Kautilya also speaks of separate courts for preserving the purity of officials.

or under a Banyan tree. The Gramani or the village Headman himself had judicial powers. He had the power of banishing from the village any person suspected of theft or adultery. In Kulavaka Jataka the Headman of the village is seen mourning the loss of fines paid by the drunkards whose character was improved by the Bodhisattva. He was assisted in the work by Grama Vriddhas (old and experienced men of the village). Elphinstone thus describes the procedure in a suit for the recovery of debt. "If a complaint was made to a Patel, he would send for the person complained of, and if he admitted the debt, would interfere partly as a friend to settle the mode and time of payment. If the debt were disputed, and he and his Kul-karni could not by their own influence or sagacity effect a settlement to the satisfaction of both the parties, the Patel assembled a Panchayat of inhabitants of the village, who enquired into the matter with very little form and decided as they thought best ; but this decision could not take place without the previous consent of the parties". The method of administering criminal justice was stated in My Chaplin's Report on the Deccan (1824) as follows : "Patels exercised formerly, without any defined limits to their authority, the power of slightly punishing for all minor offences, such as abusive language, petty assaults and trespasses. The punishment seldom went beyond a few blows with the open hand or confinement for a couple of days in the village choultry, the prisoner paying subsistence money to the Haval-dar or peon who was placed over

him²". But as the Gramani had numerous executive functions, he very rarely dealt with judicial matters. These were generally decided by the popular courts known as the Kula, the Pooga, the Sreni and the Sabha. Says Brihaspati, "Relatives, companies of artisans, assemblies and other persons duly authorised by the King should decide law suits among men excepting violent offences (Sahasa)." The ancients insisted on every case being tried by only those qualified to investigate the case. A case against an artisan was to be tried only by a court formed among the artisans, while a case against a forester had to be tried only by men of his own profession.

Says Sukra: "Among these local courts, the largest appears to have been the Pooga. It was cosmopolitan in its constitution, consisting as it did of Judges from various communities or professions resident in the village." "Thus," says Mukerjee in his Local Government in Ancient India, "the Pooga was the highest court, because it was numerically the largest assembly, on which were represented not merely the different castes, as in the Sreni, but also the interests of different crafts, trades or occupations in the village or township." This court appears to have had appellate authority too; for according to Narada and Yajnavalkya, the unsuccessful parties could carry their complainants from the Kula to the Pooga and if they were not satisfied with the award of the Pooga, they could seek the help of the State Courts. A Sreni was a court intended mainly for the mercantile class.

²John Mathai: Village Government in British India.

Each profession appears to have had a Sreni of its own in which disputes and professional jealousies were either settled or compromised. A Sreni was not a communal organisation, for it was composed of men belonging to different castes, but pursuing the same occupation.

Kula was the lowest court. It was composed of members of one particular community and appears to have been concerned only with very minor offences of a communal nature. A Kula can better be called an arbitration court and its jurisdiction was only over the kinsmen of the Judges. All these courts were based on the principle that local men alone knew about the local affairs to meet out justice.

A very interesting feature of ancient Indian judicature is the provision for appeals from the decisions of the various courts. This provision was particularly insisted upon in the republican constitutions. In fact the right of the individual was safeguarded in a manner unparalleled in the history of the world. We learn from Atthakatha that a criminal was at first sent for trial to the officers called 'Vinichiya mahamatta'. If the accused was found innocent, they acquitted him, but if he was guilty in their opinion, they could not punish him, but had to send him to the next higher tribunal, that of the Voharikas. They too could acquit the accused, if they found him innocent but had to send him to the next higher tribunal, viz., that of the Suttadhara, if they considered him guilty. There were three other tribunals with similar functions, viz., those of Atthakulaka, Senapati and Uparaja, each of which could acquit the accused if

innocent, but had to send him to the next higher tribunal if found guilty. The last tribunal, viz., that of the Raja had alone the right to convict the accused, and in awarding punishment, he was guided by the 'Paveni pustaka' or the Book of Precedents¹. It should however be pointed out that indiscriminate appeal was effectively checked by the ruling that if an appeal was lost, the appellant must pay double of what he was fined by the lower court.

Except perhaps in the case of the Kula, in all other courts, numerous officers other than the Judges were present. Among them the Accountant was the most important. Brihaspati lays down that the Accountant was expected to be well-versed in grammar, reckoning and numerous scripts. Katyayana lays down that these were to be selected only from among the Vaisyas. Vyasa goes a step further and insists upon the Accountant being an adept in astronomy. Equally responsible and onerous was the position of the Accountant in South India. Besides the qualifications mentioned above, the Ganaka or the Kanakkan of South India was expected to have some judicial talents. He is referred to in

¹Majumdar's Corporate life in Ancient India.

one of the Chola inscriptions as "Trairajya Ghatika Madhyasta." He received for maintenance four 'Nali' of paddy every day and seven Kalanja of pure gold every year and a pair of cloth. In presenting his accounts, he was required to undergo the ordeal of holding red-hot iron in his hand. One who was truthful, honest and patient, was appointed Lekhaka. He was expected to have a good vocabulary and good handwriting. The Sadhyapala appears to have been chosen from among the Sudras. Says Vyasa, "A stout Sudra whose ancestors were employed in that office acting under the orders of the Judges should be made Sadhyapala to obtain material for the trial." The Court Hall in the Mogul period was filled with the law officers of the Crown. Prominent among them were experts in Canon Law (Quazis), Judges of Common Law (Adies), Theologians (Ulema), Jurists learned in precedents (Fatawah), the Superintendent of the Law Court (Darogha-i-Adalat) and the city police officer (Kotwal). The Jail Guards appear to have been men of great respectability and their duties were highly responsible. They were expected to treat the prisoners with kindness and to attend to their wants.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram,
New Delhi.

The Delhi Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission was started in May, 1927. The permanent house of the Ashrama at New Delhi (Ibbetson Road) accommodates the Monastery, the Dispensary, the Library

and the Free Reading Room and the Office of the Institution. The Free Tuberculosis Clinic is located in a rented building in the old city at Daryaganj near Edward Park, Delhi.

A short account of the activities of the Mission during 1936 and 1937 is given below:

(1) *Religious Preaching.*—Religious classes and discourses, numbering about 265 in 1936 and 370 in 1937, besides Bhajans, were held at the Ashrama and in different parts of New and Old Delhi. Lectures (in Hindi, Bengali and English) on philosophical, religious and cultural subjects, numbering 38 in 1936 and 51 in 1937, were also delivered by Swami Sharvananda and others in Delhi, Karachi and many other places.

(2) *The Library and the Free Reading Room.*—The Library contained 824 books in 1936 and 919 books at the end of 1937. They form a well-chosen collection in English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali. The total number of books issued were 722 in 1936 and 920 in 1937. Some 25 Periodicals (including two English dailies) were available in the Reading Room. It is open every evening to the general public.

(3) *Out-door General Dispensary.*—A resident doctor who is a passed Homeopath attends the Dispensary every morning and evening (except on Sundays when only very urgent cases are attended to). The total attendance was 17630 in 1936 and 24632 in 1937.

(4) *The Out-door Free Tuberculosis Clinic.*—The Clinic was started in 1933 and serves the poor in general, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. The patients are treated with modern scientific appliances, including ultra-violet ray exposure, by the eminent medical staff who have volunteered their services to the institution. It is open every morning (except on Sundays) from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The total attendance of patients was 6,934 in 1936 and 11,363 in 1937.

The institution is maintained by subscriptions and donations from the public bodies and private individuals.

To stabilise this useful institution a permanent house with sufficient funds is absolutely necessary. It is hoped that the benevolent public will do their utmost for the poor by helping this useful institution. The house itself will cost about Rs. 25,000.

(5) *Anniversary Celebrations.*—The

Ashram held the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary in a fitting manner. Annual celebrations of the birth-days of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Krishna, Sri Chaitanya, Buddha, Christ, etc., are also held.

Purna Kumbha Mela

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram at Kankhal, Hardwar proposes to adopt the following programme of relief work during the Purna Kumbha Mela at Hardwar during the March and April 1938 :

1. The Sevashram at Kankhal, with its indoor and outdoor departments, will become the main centre under which temporary relief branches will be opened in different parts of the Mela with a view to give medical aid to the suffering pilgrims. These patients will be accommodated in the temporary huts to be constructed by the Sevashram.

2. The Sevashram at Kankhal will maintain a touring relief department, the doctors and workers of which will go round, from camp to camp, to find out those patients who will be unable to move and come to our centre. Such cases, when necessary, will be removed to the main centre at Kankhal or to some other Hospital near by.

3. We shall have to make provision for the lodging and boarding of the honorary medical officers and other workers as also of a limited number of persons who have no place to go to.

For these we require at least Rs. 5,000 in cash and a good quantity of medicines, clothing, food-stuffs, and other necessities, in addition to ten qualified medical officers, five compounders and several workers. We earnestly hope that on such an august occasion like this all the necessary help will be forthcoming from the generous public for the relief of the suffering and helpless pilgrims.

Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Asimananda, Hony. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, P. O. Kankhal, Dt. Saharanpur, U.P.

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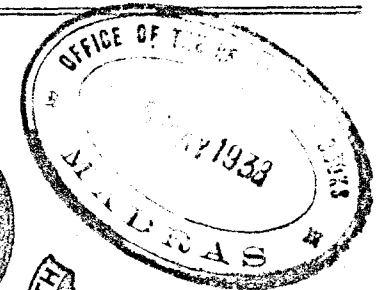
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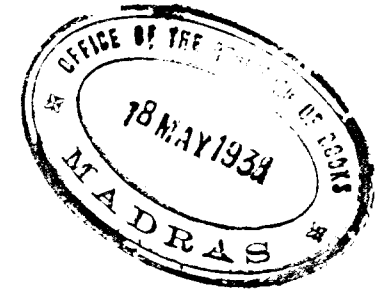
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

MAY, 1938

[No. 1

MAHASAMADHI

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of His Holiness Srimat Swami Vignananandaji Maharaj, the fourth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, on Monday, the 25th of April. To the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, and to the friends and well-wishers of the Order bearing his name, this event will come as a great shock, seeing that it has taken place so soon after the demise of his worthy predecessor in the office.

The Swami was one of the very few among the surviving direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides being the head of the Order and the preceptor of a large number of people, he was also a good scholar and mathematician. He was the author of several books, both scientific and devotional. Among these are the English translations of Brihad-jataka, a Sanskrit work on astrology and astronomy by Varahamihira, and of devotional Sanskrit works like Naradapancharatra and Devi-bhagavata. His latest work, the English translation of Valmiki's Ramayana, is now in the press.

The Swami was the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission from 1934, and became their President in 1937.

Om Santih ! Santih ! Santih !

WORLD UNDERSTANDING THROUGH RELIGION

[The thoughts set forth below were occasioned by the discussions held on this subject at the session of the Fellowship of Faiths held at Madras last March.]

I

MORE than at any time in the past, men to-day are paralysed by the fear of a possible world war. It is, therefore, quite natural that they should test the value of ideas and institutions by their efficacy in preventing such a catastrophe. In evaluating religion too men are seen to apply this test, and in many quarters there is evidence of a new interest in religion due to some lurking belief that it may be able to save man from the menace of war. It is perhaps due to this tendency that the Fellowships of Faiths gave predominance to the topic of 'World Understanding through Religion' in the list of subjects discussed at its last session held in Madras.

Now at a time when the leaders of men are at their wit's end in tackling this problem, and are ready in their despair to catch even a straw like the proverbial drowning man, few religious enthusiasts can withhold the impulse to come forward with extravagant promises regarding what they and their institutions can do in this difficult situation if they were given a free hand. But these, one should say, are exactly the persons who do not know wherein lies the springs of vitality in the case of religion. For to expect religion to do everything in the world except the function that is special to it, is the best way of smothering it. That, in fact, is what the story of religion as

an institution reveals to us. A time was when religious leaders and religious institutions controlled both the private and public life of men with almost dictatorial powers; but the record of history regarding their achievement in establishing peace and mutual understanding among nations and cultures provides rather disappointing reading. When the message of holiness that found expression in the lives of saints and saviours was institutionalised in churches, the first stage of degeneration began. This, however, is an unavoidable, and even necessary, step; for without at least a minimum of institutionalising, a message, however sublime, cannot find expression in this world for any considerable length of time. The process of degeneration did not, however, stop with this. For the churches, whose main function ought to have been to exemplify the ideal of holiness, got intertwined with secular interests, and in course of time began to busy themselves with everything except what they were originally meant for. It is certain that this worldly spirit entered the churches through an imperceptible process, under cover of high sounding aims like winning souls for God, establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and, we may add, in modern times, of working for international amity and outlawing war.

It should not be understood from this that we are against religion and

religious institutions working hand in hand with other agencies for improving the life of man in this world itself. They ought to do that, and it is doubtful whether they would gain any social vitality without doing so. But woe unto religion and religious institutions if they make these their main purpose, and God and holiness mere secondary concerns. And this is surely going to be the final outcome if religion proves attractive to men only because of its supposed utility in achieving even such noble secular aims as eradicating poverty and abolishing war. For, religion must have holy living and realisation of God as its first concern; all other things are subsidiary. *But it must, however, be remembered that these subsidiary effects follow inevitably if religion remains true to its main function.* For the more the number of men established in the true ideal of holiness and practising the presence of God, the greater the chances of establishing the reign of justice and righteousness in the secular life of man.

Of course these genuine men of religion, who can usefully influence secular life, must be of quite a different type from the champions of religion we come across everywhere, especially in this country. In most other countries religious institutions as a factor in politics and in the formation of political parties have practically become ineffective, and hence the evil effects of a decayed religious institutionalism is not perhaps so much felt. But we, in this country, with our political parties based on religious nomenclatures, our selection of public servants guided by the theological creeds people nominally profess, with our electorates determin-

ed by such important considerations as whether people wear tufted or cropped hair, beards or moustaches, turbans or fez caps—we can realise very well how earth-bound institutionalism in religion can degenerate into a curse on humanity. Now men who are the products of this secularised religious spirit, and who stand for everything else but God and holiness, are not the religious types from whom anything can be expected for bettering the condition of humanity. For they are not religious men at all, being the products of a religious institutionalism that has sold itself to secular interests.

Far different from them in character and outlook is the right type of religious man whose influence can be a regenerating force in the affairs of men. The true religious man must be able to separate the spirit of religion from its institutional vestures, and embody that spirit in his own life as dynamic spirituality. While remaining true to his religious ideal, he must have the capacity to think in an absolutely disinterested fashion even when he has to arrive at decisions involving a conflict with the secular interests of his own religious group and institutions. And above all he must have the firm conviction that the main function of religion is to impart the consciousness of Divine presence to the mind of man, and that if it helps to improve the secular life, it is only as a subsidiary effect of that great value called holiness which it helps to create in the lives of men. In other words, a truly religious man is he who succeeds in de-institutionalising religion in his public life, and in converting it into an impersonal

energy of character vitalising his action from within.

If religion is to contribute anything towards world understanding, religious leaders and institutions everywhere should recognise that their main function consists in producing such characters in an ever-increasing number, and not in succumbing to the worldly spirit around them in the name of high-sounding pretensions.

II

Just as a change in the conception of the function of religion is thus necessary, there is an equal necessity for a new spirit in the relation obtaining between religions themselves, if they are to be in any way useful for bringing about world understanding. For *inter-religious* understanding will have to be secured before the voice of religion will be heard with respect by honest men. However, as conditions obtain to-day, the question is, Which of them is the greater scandal—the worldliness of religious institutions, or the bitter rivalries and antagonisms among religions?

We shall, therefore, consider now why religions quarrel among themselves, and how these quarrels can be minimised or done away with. Leaving aside the purely material considerations that lead to quarrels among religions, we find that bickerings and lack of mutual sympathy among them arise from a total misunderstanding of the nature of 'religious truth'. Hence those who want to work for inter-religious understanding should have a clear conception of the nature of religious truth. Sometimes it is said that this is only a pre-occupation of intellectuals and does not affect the life of the aver-

age man. In a sense that may be true, but in so far as intellectuals ultimately influence the life and thought of the masses, and also in so far as the average man, without a clear idea of this important point is likely to be misguided by self-seekers in the religious garb, a proper understanding of the nature of 'religious truth' is absolutely necessary for all, if religions are to be converted from social dangers into institutions for the welfare of men at large.

We generally have great faith in the wisdom of academic philosophers and learned writers, but none of them has perhaps put the nature of religious truth in so simple, beautiful and effective a form as Sri Ramakrishna, the Son of the Divine Mother, than whom there has been none in our times to contribute to harmony among religions. To quote a simple saying of his on the point: One day the Master was heard talking to the Mother of the Universe in a God-intoxicated state: "Mother, everyone says, 'My watch keeps correct time.' The Christians, the Hindus, the Mohammedans, all say, 'My religion is the true religion.' But, Mother, nobody's watch is exact. Who can truly know Thee? But, again, if one seeks Thee with a yearning heart, one can reach Thee by Thy grace through any path, through any religion."

The philosophical and mystical implications of this saying are far-reaching. Every religion is, as it were, an attempt to capture the Infinite Being in the finite meshes of human thought; for thus only can the Infinite become the object of adoration for the human mind. In this process, however, the human mind imposes its own imperfections

on that Transcendental Principle. Thus every great religion, with its own philosophy, mythology, and rituals, can be described only as an approximation to the infinite Truth of God. All of them are true in so far as they give us a glimpse of the Infinite, but none of them is, or can possibly be, a presentation of the whole of the Infinite. Moreover, the light of the Infinite, which a religion brings for the illumination of man, has naturally to pass through the prism of a particular tradition and culture. And so, in the process of transmission, it is bound to be tainted by the imperfections of its human vehicles. Thus every religion, when put to the test of abstract intellectualism, can prove itself to be nothing more than a glimpse of, and an approximation to, the Infinite God. Thus 'everyone says that his watch keeps correct time, but no one's watch can, as a matter of fact, be exact'.

So far with regard to the theoretical aspect of religious truth. From the practical point of view, everyone of the great religions can help man to reach the Highest; for in Sri Ramakrishna's words, "With true yearning for Thee, everyone of them can lead people to Thee"—not of course by virtue of their imperfections, but by the truth which they all embody. It may, however, be questioned how, if all religions have in them the taint of finitude and imperfections, they can ever lead man to the infinite and the perfect. It is in considering this question that an important point with regard to the nature of religious truth becomes evident. We find, as a matter of fact, that all the great religions of the world have produced men of the most exalted character,

who are established at the super-conscious level of experience (*Samadhi*), and in view of this fact it cannot be denied that the religions they followed, in spite of their human limitations, have the capacity to evoke in man the experience of the Highest. This fact evidently shows that religious truth is not in this respect like mathematical truth based upon measurements, nor like logical truth based upon the law of contradiction, which one may otherwise describe as the method of 'either-or'. There is nothing like 'contradictories' in religion as a way of life. In this respect, religion is a method of apprehending the highest values, and resembles aesthetics more than logic. In aesthetics, the artist employs symbols of colour, sound or thought, and with their help evokes in those who are culturally open to their stimulating influence, the experience of pure delight that passed through his own soul when he came into contact with the realm of Beauty in his moments of exaltation. These symbols work on the mind through their suggestiveness, and not by imparting information, and they depend for their effect on the attunement of the connoisseur to the culture they represent. The symbols employed may be divergent in different cultures; in the language of the logicians they may be contradictories; and for those who are culturally immune to their influence, they may be meaningless. But in spite of this, all these divergent and logically unanalysable symbols create the identical aesthetic experience in the proper type of connoisseurs.

Religions as *Sadhana Sastra* or way of life are more or less like this. Their philosophies, dogmas, mytho-

logies and rituals are so many symbols drawn from the intellectual and emotional life of different cultures, and charged with a power to drive a properly receptive mind above its own limitations, and ultimately help it intuit the Infinite in transcendental consciousness. As the sound symbols of music, though differing in different systems of music, help the trained connoisseurs to rise above their particularities and contact an identical realm of Beauty where they enjoy the same aesthetic delight, so also the divergent symbols of religion help their pious votaries, endowed with faith and earnestness, to transcend the limitations of their body and mind, and intuit the Absolute in whom 'Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth', in whom fact and value are identical—the Absolute that has been variously described as Sat-chid-ananda (Existence - Knowledge - Bliss Absolute); Santi - samriddham - amritam (abundance of peace and immortality); Param Brahma, Param Dhama, Pavitram Paramam (Power supreme, Illumination supreme, Holiness supreme). To put it briefly, once we understand the symbolical character of religious teachings and practices, we at once get over the barrier of religious contradictions, and find no difficulty in accepting the validity of all the great religions.

A wide-spread understanding of the nature of the religious truth, in the light explained above, is absolutely necessary if anything like inter-religious understanding is to be brought about, and religion made ultimately capable of contributing towards world understanding. The basic principle of this understanding is that every great religion is true in

the sense that it is an approximation to the truth of the Absolute, and that it can lead one to the Absolute if one has but an intense hankering for the Highest.

III

Before concluding we shall touch upon one more point, and that is on the place of missionary effort in this conception of religion. The conversion of unbelievers, the saving of souls in peril, the triumph of one's tribal God over those of others, and similar ideas cannot be the motive behind the right type of missionary effort; nor can force, fraud, advertisement, offering of baits, etc., be adopted as its method. What then should be the motive and method of ideal missionary effort? Firstly, in different countries of the world, there are people who have a hankering for religion, but for some reason or other—it may be sometimes scientific, sometimes social, sometimes unpleasant experiences of the past—they find dissatisfied with the religious beliefs, symbols and institutions they were habituated to from childhood. Contact with a religion and piety coming from another culture may set their dormant spirituality aflame, and a noble-minded missionary of another religion may be able to help them very much in their spiritual readjustment. Thus there may be men with Christian Samskaras or spiritual tendencies in India and China, and men with Hindu tendencies in Europe and America. The right type of missionaries can be of much help to people of this type. Secondly, with the progress in the intellectual life of communities, people often outgrow the old religious symbols, and a necessity arises for a

re-interpretation of their significance in order to revitalise them. Contact with the religious thought, experiences and piety of other cultures, especially through the best living representatives of them, will be helpful also in this work of re-interpretation and re-statement, or if one may call it so, of pouring new wine into old bottles. And, thirdly, if the missionary is a man of wider attainments, i.e., in addition to being a spiritual man he is well versed in one or more of the other branches of culture like music, painting, poetry and literature of his culture, he can also take an active part in cultural contact in a wider sense, as envisaged by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose in his presidential address at the last session of the Indian National Congress.

Missionary work of this type, in which there is no talk of men of higher faith and lower faith, and which in a large measure comes up to the ideal pictured by Subhas Bose, is already being done by the monks of Sri Ramakrishna Order in Europe and America. Owing to their limitation in men and resources, the work has not been sufficient in volume to attract the attention of the public at large. It must also be added that it has not yet received the recognition it deserves from the leaders of thought and life in this country, and the support it requires from those who control the worldly resources in our land. But that the work is receiving ap-

preciation in the countries and communities affected by it is shown by the following facts: (1) There is a constant demand from foreign lands for more Swamis, which the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math cannot supply for want of sufficient men. (2) All the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order in foreign lands are the guests of the people there, and are mainly supported by the ladies and gentlemen interested in their work and teaching in those countries. (3) Many people in foreign lands who have been benefited by the teachings of the Swamis have shown their appreciation of India and her culture by actually co-operating with the Swamis in their work, and by contributing in terms of money for the religious and philanthropic work of the Order in India. In illustration of this may be mentioned the princely donation of 6½ lakhs of rupees by two devotees from America for the building of the Sri Ramakrishna Temple at Belur, which was consecrated a few months back.

To conclude, world understanding through religion will become possible only when religions begin to be truly religious. And it is our conviction that religions and religionists will become fit for this great work only when they have absorbed the catholic and dynamic ideal of spirituality embodied in the life and teachings of the great world teacher, Sri Ramakrishna.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

SWAMI Shivanandaji was seated in his room. Love illumined his face, and compassion flowed from his eyes. An atmosphere of deep peace prevailed in the room. It being a Saturday, some devotees from Calcutta had come to meet Mahapurushji Maharaj. Almost all of them were young men employed in different offices. Whenever they got a holiday, they came to hear the Swami and receive inspiration from his invaluable teachings. That day the conversation turned on spiritual practices.

Devotee: Maharaj, on certain days I feel joy in practising meditation and Japa (repetition of God's Name), but on certain other days I do not get any joy at all. How is it that it happens like this?

Mahapurushji: Yes, it happens like that; on some days one enjoys it and on other days one does not relish it at all. This happens almost to every one in the initial stages. One should not, on that account, stop meditation and Japa. Did not the Master speak about the hereditary farmer? One should apply oneself like that and earnestly pray all the while, saying: "O Lord, we are without devotion and the spirit of worship, being entangled in the world. We are weak; we have neither

enough time nor capacity. By Thy mercy Thou must set our minds aright, so that, we can properly pray to Thee. There is none else for us except Thee. We are very weak. If Thou dost not give us the capacity, how can we pray to Thee?" My boy, pray sincerely in this way. Pray, pray, pray to Him in a mood of supplication. And weep as you pray. Then surely He will be compassionate. Don't you know how the Master used to pray to the Mother?—"One more day is gone, Mother! Even now Thou hast not appeared before me!" Saying thus, he would weep, rubbing his face on the earth. With what an intense yearning Mahaprabhu Sri Gouranga also would pray! He would weep and rub his face on the grass, saying: "O Lord, I have not yet developed a relish for Thy Name." Even like this, one has to repeat His Name with a yearning heart. His Name, my boy, is the essential thing. The heart vibrates with energy as one goes on repeating His Name. Never forget to repeat His Name and pray to Him.

Devotee: Maharaj, can we repeat His Name at all times, say, for instance, while we walk?

Mahapurushji: Certainly. There is no question of favourable or unfavourable time for repeating the

Name of the Lord. Whenever you find time, you should repeat His Name. While walking you should mentally think of His Name, as it is not possible then either to tell the beads of a rosary or count on the joints of one's fingers without being observed by others. The Lord's Name should be repeated in secret, so that none can get an inkling of what you are doing. You should, moreover, remember Him at all times. This must be cultivated into a habit. While moving to and fro, taking food, lying down, even while engaged in all kinds of activities, remember Him constantly. There should be a constant flow of mind, as it were, towards Him—an undercurrent of His remembrance. If you practice in this way for some days, you will find that even in sleep the repetition of the Holy Name goes on without your conscious effort. The remembrance of the Lord thus becomes an inward habit.

Devotee: But the mind does not want to be steady under any circumstance. For example, one may be repeating the Holy Name: the rosary is in the hand, and His Name also is being uttered by the mouth, but one finds the mind is somehow full of diverse thoughts of other kind. Even thoughts which have never before passed through the mind would come.

Mahapurushji: Yes, this fellow of a mind is the cause of all our trouble. One has to bring this mind under control. Otherwise it will drag one this way and that way. But then, you know, this very mind comes under control with sincere effort. This very wicked mind is set right in course of time, and functions as one's spiritual guide; it takes His Holy Name in the inmost heart, leads one on the path of righteousness, and gives inspiration for right activities. One has to practise repeatedly. Pray to Him in all earnestness, and discriminate between the real and the unreal. This, my boy, is not to be achieved in a day. It is for this reason the Lord has said in the Gita, "Doubtless the mind is fickle and hard to curb, O mighty Arjuna, but by constant practice and by detachment it can be controlled." Practice, constant practice, and discrimination, are required. The Lord alone is real and permanent—this idea especially has to be held steadily before the mind.

As he spoke, the mind of the Swami was gradually becoming more and more indrawn. With steadfast eyes he was seated in silence. The devotees waited for a while; then a few of them proceeded to the shrine room and the rest to the banks of the Ganges.

KNOWLEDGE

By Prof. Dr. Otto Strauss

[Dr. Strauss is a well-known Indologist of Germany. He was professor of Sanskrit in the Calcutta University before the Great War and subsequently in the University of Breslau. In this suggestive and illuminating article he briefly traces the concepts of Vidya and Avidya from the Brahmanas downwards, and expounds in original light their significance in the Advaita system of Sankaracharya where the concepts reach their fullest development.]

THE well-known European saying, 'Knowledge is power', contains an idea which has not been foreign to Ancient India 3000 years ago. We often read in the Brahmanas that a man 'who knows thus' (Ya evam veda) will attain his desires, i.e., earthly goods or heaven. What sort of knowledge is meant in these ancient texts, the atmosphere of which is ritualistic? It is well-known that they are not meant to teach the performance of the sacrifices, for they presuppose such knowledge and what they aim at is to expound the secret sense of these performances. It is a sort of science they develop, a pre-scientific science as a great scholar has termed it. Now a modern scientist is not satisfied to make a successful experiment; he wants to understand the moving forces which lead to the success, and he looks for the cause. In the same way, the ancient priests of our texts were not satisfied with the course of the sacrifice as such; they searched for the reason why it worked in this way, and they found the reason—to speak in a general way and without going into detail—either in some story of yore where the gods had used these rites successfully or in a hidden parallelism between microcosmos (i.e., the precinct of the ritual performance)

and macrocosmos (i.e., the universe). Those only who knew this underlying sense of the actual performance were deemed able to gain its fruit. This they meant when they spoke of success only of him 'who knows thus'. This knowledge (Vidya) differentiates the true priest from the mere performer of acts not rightly understood.

Here we are at the root of the great tree of wisdom which has not withered in the thousands of years of Indian spiritual history. It is the psychological tendency of the formula, 'he who knows thus, attains to what he desires'. The substance of the words 'thus' and 'desire' will change, i.e., it will deepen, but the direction, the inclination to look for causes, will remain. The knowledge praised as insight into the hidden meaning of the ritual is being sublimated in the Upanishads to a knowledge of bigger, of infinite range because the desire is extended from tangible goods and anthropomorphic heaven to the last and highest good beyond everything.

It is one of the great wonders in the spiritual history of mankind how the ancient teachers of the Upanishads climb to the height of the new view. They start from the inner interpretation of the sacrifice, the outward acts of which are being grasped

1938]

KNOWLEDGE

11

as symbols for inner experience, till the last cause is found, the Absolute which is Brahman, represented in man as his own self, Atman.

Thus the Upanishads are the pivot of India's spiritual history. They are prepared by the speculations of the Brahmanas; they grow out of them and supersede them by creating the leading ideas for all further thinking. And the formula as stated above, 'he who knows thus attains to what he desires', is now understood in the new sense. He who knows the secret identity of his own self with the Absolute attains to emancipation from all bonds in reaching the Absolute which is beyond description (neti, neti), 'from whence all speech, with the mind, turns away unable to reach it' (yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha). This is the resulting truth, the new Vidya expressed in many ways and different shades; which have been condensed in the Brahma Sutras. On these Sankaracharya has constructed his great system of Advaita in the form of a commentary in compliance with the custom of his times instead of expounding his teachings independently. Thus it came about that according to the opinion of the best modern scholars Sankaracharya often strained the Sutras but never failed to bring out the true meaning of their common basis, i.e., of the leading ideas of the Upanishads.

The Vidya which Sankaracharya, in accordance with the best Upanishads, taught as the truth of Vedanta is of a very special kind. It is not the knowledge which is required e.g., for examination, not even the knowledge of the fact that my own self is the Absolute. In short, it is not know-

ledge in the usual sense of the word but it is the inner realization of the intellectual knowledge, its direct experience (Anubhava) which, changing the whole outlook of a person, puts him in such a position that no work can soil him any more, so that rebirth and retribution are cut off for ever. It is true that such subversion of life's fabric will not be attainable but to the very few. Here we see the aristocratic tendency which is patent in Indian thought from very early times, —aristocratic not in the usual social sense but in the sense of superior gifts for grasping the last truth, acquired in many succeeding births which are filled with the right conduct, the right endeavour, the right faith in the right teacher.

Now this Vidya has its counterpart in a seemingly negative conception, Avidya. But the negation is restricted to the word-formation, the conception being as a matter of fact fully positive. Thus it is said that like the word 'Amitra' being not 'not-friend' but the foe, Avidya is not 'not-knowledge'. We may translate it by 'everyday-outlook' as regards man's psychology. This view-point of the normal individual has its natural realism, and is acknowledged as such by Sankara in opposition to Buddhistic Vijnanavada for which the outside world is nothing but a creation of our mind. Thus he introduced the conception of a relative reality of practical significance as a lower grade to the absolute reality of Brahman, in accordance with the Upanishadic expression that the world is truth and Brahman the truth of truth (Satyasya satyam). With Sankara, the normal (Vyavaharika) soul believes through Avidya in the manifoldness of the

world, in Samsara and Isvara, and does not grasp the Absolute but only its Maya, or to put it in the simplest way : Avidya looks on Maya, Vidya looks on Brahman. In putting things in this simple way, however, we have touched upon one of the knottiest points of Vedantic philosophy. The question how Brahman, the one without a second (Ekam Advitiam), can have any connection with the illusion of plurality or Maya has been a painful riddle for all who desired to think out the system to the last. Sankara himself took the very wise course to let the riddle stand, declaring the relation between Brahman and Maya as indescribable (Anirvachaniya); but in the Vedanta literature of the following centuries philosophers could not abstain from looking for an intellectual solution of this central problem, and not always did they escape the danger of taking Maya which seems to be suspended between being and not-being, in a rather realistic sense, apparently under the influence of the conception of Prakriti in the Sankhya system.

Another problem connected with the knowledge which we are discussing, is its relation to works meritorious in the traditional sense. It is the logical outcome of Sankara's conception of Vidya, that any work, ritual or ethical, cannot contribute to the attainment of the only goal. The intuition, in its truest form, must spring directly from the hearing of the sacred texts which enunciate the identity of one's Self and the Absolute. This psychological process has been at the very bottom of Indian spiritual life as is shown also by ancient Buddhism where we are told, about the noble youth Yasa, that im-

mediately after hearing the Buddha's teaching, he obtained 'the pure and spotless eye of the truth', i.e., the knowledge (Mahavagga 1, 7, 6). Such immediate understanding, however, will, as already pointed out, be the share of the gifted few only. Others need a helping hand at least by meditation; but, for the many, good works had to be admitted as preparatory for the knowledge required, or they were even considered worthy to be added to knowledge on a more or less equal footing. This direction of the doctrine called Jnana-karma-samuchchaya (addition of work and knowledge) had been taught in Vedanta already before Sankara by Bhartriprapancha, and as it is natural to human nature to take the easier step, it had to be fought energetically. Thus Sankara in the 18th Prakarana of his Upadesa-sahasri defends his position after an exhaustive Purvapaksha by referring work to the Karma-Mimamsa and taking his ground only on the Upanishadic teaching of 'neti neti'. We may also remember that his disciple Suresvara wrote the Naish-karmyasiddhi with the sole purpose of proving the realization of liberation without regard to works.

There are different ways of finding the ultimate in spiritual research. One way consisting in ethics leads from minor to greater goodness till it reaches its culmination in the absolute Good; another way comes to the Absolute through meditation or intuition. In the latter case, the Absolute is beyond good and evil, that is to say, beyond any human standard. In Advaita Vedanta, ethics is not wanting; it is required for the conduct of life as long as there is the

relation of I and thou, that is to say, on the lower plane where there is retribution and a personal God. But Vedanta does not stop here, it has the courage to look to a sphere—and the word sphere is here, of course, only a simile because human language is not able to express it adequately—to a sphere beyond quality which is reached in life-time, rarely enough indeed. People who could attain it are called Jivanmuktas (liberated while living). There are,

however, divergences of opinion in the schools about such a possibility. But whether Jivanmukti be admitted or not, Sankara is certain that with the end of life there is the possibility for the knower 'to become' Brahman or, to speak quite to the point, 'to be what was only veiled by Maya. Then when the difference of I and thou, of subject and object has vanished, how could there be, in the ultimate unity, ethical relations?

IDEALS OF HUMAN UNITY

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

[Dr. Syed belongs to the Oriental Department of the Allahabad University. The catholic ideal of human unity and brotherhood presented by him in this lucid article is the pressing need of mankind to-day, so distracted by war and persecution.]

IT is the common and well-known truths that are generally ignored and passed by, and it is the obvious, the patent and almost indisputable verity of life that is not kept in view; and so the Brotherhood of Man, although intellectually recognised by all just and thoughtful people, is yet one of those subjects that is hopelessly ignored in ordinary life. There are many people existing in this world to whom the idea of human unity has no meaning and foundation. Some of the leading men of the world, with all their culture and enlightenment, have done incalculable harm to, and brought untold suffering on, their fellow-beings by acting in a thoughtless manner and deciding the fate of the people under their charge in a way that completely disregards this deeply significant yet simple fact of our being. Religious dissensions and racial rivalries being the order of the

day, some people still doubt whether the Brotherhood of Man has any basis in reality. On the other hand there are some who believe that Brotherhood of Man is a fact in nature and in all human relations, be they social, political, economic or religious. This fact should never be lost sight of, if we wish to make steady progress and live in concord and harmony. It is necessary that such an all-important proposition should be carefully examined and its merits ascertained.

The cry, 'I am an Englishman first and Christian afterwards' or 'I am an Indian first and Hindu afterwards', is not unoften heard; but it is rare to hear man declare that he is a human being first and everything else afterwards. With all our advanced scientific ideas we are more fond of laying greater stress on the unessential fea-

tures of our lives than the essential and fundamental ones.

During the last two centuries, scientific knowledge of every description has made rapid strides, and every department of human knowledge has been thoroughly verified and systematised. Thus the finality of the verdict of science on a topic that lies within its scope, is hardly denied. It will be well if we refer this subject to it.

The physical structure of man with the exception of his outer skin, epidermis, is common to all mankind. No man has two noses or three feet or a dozen hands. Modern physiology has indisputably demonstrated that the organs of human body have common functions in all human beings, be they Africans or Indians, English or Negroes. The modern science of psychology also points to the same end and teaches that man's mind has many characteristics common to all. The three aspects of consciousness, namely, cognition, emotion and volition, are shared by all in varying degrees and according to the stage of evolution that an individual may have arrived at. All men have a tendency to think, to feel and to act. The three laws of thought of the logicians have a common bearing on all minds. The laws of development and evolution apply equally to all men, high or low, dark or white.

All human beings are subject to the same biological laws of growth, decay and death. Thus physiologically, psychologically, logically and biologically all humanity is one.

Turning to the contending schools of philosophical thought, we find that none of them have denied the solidarity of the human race. A thorough-

going agnostic, in spite of his inability to understand and explain the why and the wherefore of the material phenomena, has not so far underrated the value of social service, or disregarded the unity of man. A rationalist believes in the supremacy of reason and nothing else, and cannot, therefore, consistently disown the rational and fundamental unity of mankind. Of all the philosophical thinkers, Auguste Comte, the founder and exponent of positivist philosophy, has greatly emphasised, and even made much of, the religion of Humanity. "Humanity is our highest concept," says he, "whatever the foundation of things may be in itself, however indifferent or hostile to human progress, things may, at least up to a certain point, be compelled to enter the service of man." In England men like J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, though never his disciples in the strict sense, were greatly influenced by him.

Men like Charles Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, who declared themselves as atheists, were in no degree anti-humanitarian; on the contrary the former always held up before himself and others a very high standard of social service. Philosophically, all those who believe in Monism or in the divinity and unity of all that lives, cannot but recognise the need for cultivating friendliness (Maitrya) towards all. Brotherhood of Man has a deep spiritual basis. Its practical realisation constitutes the first and the last word on the path of spiritual enlightenment. We might go to any highly advanced man of any Faith or creed, and we shall find him tolerant, loving and saturated with sympathy and good-will for all.

Brotherliness for all is a *sine qua non* of spiritual development according to ancient and modern mystics. Says Arthur Schopenhauer, "After all, it is only phenomenally that I differ from my neighbour. In reality, each man must say to himself with reference to other things: This art Thou. Down beneath the appearance of differences which the space and time forms give, it is the same unitary will which constitutes your life and mine; and so our interests are not different but identical."

In the last century, Joseph Mazzini, the true apostle of human liberty, the terror of principalities and powers and the champion of Republicanism, figured as a most outstanding personality and did not spare himself in proclaiming the holiness of humanity and in living up to its highest ideal. He says: "The unity of the human race could only be admitted as the consequence of the unity of God. The time has come to teach men that, as humanity is a single body, we are, all of us, as members of that body, bound to work for its development, and to make its life more harmonious, active and strong. The time is come to convince ourselves that we can only rise to God through the souls of our fellow men, and that we ought to improve and purify them even when they do not ask it of us themselves. Generally speaking you cannot, even if you would, separate your life from that of humanity; you live in it, by it, and for it."

Further he says: "Free men and slaves, you are all brothers. Origin, law and goal are one for all of you. Do not say, the language which we speak is different; tears, actions, martyrdom form a common language

for all men, and one which you all understand. Do not say, humanity is too vast, and we are too weak. God does not measure powers, but intentions. Love humanity. Ask yourselves when you do an action in the sphere of your country, or your family: If what I am doing were done by all, would it advance or injure humanity? Be apostles of this faith, apostles of the brotherhood of nations, and of the unity of the human race—a principle admitted today in theory but denied in practice." How very true and inspiring are the words of this apostle of human love and freedom! The European nations do not seem to have taken these words to their hearts or else there would have been no war.

Let us turn now to the testimony of religion. As it begins by declaring the unity of God, so it ends by proclaiming the Brotherhood of Man. In fact the two truths are inseparable, the second being implicit in the first. If there be but one life, then each form it animates, must be linked indissolubly with every other form similarly animated. All forms make but one body, of which the life is God.

"As an injury done to any organ of the body injures the whole body, so is a wrong done to one member of the body of humanity done to the whole race. None may separate himself from this intimate union; none may stand apart and seek to live alone; born into the human family, we must live in it." "Brotherhood is a fact in Nature, and from it there is no escape," says the editor of the Universal Text Book of Religions. All Religions without any exception believe in the Fatherhood of God, as

the creator and source of all beings. If that be so, then the only logical conclusion that we can draw from this faith is, that all men are equal in the sight of God. As Sri Krishna says, "The same am I to all beings; there is none hateful to me, nor dear, they who worship me with devotion they are in me and I am in them." Brotherhood of Man is only a necessary corollary of the Fatherhood of God. The source and origin of mankind is one and the same, differ as much as we may in our outer form, features and temperament. We cannot, however, deny our common origin and destiny. Some people ejaculate, "Well, whatever else religions may be, most certainly they are not brotherly." And it is unhappily true that if we look into the religious history of the immediate past, we shall find therein very little brotherhood; religious wars have been the most cruel; religious persecutions have been the most merciless; crusades, inquisitions, horrors of every kind blot with blood and tears the history of religion. We generally forget that each religion speaks one letter of the great Name of God, the One without a second. God is so great, so illimitable, that no one man, however great, no one religion, however perfect, can express His infinite perfection.

The religions of the world aim at purifying the human heart and bringing it nearer God, but people in their indifference do not study their own faiths. This is why they act against them. I dare say there is no religion in the world which has preached against the brotherhood of man, and as a proof of this statement, which might perhaps be doubted by some sceptics, I take the liberty of quot-

ing from the various scriptures of the world religions.

HINDUISM

The oldest of all the religions of the world is Hinduism. All the sacred scriptures of this ancient faith contain clear and unmistakable references to the brotherhood of man. In the 6th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita we read the following striking verses :—

"He who regards impartially lovers, friends and foes, strangers neutrals, foreigners and relatives, also the righteous and the unrighteous, he excelleth."

In the Manu Smriti we read the following :—"He who befriendeth all creatures, his name is Brahmana." "He who thus seeth the self in all beings by his own self realiseth the equality of all, and attaineth to the supreme state of Brahman."

In the third chapter of Bhagavad Gita, we read the following :—"Having an eye to the welfare of the world also, thou shouldst perform action (III:20)". "I, O Conqueror of Sleep, am the self seated in the heart of all beings." There are many other such Slokas.

In Katha Upanishad (V. 10) we come across the following :—"Thus one universal Inner Self of all beings becometh one separate individual self for each form."

Again in the Isha Upanishad we read :—"He who seeth all beings in the self and the self in all beings, he hateth no more."

In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata the following verse is most significant :—"He who is the friend of all beings; he who is intent on the welfare of all with act and thought

and speech—he only knoweth religions."

In Vishnu Purana we read :—"Knowing the Supreme to be in all beings, the wise extend love to all creatures undeviatingly."

ZOROASTRIANISM

In the order of historic sequence, the next religion given to the world is Zoroastrianism. We read the following in the Patet Pashemani :—"If I have committed any sin against the law of brotherhood in relation to my father, mother, sister, brother, mate or children, in relation to my leader, my next-of-kin and acquaintances, my own townsmen and my servants, then I repent, and pray for pardon."

BUDDHISM

Buddhists, in the Dhammapada, are taught the following :—"Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us; among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred."

In the Mettasutta, 7, 8, we read :—"And let him (every one) cultivate good-will towards all the world, a boundless (friendly) mind, above, below and across, unobstructed, without hatred and without enmity."

CHRISTIANITY

"One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." (Math., XXIII, 8.)

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Act XVII, 24, 26, 29.) "We are the offspring of God." (Galatians, III, 28.)

In Colossians, iii, II, we read the following :—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for

ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians, IV, 4 : "Peace be to the brethren."

St. John, Ch. XVII, 21-23 : "That they all may be one : as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

Corinthians, VIII, ii, 12 : "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ? but when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."

John, IV, 7 ; II, 20, 21 : "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? And this commandment have we from Him : That He who loveth God loveth his brother also."

ISLAM

The Holy Koran teaches : "To your parents show kindness, and to kindred, and orphans, and the poor, and the neighbour who is a kin and the neighbour who is a stranger and the companion who is stranger and the son of the road and what your right hand possesses (slaves). As for the orphan oppress him not ; and as for the beggar, drive him not away."

The sayings of Mohammed : "No man is a true believer, unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself." "He who is not affectionate to God's creatures and to his own children, God will not be affectionate to him." "Who is

the most favoured of God? He from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures." "The best of men is he from whom good accrueth to humanity. All God's creatures are his family; and he is most beloved of God who trieth to do most good to God's creatures." "Feed the hungry and visit the sick, and free the captive if he be unjustly confined. Assist any person oppressed, whether he be Muslim or non-Muslim. God enjoins you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters and aunts. Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow-men first."

Says the Koran: "O you who believe, let not one people or nation scoff or laugh at another people or nation, perchance they may be better (in the eyes of God, i.e., possess greater potentialities of doing good), than the scoffers."

The Prophet of Islam said during his last pilgrimage, "Remember, you are all brothers. All men are equal in the eyes of God. And your homes, your lives and your properties are all sacred and in no case should you attack each other's life and property. To-day I trample under my feet all distinctions of caste, colour and nationality. All men are sons of Adam, and Adam was of dust."

The great Khalifa Omar renewed this charter in the following words: "I will make no invidious distinction between the red and the black, between Arabs and non-Arabs, and will follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet."

Again the Holy Koran says: "And do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after (you have joined the brotherhood of Islam)."

From these quotations it is abundantly clear that none of the great religions of the world ever taught anything anti-humanitarian or encouraged intolerance or persecution.

The followers of a religion and not the religion itself are to be blamed for any offence they may have committed against their brother men. At times the noble truths of religion were misunderstood and perverted and this gave rise to dissension and quarrel among the faithful.

If the common ideal of human unity is universally recognised and accepted by all the civilised nations of the world, they would try to extend a helping hand to those of their fellow-nations which are weaker, less equipped, less fortunate and more backward than their own, in the name of humanity, good-will and fellow-feeling. They would not, then, be actuated by any racial feeling, nor would they be guided by the time-worn and almost primitive consideration of the so-called national prestige, power and glory; but they would be mostly influenced by higher and more lofty ideals of human unity, and consider it a privilege rather than pride and false glory to uphold the cause of truth and justice, and stand by those peoples who are in distress or in a fallen condition.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF BHAKTI IN HINDUISM

By Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D.

[This forms the first of a series of self-contained articles by Dr. Sinha, Professor of Philosophy, Meerut College, on the Bhakti cult in India.]

THE Bhagavata religion is the religion of devotion and love. It is a monotheistic religion. It believes in one God as the Supreme Person (Purushottama). It does not look upon the ultimate reality as an impersonal Being or Brahman devoid of all qualities, but as the Supreme Person endowed with moral qualities, and with whom we hold communion. It believes in the distinction between the finite soul and God, at least for practical purposes of prayer, worship, and religious communion. It lays stress on the blissful character of God. God is pre-eminently the God of love. The finite soul can know Him and realise Him only through faith and devotion. Knowledge, concentration of mind (Yoga), penances, and moral actions are subsidiary to faith and devotion. They only purify the mind and incline it towards God. Without faith in God they are of no avail. Bhakti is the only means for the realisation of God. He reveals Himself to the devotee who offers his whole-hearted devotion to Him, and fills him with His presence.¹ God can be known only through His grace. No human attainments, physical, intellectual, moral, or spiritual, are adequate to the comprehension of God. No human achievement can compel the grace of God. Repentance for sins (Anutapa), humility of spirit (Dainya), complete self-

surrender to God (Atmanivedana), absolute resignation to God (Prapatti), looking up to Him as the only support of life (Saranagati), living for Him and Him alone (Tadarthapranasthana), and loving Him as our very own, the nearest and the dearest (Pretha), these are necessary for the realisation of God. These are the main tenets of the Bhagavata religion.

The cult of Bhakti is an indigenous growth in Hinduism. Its germs are found in the Vedic hymns. "It is impossible to read some of the soul-stirring Vedic hymns to Varuna, Savitr and Ushas, and not to feel therein the presence of true 'Bhakti,' however inadequate may have been its philosophical background."² "Varuna is mainly lauded", says Macdonell, "as upholder of physical and moral order. Varuna is gracious to the penitent. There is no hymn to Varuna, in which the prayer for forgiveness of guilt does not occur. Varuna is on a footing of friendship with his worshipper, who communes with him in his celestial abode, and sometimes sees him with the mental eye."³

The following hymns to Varuna will amply bear out the truth of the statement:

² Belvalkar and Ranade: *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pages 409.

³ *A Vedic Reader*, pp. 134-35.

¹ *Narada Sutras*, 79-80.

I

"Varuna, hear this call of mine :
be gracious unto us this day:
Longing for help I cried to thee.
Thou, O wise god, art lord of all,
thou art the king of earth and
heaven :
Hear, as thou goest in the way.
Release us from the upper bond,
untie the bond between, and
loose
The bonds below, that I may live."⁴

II

"May we be in thy keeping, O thou
leader, wide-ruling Varuna,
lord of many heroes,
O sons of Aditi, for ever faithful,
pardon us, gods, admit us to
your friendship."⁵

III

"If we, as gamblers cheat at play,
have cheated, done wrong un-
wittingly or sinned of purpose,
Cast all these sins away like loos-
ened fetters, and Varuna, let
us be thine own beloved."⁶

The cult of Bhakti or single-minded devotion to God, adumbrated in the the Vedas, clearly comes out in the later Upanishads. They unequivocally declare that Brahman is the ultimate reality (Sat), consciousness (Cit) and bliss (Ananda)⁷. It is of the nature of bliss (Rasa) which transcends pleasure and happiness. Finite creatures enjoy only particles of the infinite bliss of Brahman.⁸ Brahman is made of the quintessence of bliss. Finite creatures become happy only by partaking in the divine

bliss which is the core of their life. Bliss is the soul of life. Who would live if he were not sustained by the vitalising force of the infinite bliss of Brahman.⁹ It is Brahman which gives us life and joy. Brahman is identical with Atman. Atman is dearer than sons, dearer than wealth, dearer than all other things.¹⁰ The husband is not dear for his own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in him. The wife is not dear for her own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in her. The sons are not dear for their own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in them. Wealth is not dear for its own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in it.¹¹ Things and persons are dear, not in themselves apart from the Atman, but as imperfect expressions of the Atman which is the soul of our souls, and dearest to us all.

The word 'Bhakti' occurs for the first time in the Upanishads in the Svetasvatara Upanishad. The following texts from this Upanishad clearly bring out the cult of Bhakti propounded by it: The spiritual secret should be imparted to him only who has absolute faith (Bhakti) in God as in the Master (Guru)¹². By meditation on, and communion with, God, the ignorance of God is dispelled.¹³ The doctrine of grace is emphasised by the Svetasvatara Upanishad. Man, when favoured by God, attains freedom from death.¹⁴ God helps him in the attainment of spiri-

⁴ *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.7.

⁵ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 1.4.8

⁶ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 2.4.5.

⁷ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, vi. 23.

⁸ *Ibid*, i. 10.

⁹ *Ibid*, i. 6.

⁴ *An Account of the Vedas*, 1892, p. 76.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 76.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 85.

⁷ *Nrisimhapurvatapani Upanishad*, 1.7.

⁸ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.3.32.

tual knowledge and fruition of ascetic practices.¹⁵ Self-control and meditation depend upon the grace of God.¹⁶ The attainment of spiritual bliss also depends upon Him.¹⁷ By the grace of God, the Creator, one can see the Lord.¹⁸ The Kathopanishad and the Mundakopanishad also emphatically declare that the Atman cannot be realised by the study of the Vedas, nor by intelligence, nor by deep learning; it can be realised by him only whom it chooses or favours;

to him the Atman reveals its own nature.¹⁹ The Svetasvatara Upanishad gives us also the message of Prapatti or absolute self-surrender to God. Verily, as a seeker after liberation, I take refuge in that luminous Being only who is the illuminator of spiritual understanding.²⁰ Thus the germ of the cult of Bhakti are found in the Vedic hymns, which grow and develop in the Upanishads and blossom forth fully in the Epics and the later devotional literature.

PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL STRIVING

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present teaching the principles of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe, with Switzerland as his headquarters. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, on the basis of the book 'Spiritual Teaching of Swami Brahmananda.' We are glad to announce that instalments of these talks will be a regular feature of the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time.]

THOSE who are not spiritually minded while they live in the world, can never be spiritually minded when they retire from the world. Unless we have sown the seed of spiritual life in our soul in early life itself, there is no possibility of creating the spiritual instinct in later life.

One has to begin with one's spiritual life as early as possible, whatever the worldly-minded may say. The cleverness of all such worldly minded critics is just like that of the crow. It thinks itself very clever and worldly-wise, but it eats filth and dirt all the same. Worldly people always tell you that there is plenty of time for you to take up spiritual life. First

enjoy your youth, and then, in old age, there will be time enough to do devotional practices and lead a spiritual life. But what will happen if this advice is followed? When you grow old, you will find that the old impressions have become so deep that there is no possibility of effacing them, that you have become the slave of your impulses and instincts, and can no longer act in the way you would like to. You will find it impossible to lead a higher and purer life, either mentally or physically. Our ideal must, therefore, be to make a beginning for the attainment of liberation in this very life, and to make the best use of the time that is given us.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, i. 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, ii. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, iii. 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, iii. 20.

¹⁹ *Katha Upanishad*, ii. 23, *Mundaka Upanishad*, iii.2.3.

²⁰ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, vi. 18.

Purity is the condition of Divine grace. Without purity and real dispassion there can never be any spiritual life, or any deep spiritual striving even. 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. There are so many people in this world who do not care for spiritual life; so the very hankering for spiritual life in one, is really due to the grace of the Divine.

Some speak of destiny, others speak of self-effort, while others again 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".

In actual spiritual life we find that unless we strive our utmost and our best, the Lord's grace will not descend on us.

We must know how to divide the mind to some extent. The mind has such wonderful powers, and we can make one part of it cling to the Lord and to the Lord alone, whatever be our occupation. This in itself is a great Sadhana. 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, without allowing it to give itself to thoughts of the world, or of worldly affections and relations, even when occupied with some worldly duty.

Through constant and 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 offered to Thee. This service may be physical, intellectual or spiritual.

It is quite true that all are the Divine, but it is better to salute some of these manifestations from a safe distance. There are some forms of the Divine that you should avoid, and others again that you should not approach too closely, during the time of your Sadhana. Always be on your guard, and be wide-awake. Always watch the reactions in your mind brought about by certain people and things, and let your relations with them be guided by these reactions. Avoid everything that is apt to rouse old impressions and thoughts belonging to your former life. If you do not, you cannot attain mental purification.

BUDDHIST IDEAL OF SPIRITUALITY

By Bhikshu Jnanapriya

[Rev. Jnanapriya is a German Buddhist monk. His presentation of the Buddhist spiritual ideal, mainly as depicted by the Mahayana School, reveals the very close affinity of this phase of Buddhism to Vedanta.]

WHILE the Southern or Hinayana Buddhism regards Mahayana as a corruption of the original Buddhism or at best a false and decadent branch, the Northern School of the Mahayana considers the Hinayana in turn as incomplete—as true, no doubt, as far as it goes but not going far enough. To a very large extent Hinayana is taken up with subtle word-teaching, and consequently it is only an intellectual and 'ethico-philosophical system' teaching only self-salvation. Such a cold, lifeless philosophy or set of doctrines, they would contend, has darkened all light of intuition, Bodhi or Prajna. Whatever justification there is for this criticism, arises from the negative asceticism of Hinayana which cuts off the adherents of that school from the world, and smothered Buddha's spiritual dynamism and contagious energy with its own unimaginative pedantry.

It seems hardly justifiable to use even the word 'spirituality' in connection with the Southern School of Buddhism. At least the writer knows followers of that School who object to the use of it. For the traditional Southern Buddhism is essentially analytic, and to this extent it is somewhat materialistic and mechanical. The analogy of the nineteenth century pseudo-scientist who tried to discredit spirit by defining it as 'a gaseous vertebrate'

(Haeckel), is to the point here. The Hinayana, too, endeavours simply by analytic meditation and a bit of experimental psychology to understand moving life by breaking it into dead bits and pieces. But to the discriminating intellect, disintegrating analysis dealing with the superficial, external aspect of life, is death. Such a process of analysis operates destructively, if the synthetic, unifying and positive method of meditation is rejected with horror. To be in tune with the antiquated and exploded notions of the flat Western materialism with its senseless atheism, and to be monstrously disgusted with all spirituality and true religion, form an attitude that is fatally destructive and sterile. It is like Goethe's 'ghost of negation, the father of all hindrances.'

What then is Buddha's ideal of dynamic spirituality? He did not give a system of thought, but a way of life and practice, of mind-control and self-culture, based upon what are known as the Four Noble Truths and the Golden Path that leads unerringly to Enlightenment and perfect Self-realization inherent in every one of us. It is the definite Path of confidence, steady self-restraint, aspiration and discipline, which all the Buddhas and ancient Rishis had followed. The last, again, in its triple form, consists of Sila, Dhyana and Prajna.

The Spiritual Path, we may say, is the sublimation and transformation of our restless savage tendencies. It is thorny, precipitous and keen like the edge of a razor; nevertheless this arduous path has been trodden by men of strong determination, undaunted spirit and indomitable energy. One must have a firm resolve to realise it. When once you make up your mind to tread the path, everything becomes smooth and easy and the whole spiritual world will back you up.

In conformity with nature, the way of life and spiritual practice differs for different individuals according to their varying capacity, temperament and taste; yet the destination and goal of all is the same. It is an unfolding experience, a purifying process. It is inherent in the nature of Ultimate Reality itself called Mind-essence or Void. Thus one rises to spiritual levels beyond the limits of intellectuality and ultimately attains a blissful harmony and identity of one's life with all life: "Tat tvam asi!" Confidence and conviction are based on an actual becoming and awakening that comes by practising concentration and meditation with an ever increasing awareness. Absolute certitude can only come from a direct, intuitive self-realisation of the perfect Oneness of the totality of all beings in their essential Reality, i.e., Mind-essence or All-inclusive Consciousness. The fundamental characteristic of spiritual life is seen to lie in its unitive nature.

The basis and principal teaching of Buddha's Noble Path is that all definitive things, phenomena and ideas are subjective and unreal, being infinitely varied manifestations and

appearances of one's own mind (Cf. Dhammapada). Even the highest conceptions are wholly mind-made and 'void'. They are terms of relation, not of Reality. For a concept (even the concept of Karma or Anatta), is a form and a part of Samsara, and as such is subject to the same conditions as all other forms having no self-nature of their own. People, grasping their own shadows without discrimination, become attached to them; and clinging to dualism, they never attain tranquillity.

The sole Reality, we can conceive, is an ultimate Essence of Mind or the one undivided Existence, free from all change and all duality. Universal Mind, in its essential nature all-pervading and immaculate as a deep mountain lake, pure and unruffled, is intrinsically clear; its face is eternally unclouded by Karmic defilements. That is, it is not directly the source of things and phenomena, and is free from all individuation; it is for ever serene and eternal; yet it is working in all things to uplift and lead them to the peaceful Bliss and exalted state of Buddhahood and Nirvana, and thereby causing the process of evolution from behind the scene. Universal or Divine Mind and Nirvana are One, and this life-and-death world and Nirvana are not to be separated. Worlds and oceans evaporate in Eternity! And this world of entrancing sound and colour, of dance and vibration, is a tiny bubble in the Eternal Silence of the Infinite; it rises out of the darkness, laughs in the glimmering light, and disappears. It is like seeing phantoms coming and going, as it were, upon the surface of a mirror or like hearing an echo in the valley. When the

unenlightened mind of sentient beings, which in its inmost, essential nature is absolutely pure and clear, is stirred and defiled by the winds of delusion—Maya or relativity—the dancing of the waves and bubbles of mentation and discriminative disturbances make their appearance. Any form regarded as in itself superior to, or existing independently of, its parent Mind as 'Atta', is a menace to that mind's enlightenment. When vain ignorance and self-illusion are removed, and the mind is for ever quieted, the multiplicities of separate things disappear. The higher Mind, restored to its original brightness (Prajna), realises its identity with Noble Wisdom and purest Mind-essence, which is the seed or kernel of enlightenment.

Before one can attain Enlightenment and Buddhahood, which is the spiritual perfection of the highest order, the genuine aspirant must steadily cleanse and emancipate his mind from all discriminations of ideas, thoughts and desires. The essence of spiritual practice and soul-growth is to thoroughly purify the intuitional mind and to remove from it all illusions that hide Ultimate Truth and Reality. If this is achieved, all on a sudden the recognition of the Oneness of all things in their essential reality flashes up, and Samsara becomes Nirvana. The attainment of Buddhahood is not by dependence on words and letters, nor through transmission from outside by scriptures. It is by looking deep into one's nature, and by the manifestation of the Divine immanent in man.

To find this new point of view which is imperative for Moksha, we have to develop and use a faculty of cognition which is higher than mind and

intellect. As Bergson pointed out to the people of the West last century, the power of the discursive understanding is strictly limited and only relational. It has been evolved by life for practical purposes, but unfortunately we have at the same time darkened the light of intuition. This 'something higher' is the deeper, intuitive faculty of Prajna, Bodhi or Vidya, the highest spiritual power inherent in our own nature. This splendid pillar supports the grand edifice of the whole of Buddhism. Hard and sharp like diamond it will cut away all arbitrary conceptions and bring one to the other shore of enlightenment. When this principally spiritual faculty begins to blossom and to radiate in the bliss of Samadhi, Sunyata or the Void of things (nothing), equivalent to the One without a second, is understood; and from that understanding rises Karuna, all-embracing loving kindness and compassion in the supreme Unity of Buddhahood. Prajna, marking the crowning height of the spiritual practice and discipline, is the Ultimate Principle of unified Wisdom and Love overflowing the whole creation; it gives self-realisation through identification. "You must penetrate into your own true nature and listen in noble silence, for this nature is the Buddha Himself" (Bodhi-dharma). Infinite and indomitable strength is within! Open your eyes; your native Light shines clearly forth, and you see things 'as they really are.'

Accordingly, we must really live the true Buddha-life; for only thus can we understand the unitive life of Buddhahood and the wonderful secret of Existence embracing all things; otherwise we can have no real know-

ledge of, and confidence, in it. Reality cannot be entered into by mere bookish statements concerning it. The ingenious spirit of Buddha cannot be transmitted verbally, it must be directly and personally experienced by each one of us in his inmost soul. Never but by the daily application of it as a mental principle, by making it part of our very being, is it truly understood. It is solely the practical side that is the human side everywhere: it is earnest practice and discipline, not theory or school that counts in life; and the touchstone of living faith and philosophy is, after all, action. The Dharma must really educate and develop the whole man, his heart and hand as well as his intuitive power. Such an ideal of perfection will not at all produce lazy, dreamy souls and overwise quietists who are out of touch with life, and who shrink from life's responsibilities. The Blessed One Himself was indeed the most energetic person imaginable. His personal experience under the sacred Bodhi-tree will directly take one to the radiant peak of spiritual attainment possible for man. The veil of the finite mind will then open and the little ego will melt into nothingness, and there takes place the revelation of Truth in the great silence, the blissful peace and harmony of the Infinite.

Peace and joy have always been most considerably emphasized in India. They are the twin distinctive characteristics of true, inner spiritual life. Buddhism, without Enlightenment and Bliss, is like the glorious sun without light and heat. If the aspirant is put in tune with the All-Perfect Infinite, and the new point of

view is acquired, the tone of one's life is thereafter changed. The false ugliness of life is transformed into the real beauty of a universal harmony and peace. Many saints and humble God-men who diffuse light and joy like the self-luminous sun, have described the highest states of spirituality from their profound experiences. The mind of these true Supermen is one with the heart of Universal Life, with the 'pulsings of eternity', and death can no more overcome them. No wonder, they liked to live in the hush of the jungles and lonely mountains and by the lakeside. In close and intimate touch with Nature, the soul seems to break the limits of personality and to grow in tempered strength and sweetness. It takes wings and soars to the heights of Nirvana, blissfully peaceful with the serenity of perfect love and compassion for all.

Now let us look at the landscape before us. The trees, the hills, the sea, the golden clouds, they are our brothers with whom we are intimate as with ourselves, like the air and the mote dancing in the sun-light. Everything can teach us. Observe how the sea is approaching us! So fearless and quiet! It moves involuntarily and naturally, unconscious of movement, so purely, 'because so it must be.' Let your life flow of itself, as the sea heaves, as a flower blooms, in the unabating, simple beauty of Tao, the One illuminating all creations and working constantly and eternally in all things to raise them to higher and higher levels of life. All spiritual practice is the evolutionary urge of this principle from within, for attaining greater and greater perfection. Let us return to our 'own home,' to

the purity and simplicity of the we return. Those who know it, tell original source whence we came! it not, those who tell it, know Out of the silence we come, and to it it not.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By Louis Hector

[Mr. Louis Hector of Williams College, Massachusetts gives herein a comparative study of Buddhism and Christianity, which is very suggestive.]

THE comparison of two great religions which have existed for many centuries and have been held by millions of believers, is a peculiarly difficult task. When one compares two philosophies, he is comparing two intellectual systems. It is relatively easy to point out the points of agreement and of conflict. A philosophy, moreover, is contained in a book or a group of books written for the express purpose of describing a definite body of beliefs. Philosophies are thus so explicit and so similar in form, that they can be almost written down in parallel columns, and checked one against the other. Religions, however, are a very different sort of thing. A great religion is more than a body of teachings; it is more than a set of beliefs or a set of ritualistic practices. It is a peculiarly organic thing including a great number of individuals, many beliefs of a varying character, many organisations and rituals. It extends over many centuries and suffers a multitude of changes. It includes schisms, heresies, and many factional disputes. If one looked, for instance, at a great variety of Christians, and compared their actions and beliefs, he might be tempted to say that they had nothing in common but a name. Buddhism is also just as varied and as diversified. One is struck by the fact that St. Francis

seems much closer to Buddhism than to the Christianity of St. Augustine or of Calvin; Jacopone da Todi and St. Theresa are closer to the Chan sect than they are to St. Ambrose or St. Gregory. Santi-Deva, on the other hand, is a man of emotional fervour and spiritual struggle much closer to Augustine than to Gotama. Indeed, the most fascinating thing about the study of Buddhism is the observance of the many religious types and their similarity to the many types of Christians. In spite of this wide-spread diversity within the great religions, however, there is a unity which can be observed in each of them; there are certain fundamental characteristics which tend to remain the same among the multitude of variations. A comparison of some of these characteristics will show that there are differences between Buddhism and Christianity as well as similarities.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Christianity and Buddhism is in the authority of their doctrines. Jesus was a good Jew and believed in the old Hebrew religion. He respected the authority and the prophecy of the Old Testament figures. If he seems at times to have disobeyed the letter of the Law, it was only that he might be more loyal to the spirit of the Law. He quoted a great deal from the Old Testament to prove his points. His

own doctrines were divinely inspired because he was the Messiah. Jesus does not seem to have considered his teachings as anything more than the culmination of Judaism. God had revealed his word to Moses in the Law, and to the prophets in their inspired revelations. Jesus seems to have felt that he had at last come to fulfill the prophecies, and to bring the final message of God. His teaching was not dogmatic in the sense that it was formalistic and hide-bound by all traditions. It was essentially, however, a teaching that had to be accepted because God had ordained that this was the way one must act if he wished to gain the Kingdom of Heaven. As soon as the church began to grow, Christianity came to rest more and more on authority. In the third century, Tertullian and Cyprian made it plain that the bishops have the final authority in all doctrinal questions, and that heresy was a terrible sin. There was little appeal to argument or reason; truth was found in the Bible and its inspired interpretation by the bishops. Tertullian's 'Credo quia absurdum' is about as far from Buddhism as anything could be. When the church became a part of the Roman imperial system, this dogmatic, authoritative control over beliefs became even stronger. Councils were called to settle, once and for all, subtle theological problems. Buddhism also had its councils, but these were chiefly for the purpose of correctly setting down the teachings of Gotama by comparing the various statements handed down by memory. There was nothing in Buddhism like the nasty fight over the nature of Christ at Nicaea. The Reformation really brought small change. It simply substituted individual interpretation for

church interpretation. The Bible was still the holy book, the word of God which was undeniably true, and instead of one dogmatic interpretation there came to be many interpretations, each of which claimed to be the sole truth.

Buddhism, on the other hand, rests on reason. "Do not accept a statement on the ground that it is found in our books, nor on the supposition that 'this is acceptable', nor because it is in accord with your belief, nor because it is the saying of your teacher." This is almost unbelievable to us Westerners. Even the scientist of to-day, who is so insistent upon rationality and demonstration, does not make such an appeal to the rational faculties if one discusses the hypothetical, conventional elements of his science. Buddha felt that he had the truth, but he seems to have realised that this truth would be valueless to his disciples unless they themselves had reasoned it out. This is the glorious faith of our own Western Liberalism in its highest form—that man will recognise the truth when it is reasonably demonstrated to him, and then accept it; and that a doctrine, even if true, becomes a dogma when it is forced upon a man who does not see its rational character. It is true that Buddhism contains traditional elements. The idea of Karma, of transmigration, and of a rigidly just universe are accepted from Hinduism without question. On the basis of these beliefs, however, Gotama erected a teaching that is based on psychological observation of the springs of human suffering. It should be noted also that the Buddhist teachings retain all their validity if these doctrines are discarded. The state of Nirvana becomes a state of tranquill-

ity and peace of mind desirable in this life, even if we forget all about Karma and rebirth.

It is instructive, also, to compare Buddhist sects with Christian sects. The latter always seem to be based on various dogmas that arise from different interpretations of the Bible. The sects are conscious of the truth of their own theological tenets and the falsity of the doctrines of other sects. The Buddhist sects, particularly in China and Japan, where they exist in great number, seem to be based on a different sort of distinction. These sects emphasize the different ways of worshipping. Thus the 'Pure Land' sects emphasize Bhakti, worship or fervent adoration of Amitabha (Amito); the Chan or Zen direct mystical communion with the Buddha nature; the Tien Tai, philosophical meditation. Doubtless, each sect considers its particular method of worship slightly superior in efficacy to all the others. This does not involve, however, the black and white, true or false tendency of Christian sects. There is a great difference in thinking that your neighbour is worshipping the same thing in a slightly inferior manner, and in thinking that he is quite wrong in his beliefs. It is true that Protestantism has been tending toward the former of these concepts in recent times. Such a move as that of John D. Rockefeller Jr., to bring together the churches into a common Christian body, is one of a number of attempts to gain that freedom of intercourse and benevolence which Buddhism seems to have so successfully preserved.

There are hundreds of similarities that might be noted, and contrasts that might be drawn in this comparison. The doctrine of love, the peda-

gogical methods, mysticism, the idea of God as compared to the eternal Buddha, the limited Jewish cosmology with a *denouement* soon to arrive, as compared to the seemingly limitless Buddhist conception of the universe—all these would be fruitful subjects. In this short paper, however, I should like to consider, perhaps only suggest, a problem which is less definite than these, but to me very important. The Buddhist seems to be engaged chiefly in saving himself from the suffering of the chain of Karma. He is interested in freeing himself from the pains of existence which arise through desires and passions. The Buddhist works for peace by the annihilation of all attachment to worldly things. One even feels sometimes that the Buddhist advocates love for the calming effect it has on the lover. All this springs from Gotama's fundamental intellectualism. There is a desired state, and psychological observation tells what will produce that state. I do not mean to condemn Buddhism. This calm passivity and this love, so unattached to objects as to be almost unearthly, are tremendously inspiring. In Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity, however, there is an added emotional element. Santi-Deva and St. Paul have a tremendous desire, an almost physical hunger, for grace and religious experiences. In the Mahayana, moreover, one finds the idea of storing up merit for others, of saving the world. There is a sense of activity here. It is like Christ driving the money-changers from the temple. In Christianity one finds statements such as St. Theresa made about her mystical visions. "This is the end of that spiritual union, that there may be born of its works, works." In some

Christians, like St. John, love itself and the mystical union with Christ are the great goods. But I have never found a Christian with the complete calm of Buddha. We Westerners, who have felt the force of Goethe's thought, sometimes, are a little suspicious of this calm without any struggle or desire, of this complete at-homeness in the universe. We have a few phrases such as 'the peace of God that passeth understanding',

but most Christianity has a strong dynamic element. The beauty and final moral nature of Gotama, however, allay the suspicions of those who study him. It is not for us to pass judgment on the value of these elements. It would seem to me, however, that for most of us, who are neither Faust nor Gotama, each has a validity and an uplifting message which can help us in the conduct of our lives.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

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

SUTRAS 13 TO 15.

अन्यथा पातित्यशङ्कया ॥ १३ ॥

अन्यथा otherwise पातित्यशङ्कया as there is risk of a fall.

13. As otherwise there is risk¹ of a fall.

Notes. 1. *Risk of a fall*—The case that is being considered is that of a man whose realisation has become well established. Therefore, there can be no risk for him. He can never have a fall. Realisation once gained and fully established can never be lost. Nor need he be afraid of becoming vicious or wicked in life; for all his propensities for wickedness and vice have vanished with his ego and selfishness, before his realisation. In fact, it is the conduct of a realised man that sets the standard of Dharma. The realised man is, however, more anxious about the risk of a fall for others who are likely to imitate him and follow in his footsteps. He will,

therefore, be very scrupulous in setting an example to others, lest they should have a fall. His one consideration will be the welfare of others.

लोकोऽपि तावदेव भोजनादिव्यापारस्त्वा-
शरीरधारणत्वमि ॥ १४ ॥

लोकः social customs अपि also तावदेव in like manner, to that extent only भोजनादिव्यापारः तु activities such as taking food, etc., आशरीरधारणत्वमि to the extent necessary for keeping up the health of the body till it falls off in its natural course (भवतु) let there be.

14. Social¹ customs and practices also may be followed in like manner to² that extent only. But activities like taking³ food may be continued to the extent necessary for preservation⁴ of the health of the body

until⁵ it falls off in its natural course.

Notes. 1. *Social customs*—Ways of life that are not specifically enjoined by the Scripture, such as particular ways of dressing, rules of etiquette, etc. These are merely social and conventional. The realised man may also do such other actions which may not be sanctioned by the strict letter of the law, but which may be considered by him, on the basis of his realisation, to be more in accordance with the spirit of its teachings. It is these latter actions which generally bring about change in the Scriptural injunctions in course of time. Again, particular and novel situations and circumstances may necessitate a novel application of the truths of the Scriptures. Only the realised man can show how departure from the current practice can be made, without any disrespect for the Scripture.

2. *To that extent only*—To the extent that is necessary for saving the world from pitfalls, for escaping from undue notice from the public, and for not wounding the feelings of society.

3. *Taking food, etc.*—Includes such activities as sleeping, physical exercise, etc., which are all unavoidable for a person who is alive.

4. *Preservation of health*—One cannot serve others without a healthy mind in a healthy body. A realised man considers his own body and mind as not belonging to himself but to the society that brought them into being and nourished them till his realisation, and as such takes care of them as a trustee for society, though he does not care for them for his own sake. He can never be negligent and careless about them, as he has no ego

of his own, which may lead him to such carelessness.

SUTRA 15

Narada has already given us a fairly detailed account of his conception of Bhakti or spiritual realisation in the first fourteen Sutas. He has pointed out how all functions of the mind co-operate with one another in that state, and are harmonised and integrated into the unity of spiritual experience. He now proceeds to give us a few descriptions of Bhakti as given by some writers who have preceded him, and to show how his own view is more complete than that of any of his predecessors. In the fifteenth Sutra he explains the possibility of describing this ineffable experience, as well as the inevitability of differences in view, the moment one tries to bring it down to the level of thought.

तद्वक्षणानि वाच्यन्ते नानामतभेदात् ॥ २७ ॥

तद्वक्षणानि Its characteristics मतभेदात् on account of differences in view points नाना variously वाच्यन्ते have been described.

15. The characteristics¹ of Bhakti have been described² variously³ on account of differences in view points.

Notes. 1. *Characteristics*—Spiritual experience is, as we have seen, indescribable. Still some sort of description cannot be avoided, at least for the benefit of the future generations. All such descriptions must inevitably fall short of the actual truth; they can at best be only close approximations to the reality. What can actually be observed and described are only the external marks which con-

stitute the expression of the subjective experience.

2. *Have been described*—Description is an intellectual process, and the quality and perfection of the description must, therefore, depend upon intellectual powers such as capacity for scientific observation and analysis, powers of expression, the theological and temperamental prejudices of the observer, the needs and capacities of the audience, the requirements of time and locality etc.

3. *Variously*—No two minds are constituted exactly alike, and as such there is plenty of room for differences and variety in the descriptions of the same experience. Thus those who are predominantly intellectual in outlook must necessarily give an intellectual colouring, those with an emotional bent are bound to describe in terms of emotion, and those of a dynamic temperament must view it from an ethical standpoint. In fact, it is only such characteristics of the realised man as are appealing to one's mind, that can find a place in the description.

Thus in Bhagavatam III: 25, 32 and 33, Maitreya says that Bhakti consists in the mind naturally settling upon the Highest Truth, the root of all existence as well as of the senses; and in III:29, 11 and 12 Kapila describes it as uninterrupted thought flowing towards God seated in the hearts of all creatures, like the flow of waters of the Ganges towards the sea. In the Vishnu Purana we find Prahlada praying that the love which the undiscriminating have for the objects of the senses, be turned into Bhakti by being directed towards God. In the Devi Bhagavatam we read, "As oil poured from one vessel to another

falls in an unbroken stream, so when the mind in an unbroken stream thinks about the Lord, we have what is called supreme Love." The Narada Pancharatra describes it, in one place, as service or worship of the Lord of Indriyas through the Indriyas without being clouded by Upadhis and purified by being directed towards Him; and in another place the same author describes it as unintermittent stream of thought based on the love of God without attachment for anything else. Sri Sankaracharya describes it in the Vivekachudamani as constant thought on the real nature of one's own Self, and says in the Shivanandalahari, that we have Bhakti when the thoughts approach the feet of the Lord and sticks to them permanently, as the seed approaches Ankola tree, an iron needle the magnet, a virtuous wife her husband, or a creeper a tree. Sri Ramanujacharya in Sri Bhashya I: 1, 1, identifies Bhakti with loving meditation. Sri Madhva in his Mahabharata Tatparyanirnaya describes it as an unshakable love, surpassing all others, resulting from the knowledge of the greatness of God. Sandilya in his Bhakti Mimamsa describes Bhakti as supreme love of God, and Swapneswara in commenting on the Sutra says that this love results from the realisation of the greatness of the Lord. Madhusudana Saraswati, in Bhaktirasayana I:3 & I:1 describes it as an unintermittent flow of thought towards God whose form is indelibly impressed upon the heart which has melted in love. In the Bhaktirasamritasindhu, Rupa Goswami describes it as constant enjoyment of God unobstructed by desires for anything else and unclouded by

Jnana or Karma. Jayatirtha speaks of Bhakti as an incessant flow of love preceded by the knowledge that God is possessed of unequalled, unsurpassed, infinite auspicious qualities—a love which exceeds one's love to oneself, one's relations and belongings, which is not retarded or shaken by a thousand troubles and difficulties. Alavandar *alias* Yamunacharya, Ramanujacharya's predecessor and Guru,

speaks of the vision of God as Para Bhakti; union with Him as Para Jnana, and fear of separation from Him is Parama Bhakti. Manavala Mahamuni in his Dravidopanishad-sangati speaks of Bhakti as the direction towards God, of that love which the undiscriminating have for the objects of the senses. Some more views are described by Narada himself in the next three Sutras.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India : By C. V. Narayana Ayyar, M.A., L.T. Published by the University of Madras. Pp. 483.

The present book is the result of researches conducted by the author under the auspices of the Madras University. Beginning with the Vedic origin of Saivism, it deals with the early history of the cult in South India up to the first half of the eighth century A.D.

The origin of the Saiva cult has been a matter of much speculation. The question whether Siva was an Aryan or a Dravidian deity, though of no significance to his votaries, has been made a subject of controversy by those who are interested in raking up sordid racial and communal feelings. Fortunately Mr. C. V. Narayana Ayyar has pursued his studies in the interests of pure scholarship and historical accuracy with an unbiased mind, unobsessed by the controversial atmosphere. The wealth of quotations from the original sources which he has displayed in tracing the history of the cult leaves little doubt as to the fact that Rudra-Siva was already a Vedic Deity at the dawn of history. The question whether Vedic Aryans had assimilated this cult from the original inhabitants of India has not been discussed.

Mr. Narayana Ayyar has refuted the belief held by earlier historians that Rudra was exclusively a malevolent deity, and has shown that he was also a benevolent deity even from the Rig-Vedic times, and that one or other of these aspects have been alternately emphasised through the

chequered history of the cult. In the Brahmanas his terrible aspect is more prominent, while in the Upanishads he is the God of Gods as well as the Impersonal Brahman. Some amount of opposition existed between the followers of the Saiva cult and the votaries of the sacrificial cult of the Vedas. It is quite possible that while the Aryans were in dread of him and propitiated him, he might have been a benevolent deity to the aborigines who considered him as their own deity. As Siva was gradually assimilated into the Vedic pantheon, he might have appeared benevolent even to those who at first stood in fear of him. This may explain the fact that the word 'Siva' appears to have been applied to Rudra only much later, *viz.*, in the Upanishads. The Vedic Aryans' dislike of 'Sisna deva', coupled with the fact that Siva, unlike other Vedic deities, could be worshipped by all castes, seems to point to the probability that Siva might have been a Non-Aryan deity, though the names Rudra, Siva, etc., might have been given by the Aryans. The book under review does not, however, draw this conclusion.

By the time of the Svetasvatara Upanishad, Siva had been raised to the position of the highest Godhead, and had attained great popularity. In the Mahabharata period Saivism and Vaishnavism had taken deep root with their own separate votaries. At the same time there were also many who believed that Siva and Vishnu were the different names of the same supreme Being. Definite theologies

began to develop round these deities, and other Gods were given a subordinate place in each pantheon. Sectarianism was growing up, and intolerance had begun to appear. Attempts were also made at theological harmony and synthesis. The Linga worship was assimilated into the Vedic Cult, and Saiva initiation also came into vogue. The doctrine of Ahimsa and vegetarianism were emphasised by the Saivas, and these gradually influenced Brahmanism to the detriment of the sacrificial cult. But as he became a prominent God in the Brahmanical cult, Saiva was made not only the advocate of the sacrifices but was conceived as the chief of the sacrificers. The significance of the Daksha Yaga has been shown to be the triumph of austerities over the cult of sacrifices. Saivism had reached the southernmost corners of India towards the end of the Vedic period.

Discussing the origin of Siva Linga, Mr. Narayana Ayyar rejects the idea that it is a phallic symbol and accepts the explanation of the Linga Purana that the Linga represents the absence of the characteristic marks of the Supreme Being. As an interpretation of a symbol from a philosophical point of view, this position is quite all right. But to-day religious symbols have to be studied also from the broad perspective of anthropology and comparative religion, and it is then that the opposite view becomes significant. But a reconciliation between the devotional and the anthropological views is not an impossibility.

By the time of the Sangam literature, the Vedic religion and mythology had already become the possession of the Aryanised southerners, though their number was not large. There is no mention of Siva in Tolkappiyam and Narrinai, but by the time of Silappadikaram and Manimekalai a pretty large number were Saivas, and Saiva temples had come into existence. The cult at that time (200 A.D.) was free from sectarianism. A big chapter is devoted to the narration of the life-histories of the Nayanars, minor as well as major. In this we find the heights of devotion and asceticism to which the Saiva devotees had risen, as also the bigotry and fanaticism unavoidable in devotional cults. An abundance of miracles and a wealth of

divine grace as the reward for self-effacing and one-pointed devotion, form the theme that runs through the life of the Nayanars.

The earliest Agama literature in Tamil on Saivism is the Thirumandiram of Tirumular. A whole chapter of the book under review deals with this exposition of the theology of the Saiva cult in all its aspects. "What Tirumular did was to render into Tamil the Saiva doctrines as they were found in the Sanskrit Saiva Agamas which were current both in Northern and Southern India for several centuries past. His work became the foundation upon which the later structure of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy was built." Tirumular lived about the 6th century A.D. According to Tirumandiram the Vedas and the Agamas were both revealed by the Lord. "Vedantam is Suddha Saiva-siddhantam". Those Siddhantins devoid of the knowledge of Vedanta are the common folk." Like Vedanta, Tirumandiram considers Jnana as the immediate means for Moksha. "Becoming Siva is Vedanta Siddhanta Pasu which is the *Tvam-pada* of the Vedanta is said to be the *Puti* when it casts off the *Pasu* which lies beyond *nadantam*. The *Tatpada*, which is the final knowledge of *Bodhantam*, uniting with the *Pati*, is Siva-Sayujya."

The next great period in the history of South Indian Saivism is covered by the lives of the great Tevaram hymnners and Samayacharyas as Sambandar, Appar, Manikkavachakar and Sundaramurti to each of whom a separate chapter is given. Their personal histories and works, the contemporary state of the Saiva cult as attested by their hymns and the nature of the faith that they preached, are all dealt with in great detail. This period was marked by sectarianism and quarrels with Jainism and Buddhism whose followers were finally absorbed into the Saiva cult. The book traces the history of Saivism to the times of Sundaramurti Nayanar.

It is difficult to estimate the value of the author's observations and conclusions on a variety of questions dealt with in the course of the narration. The sources of the book are confined to the recognised sacred literature and a few other contemporary works. The book contains a good index. We wish the long discussions of

dates, etc., had been relegated to appendices. That would have prevented the break of continuity in the narrative in several places, and brought out the general features of each period more prominently. As a first attempt at a continuous history of Saivism in South India the book is a valuable addition to historical literature.

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The Srihara Bhashya Volumes I & II :
Edited by C. Hayavadana Rao. Published by the Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore City. Pp. Vol. I, 888 ; Vol. II, 567. Price, for both volumes together Rs. 15 ; separately Rs. 8 each.

In these two volumes of formidable size, the world is for the first time seeing a printed edition of the Sanskrit commentary of Sripatipanditacharya on the Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana. The first volume, the bigger of the two, contains an Introduction in English—perhaps, the biggest Introduction that has ever been written for any book, extending, as it does, over full 888 pages. The second volume is devoted exclusively to the Sanskrit text and appendices.

All readers of Indian religious literature know full well that it has been the tradition in India for every religious sect to produce a commentary of its own on Badarayana's Vedanta Sutras. It only testifies to the authoritative character of these Sutras that even Virasaivism, which began by discarding the Vedic tradition, ended by producing a commentary on these Sutras embodying the Vedic philosophy. For Sripatipanditacharya, who lived about 1400 A.D., has attempted in this work to establish that the Vedantic aphorisms of Badarayana yield only a meaning that is in agreement with the fundamental tenets of Virasaivism.

From the theological point of view the chief aim of the commentary is to show that the Parabrahman spoken of in the Sutras is Siva. Philosophically the view advocated has been described as Dvaita-Advaita, which means a point of view that occupies a position midway between the pluralism of Madhwa and the monism of Sankara. This position is only a branch of the well-known trend in Indian philosophic thought generally known as Bheda-bheda or identity in difference. Sripati contends that his position alone can syn-

thesise the Sruti texts proclaiming the identity of the Jiva and Brahman as the ultimate metaphysical truth, with others which emphasise the difference between the two.

The statement of the relation between Jiva and Brahman is the crucial point in all Vedantic system. Sripati's position in this respect may thus be stated briefly : During the period of bondage Brahman and Jiva exist separately in the relationship of the worshipper and the worshipped, their existence as different entities being absolutely true. In the state of liberation, however, they exist in the relationship of a river towards the sea into which it has winded its way. The Jiva is naturally released of its Jiva state, and attains to that all-pervading, undivided and supreme Akasha form, bears the characteristics of Sat, Chit and Ananda, and acquires all the unrivalled, all-knowing qualities of Parabrahman.

A position like this will no doubt satisfy neither the pluralists nor the monists. But if both these extremists lay aside their bias as philosophical theorists, and view this position as pure spiritual aspirants, they will find that they get in it all that they want for building up their spiritual life. All who are striving for liberation are in bondage, and the very striving presupposes a sense of duality. There is no use of one who is thus a struggler proudly proclaiming his identity with the Supreme. So, too, what does it matter for the dualist if the soul becomes one with God in liberation? His separation from God, in the state of bondage, is admitted, and that is enough for him to cultivate love of God and to serve one's fellow-beings—the two disciplines that are in themselves capable of taking man to his highest spiritual destiny.

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Altar-Stairs : *By Rao Sakib Dr. V. Ramakrishna Rao, M.A., L.T., Ph.D. Published by Liberty Press, Madras. Pp. 434. Price Re. 1-8 or sh. 2-6.*

This is a collection of essays written by the author from time to time for various Indian periodicals, especially for 'The Indian Messenger', the Organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta. The sixty essays comprising the book deal mainly with topics of religious interest,

although towards the end there a few dealing with literary subjects. In the case of a book of this kind, containing disconnected articles that do not presume to develop any single topic, it is difficult to give even a cursory account of the subject matter. In general they may be described as dealing with spiritual Theism—its doctrine, discipline and development, i.e., with the religion and philosophy of the Brahmo Samaj. Dr. Rao, who has himself drawn his spiritual nourishment from the Brahmo Samaj, has transmitted into these writings the spirit of that sublime monotheism preached by Ram Mohan and Keshub, and has, thereby, enlivened his thoughtful presentation of moral and theological problems, with the touch of sincere devotion and deep ethical fervour. The English style too, though somewhat antiquated, has much of literary charm about it.

No-Man's-Land: *Five articles reprinted from the Aryan Path, February-June 1937. Published by the Theosophy Company, 51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India. Pp. 91. Price As. 8. Post free.*

The rather vague title of this beautiful little book indicates perhaps the non-sectarian character of its teachings. But one feels, somehow, whether it would not have been more appropriate to call that universal substratum of truth, forming the basis of all religions, by the name 'Every-man's land' than by the one adopted here namely 'No-man's land.'

It is pointed out how religions become superstition by stigmatising the tendency to question its dogma as sinful, and how in opposition to this stands science, with the spirit of inquiry into all the phenomena of nature and of man. "When both the superstition of religion and the materialism of science become an intolerable pack-saddle on the back of mankind, the insubordination which began at the top ferments in the mass, and a kind of mental and moral yeastiness affects the whole body-politic of humanity. Delusions of every kind afflict the multitude and its leaders. Those who remain sober and attentive to the preservation of the good, the destruction of the evils in our civilization—begin to search anew the scriptures of nature and of man, to question in every direction, concerning

themselves not so much with the messenger as with the Message he may bring. Such an epoch is the present." This universal message or the one Wisdom Religion is to be found not in the teachings of priests, historians and interpreters, but of Incarnations and Demi-Gods. The book attempts to give a rational explanation of such conceptions and formulates the fundamental principles of a spiritual view of life. Though at times vague and elusive, it provides very interesting and instructive reading. Many may find in these ideas the intellectual scaffolding necessary for building their spiritual life.

The Rig Veda As a Land-nama-book: *By Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1, London.*

In the Rig Veda the Five Aryan kindreds are spoken of as immigrants; they have come from another place across the waters, and have settled and tilled the lands on the hither shore. This process of land-taking has generally been interpreted as referring to an historical immigration of an Aryan speaking people who, fair in colour and sharply distinguished from the dusky pagan Dasyus, crossed the Saraswati in the Punjab and made their home in Bharatavarsha. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami contends that this is a euphemistic interpretation of a traditional literature which is, strictly speaking, devoid of any historical content whatever. It is a metaphysical formulation in accordance with a logical order of thought. With the help of his vast scholarship Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami proves the tenability of this view by analysing the meaning and content of certain constantly recurring and characteristic terms in the Rig Veda like Arya, Panchajana, Sarasvati, Setu, etc.

The Ocean of Theosophy: *By William Q. Judge. Published by the Theosophy Company, 51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India. (Second Indian Edition). Pp. 153. Price, Paper Rs. 1; Cloth, Rs. 2.*

This is a very valuable hand-book on the principles of Theosophical movement by one of its pioneers. The exposition is simple and lucid, and does not seem to demand on the part of the reader any previ-

ous acquaintance with the teachings of Theosophy. It can, therefore, be safely recommended as one of the best books for one to begin the study of Theosophy.

It is not possible here to go into any consideration of the subject matter of the book. Like all authoritative works on Theosophy, it is an attempt at synthesising the knowledge that man has gained through science, philosophy and religion. It is not to be wondered at, if a scientist, a philosopher or a religionist finds in such attempts many things that are mere assumptions, bizarre speculations and useless pieces of information that have nothing to do with the building of character and the culture of the spirit. But if men of those three classes would for a time cast aside the peculiar bent of mind derived from an exclusive pursuit of their respective subjects, and attune themselves to the universal aspirations of humanity, they will find in the highly speculative and often mysterious theories of this book, an attempt to give man some definite and systematic information about the invisible forces that govern the evolution of the cosmos and the personality of man. That there is a place for such an enquiry cannot be denied by any one accepting a trans-physical significance for life, and it may also be legitimate for people, up to a certain point, to seek for information on such subjects. But one must always be aware of the dangers lurking behind such a pursuit, namely, that of dissipating one's intellectual life in a maze of credulity and idle curiosity on the one hand, and on the other of being side-tracked from attempts to build character, to purify the mind and cultivate true longing for God. Generally works on Theosophy are such that they more than justify this apprehension. But the book under review is, however, much more balanced in its trend and tone, and many may find in the information contained therein a basis helpful for pursuing higher spiritual life.

Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky: *Compiled by Mary K. Neff. Published by Rider & Co., 34, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pp. 323. Price sh. 18.*

The compiler of this work is to be congratulated for the very successful way in

which she has been able to produce what is virtually an autobiography of the celebrated founder of the Theosophical Movement, nearly forty-five years after her death. For, but for connecting links and critical remarks here and there, the larger portion of this book consists of extracts from the letters, conversations, etc., of Madam Blavatsky, together with confirmatory evidence of the events referred to in them from the writings and utterances of contemporaries of Blavatsky and the chief associates in her life and work. Besides utilising materials already published, the compiler has incorporated a very large body of hitherto unpublished materials from the archives of the Theosophical Society. The book has, therefore, the appearance of a full-dressed autobiography and one can follow in it the life of Madam Blavatsky in her own words almost from year to year. One gets also details of her life prior to the formation of the Theosophical society. Besides being an admirable production from the literary point of view, the work will be of much interest to occultists too. The book also contains twelve excellent illustrations.

The Life and Teachings of Zoroaster: *By Dewan Bahadur T. Bhujanga Rao. To be had of the Manager, Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavangudi, Bangalore. Pp. 32. Price As. 4.*

This is a very lucid presentation of Zoroastrianism in all its aspects. The Hindu reader will find it specially useful because it brings out the affinity between the religion of ancient Iran and Hinduism represented in the Vedas.

An Eight-Hundred Year Old Book of Indian Medicine and Formulas: *By Elizabeth Sharpe. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1, London. Pp. 135.*

This book is described as a translation from a very old manuscript in a peculiar form of Hindi, supposed to have been written by a pupil of the great Jain priest Hemchandra. It gives a very large number of recipes for the cure of many forms of diseases. Of course no one can vouch for their actual medicinal value.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Swami Avinashananda's Cultural Mission to Fiji

Swami Avinashanandaji of the Ramakrishna Mission, who left India for Fiji on a cultural mission towards the end of April 1937, came back to India in March, landing at Colombo on the 22nd February.

During his seven and a half months' stay in Fiji, the Swami visited every village and settlement there and came into intimate contact with all sections of Indian community. He had to do this work mostly during nights, as it was the season for cutting and pressing sugar cane, and people were, therefore, busy with this work during day time. After a thorough study of the conditions of the people, the Swami made representations to the Government of Fiji for the educational and social amelioration of the people, especially for removing the difficulty felt by South Indians due to the absence of any facility for the teaching of South Indian languages in the educational system of the Island. The Government seem to have attached much importance to his representation as seen from the following extracts from the speeches of His Excellency the Governor of Fiji in the Legislative Council of the Colony:

"Swami Avinashananda of the Ramakrishna Mission is at present in the colony studying social conditions. He has made proposals for the social betterment of Indians, which include education. It is now intended that in selected areas, where Indian communities whose mother tongue is a language other than Hindi are prepared to establish schools in which their children can be taught from the early stages of their education in the mother tongue, Government will encourage and assist them in their endeavours. In this connection the Government is now considering the proposals for the establishment of a cultural centre for South Indians at Nadi, where it is expected that teachers competent to teach South Indian languages may be trained for the future. Both the Director of Education and I are in sympathy with these aspirations, and have undertaken to give practical effect to this sympathy at an early date."

Besides this, in October last the Swami started and organised a Students' Home for both paying and poor residents. More than 100 children are at present in it. He reorganised the South Indian Sangham, at whose invitation he had gone over to Fiji, and got for it a legal status by obtaining for it a special license from the Governor. He formulated a well-regulated plan for the educational advancement of the South Indian community, and collected a substantial portion of the funds required for putting it into operation.

The Swami also tried to bring together the different sections of Indians, who are unfortunately much divided among themselves. One definite suggestion of his for this purpose, that has been put into practice, is to institute a celebration called Bharata Mata Day on the last Sunday in the January of every year. Fijians who are the natives of the Island, are also invited to co-operate. Besides, he has arranged that, on the English New Year's day of the 1st of January, the South Indian Sangam would invite the Fijians for a special celebration, in which a special dance of the Fijians would be arranged.

The Swami feels the need of a regular army of self-sacrificing Indians going over to the Island for the cultural amelioration of the people there. Especially there is urgent need for cultured teachers in Tamil and Telugu, imbued with high ideals.

On his voyages both to and from Fiji the Swami visited New Zealand and Australia. On his return he stayed in Australia for three weeks. On both occasions he gave parlour talks to a large number of people interested in Indian culture.

Swami Viswananda's Departure to U. S. A.

Swami Viswananda, President of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay, has been deputed by the authorities of the Mission to take charge of the Vedanta Centre at Chicago. The Swami sailed from Bombay on Thursday, 31st March, by an Italian mail steamer. The Swami was a popular figure in Bombay for about a decade and a half.

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To bid farewell to the Swami a meeting of the residents of Khar and the friends and admirers of the Swami was held at Khar in the compound of Laxminagar Pavilion under the Chairmanship of the Hon. Mr. B. G. Kher, Prime Minister of Bombay. On the occasion, distinguished citizens such as Messrs. K. Natarajan, J. K. Mehta, F. J. Ginwala, Seth Mawji Govindji and Prof. V. G. Rao spoke about the philanthropic and selfless work of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad, and paid tribute to the scholarship and personal qualities of the Swami.

The *Bombay Chronicle* editorially comments as follows:

"The Ramakrishna Mission has established a world-wide reputation for service of suffering humanity without distinction of race or creed and for the dissemination of the ideals of universal brotherhood and the harmony of the basic truths of all religions. The catholicity of the outlook as well as activities of the mission was well illustrated by the spontaneous farewell reception held in honour of Swami Viswananda, head of the Bombay branch of the Mission, last week on the eve of his departure to the United States of America to carry on the work of the Mission in that country. Not only Hindus, but a host of Parsi, Muslim, Jew and European friends of the Swami also joined in giving him a hearty send-off and wishing him every success in his mission. From very humble beginning the Khar Ashram has developed into an influential centre of beneficent activities. A large portion of the credit of this success is undoubtedly due to Swami Viswananda. We have no doubt that he will prove a cultural ambassador of this country...."

To wish 'bon voyage' to Swami Viswananda his friends and admirers held another function at Cama Institute on Tuesday evening. Madame Sophia Wadia who presided over the function emphasised the mission which India has to fulfill in bringing together all races, classes and creeds, and men and women of various conditions together. "She suggested an exchange of cultural ambassadors between the countries of the East and the West—ambassadors free from political interest, religious prejudices and material or business considerations, and exempli-

fying the religious tolerance that was the characteristic of the Indians." Mr. F. J. Ginwala, Prof. Bhagawat and Seth Mawji Govindji also addressed the gathering in warm words, expressing their regret to miss the Swami from their midst and wishing him all success on his mission abroad on behalf of the motherland. The Swami gave a message of cheer to all, and specially welcomed all the Europeans, and felt extremely glad at the presence of the Italian Consul.

The children of Khar also gave a farewell entertainment to the Swami on Saturday evening with a drama.

In an interview given to the representative of the *Bombay Chronicle* the Swami made himself clear about his mission thus:

Q. How long do you propose to remain in America and what is the object of your visit?

A. "I will have to stay in the United States of America at least for three years. The Ramakrishna Mission has got a number of centres, and I am being deputed to take up the charge of one centre. The primary object is to live the spiritual life there, and to demonstrate the necessity of introspection and contemplation in the midst of the hustle of American life."

Q. Will you be visiting any of the European countries? Are there any Sannyasin members of the Ramakrishna Mission in Europe? Where are they working and since when?

A. I shall visit Italy, France and England. There are three Swamis of our Mission, working at Geneva, Paris and London. The centres at Geneva and London were started in 1934, Paris in 1937.

Q. Where will be your headquarters in the United States?

A. Chicago.

Q. How many centres of the Ramakrishna Mission are there in the U.S.A., and how many Sannyasins of your Order are working there?

A. There are twelve centres and ten Sannyasins.

Q. What is the object of the activities of the Mission in America? Do you think India has got to teach to Americans, and conversely do you think Indians have anything to learn from the West, especially, America?

A. The Mission does not believe in proselytising. The Swamis of our Mission constantly emphasise the fundamental unity of religions and the glory of true religion. The object is to uplift men and women to higher planes of consciousness. Yes, India can teach America the values of spirituality and learn from America industry and commerce and the power of organisation.

Q. Are the American people imbibing the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda? What is appealing to them most in these teachings?

A. The American people are imbibing their teaching. It is the universality and catholicity of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings which are appealing to them most.

Q. Among what classes of Americans has the response been the greatest?

A. It is amongst the cultured men and women. The thinking section of the American nation do feel the need of contemplative life. One American friend told me: Much of our activity is insanity.

Q. Is there any antipathy among the orthodox Christians of America against the so-called invasion of America by Hindu Swamis—especially Swamis of your Mission?

A. There is apathy. The orthodox and bigoted section in every religion vehemently oppose the intrusion of new ideas. But in spite of their opposition the Vedantic ideas are forging ahead. Recently one American gentleman wrote in the Social Reformer—"Many American minds are fed on Upanishadic thought to-day."

Q. Do you think that the attitude of the Americans towards Indians has anyway improved as a result of the activities of Ramakrishna Mission since the visit of Swami Vivekananda to that country?

A. The phenomenal success of Swami Vivekananda has turned the attention of savants and thinkers of America towards the hoary culture of India. The attitude of the Americans has certainly changed.

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Sri Ramakrishna Temple at the Belur Math

The Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur, Howrah, sends the following appeal for publication:

The magnificent temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math, the dedication

ceremony of which in January last was witnessed by fifty thousand people, is fast nearing completion. In less than a couple of months the whole edifice will be finished—a standing monument of the love and sacrifice of two American ladies for the glorious ideal of the harmony of all religions preached and practised by Sri Ramakrishna. It is a fulfilment of one of the cherished dreams of Swami Vivekananda.

In point of beauty and sublimity, the Temple is a unique piece of architecture in the whole of Northern India. Already numerous visitors including many Western and Eastern notables have showered their praises on it for its fine proportion and harmonious blend of some of the architectural features of the East and West, ancient as well as modern. The stone-facing of the entire Garbhamandir or main shrine and a large part of the Natmandir or prayer-hall, contributes to the durability of the structure. In fact, it was more with a view to ensuring this than anything else that the Math authorities changed their previous plan of having it built entirely in brick. This, however, has forced them to exceed their original estimate by nearly fifty per cent.

To make up the deficit, an appeal was made to the sympathetic public for funds to supplement the handsome donation of the two American friends. But the response so far has been meagre. We still urgently need a lakh of rupees to meet the debt already incurred as well as to finish the remaining constructions which are vitally connected with the Temple and cannot be put off.

In this exigency we earnestly appeal once more to the discriminating judgment of our generous countrymen. We wish humbly to draw their kind attention to the fact that Sri Ramakrishna to-day is a world-figure, and in view of the immense possibilities for religious unification of the world that Ramakrishna Temple at Belur possesses, is it too much to expect that the comparatively small sum of rupees one lakh will be subscribed by the devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna within a very short time? Let it not be said in criticism that India does not know how to honour her greatest modern Prophet.

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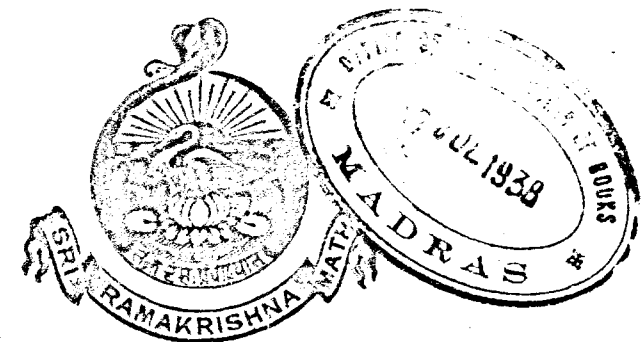
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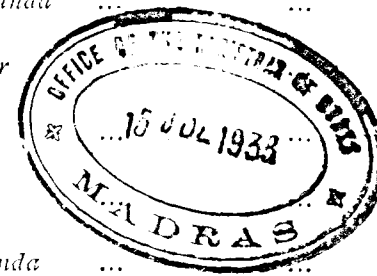
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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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HINDU ETHICS

उपपन्नं हि यत् प्राज्ञो निस्तरेनेतरो जनः । दूरतो गुणदोषौ हि प्राज्ञः सर्वत्र पश्यति ॥
संशयात्तु सकामात्मा चलचित्तोऽल्पचेतनः । अप्राज्ञो न तरत्येनं यो ह्यास्ते न स गच्छति ॥
अप्राज्ञो हि महादोषं मुह्यमानो न गच्छति । कामग्रहगृहीतस्य ज्ञानमध्यस्य न प्लवः ॥
तस्मादुन्मज्जनस्यार्थं प्रयतेत विचक्षणः । एतदुन्मज्जनं तस्य यद्यं ब्राह्मणो भवेत् ॥
संस्कृतस्य हि दान्तस्य नियतस्य यत्तात्मनः । प्राज्ञस्यानन्तरा सिद्धिरिह लोके परत्र च ॥
सतां धर्मेण वर्तेत क्रियां शिष्टवदाचरेत् । असरोधेन लोकस्य वृत्तिं लिप्सेदगर्हिताम् ॥
दानमध्ययनं यज्ञस्तपो ह्यीराजं वं दमः । एतैर्विवर्धते तेजः पाप्मानं चापकर्षति ॥

It is perfectly intelligible why a wise man gets over difficulties and not one without wisdom. The wise man discerns everywhere right and wrong from a distance. How can the fickle, insensible, unintelligent one full of hankerings do so, harassed as he is by doubts and uncertainties? He who sits never travels. Without a barge the deluded person cannot traverse the vastness of evil. And even knowledge is no barge for one possessed by the evil spirit of lusts. So the discerning person should seek a barge. What is the barge that will save him from sinking? — To be a Brahmana. Being refined, self-controlled, regulated, serene and wise, he will accomplish his ends here and hereafter. He should live by following the path of the good and do his work as becomes an educated man. He should earn his living by respectable methods without exploiting others. By charity, study, sacrifice, concentration, modesty, straightforwardness and self-mastery his prowess will be enhanced and sins effaced.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 241.

MAN AND HIS DESTINY

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Man and his Destiny' is the first of this series.]

I

A GREAT poet once said that man is the greatest study for man. In another age and in another clime, a wise man and a representative of a great culture asked a prominent thinker of another country what the object of his study was, and received the reply that it was Nature. Thereupon the former is said to have exclaimed, "How can you know Nature without knowing man?"

In our own times it was the recognition of the same principle that found expression in a great scientist's description of this branch of study as 'the science of the future'. The meaning of this significant expression is this: the study of dead Nature as undertaken by physics and chemistry has perhaps come to its peak of achievement; but the study of living Nature as revealed in plants, animals and especially man is yet in its infancy. It is the work of the future to develop it, and just as the progress of man in the past few centuries depended on the study of external Nature, the next great strides in his progress can come only from the study of his own nature.

But even in the study of man, the modern mind has not, however, been able to get rid of the peculiar bent it has received by its pre-occupation with external Nature. Its tendency is to describe the higher as nothing but

a development of the lower, and to look upon the reduction of the higher into the lower as the highest object of research. Consequently the modern mind has given a startling answer to the question, What is man? The answer consists in that, physically, he is only a member of an unusually gifted branch of the simian family, collateral with those of anthropoid apes, and that mentally, he is nothing more than a bundle of primitive instincts common to all the higher animals. Not only that, even the specifically biological and mental functions of his as well as of all other creatures are to be reduced ultimately into functions of material atoms. Thus brute matter or unconscious and purposeless Nature, whatever that entity might be, is the only reality in the ultimate sense.

Up to a certain stage such a view of man, based upon a faith in the sufficiency of the reductive process, yields satisfactory results. But the limits of its usefulness are passed when we go beyond the purely physical and vital nature of man, and confront the emergence of higher qualities in him as given in the pure aesthetic sense, or moral impulse, or the mystical intuition. Reducing these aspects of mind into animality, materiality and conventionality does not satisfy the plain man, however much it may be necessary in the interests of scientific orthodoxy. Evidently we feel here the

need for a new method in the study of man.

In religion we find this new outlook required for understanding the higher nature of man. In all religions there is the tradition that man was originally a perfect being, that his present state is a state of degeneration, and that the goal of life is to regain that original condition of pristine purity. Such a theory of human nature is absolutely necessary if we are to understand the simultaneous presence of the higher and the lower, the divine and the animal in man, as well as for justifying our faith in the ultimate possibilities of human nature even in a social sense. For if man is nothing but an animal, we need not expect of him anything more sublime than what we find in the animal world. Thus in the last resort, the religious view of man becomes necessary not only as a support for a theory of salvation in a spiritual sense, but even as a sanction for any expectation we may entertain of a human society based on a higher sense of justice and altruism.

II

There have been two types of views offered by religions as an explanation of the present degraded state of man. One type, represented by Christianity, attributes it to sin, while the other, represented by Hinduism, attributes it to ignorance (Avidya). Both explanations ultimately mean the same thing, the difference being only in the point of view they take of man. For the conception of sin implies that the degradation of man is due to a perversion of the will, while the concept of ignorance traces it to a defect in the cognitive faculty. The first

takes an ethical view of the problem of life, and the second a metaphysical view of it.

With the metaphysical bent of mind characteristic of the Hindu, Sri Ramakrishna interprets the fall of man as a forgetfulness of his real nature. Says the Master: A lioness gave birth to a cub while attacking a flock of sheep, and died immediately after. Growing amidst the flock, this cub forgot its leonine nature and cultivated sheep-consciousness. Thus it bleated like the sheep, and grazed like one of them. One day another lion from the forest attacked the flock again. It was, however, surprised at the sight of the sheep-lion. It caught hold of the latter and tried to convince it that it was a lion and not a sheep, but it would not be convinced. So it dragged the sheep-lion to a well, and showed it the image of them both in water, and made it taste blood. This quickened its latent instincts, and it began to roar like a lion, and thenceforth roamed in the forest as the king of the beasts. The same is the case with man. In his real nature he is akin to the Divinity or identical with Him, but ignorance makes him think otherwise.

Ignorance has not only hidden his real nature from him, but added unto him various appendages (Upadhis) resulting in material changes in his behaviour. When a man dresses like a fop, wearing the fine black-bordered muslin, 'the love songs of Nidhu Babu' naturally come to his mouth. A pair of English boots inflates even a languid man with vanity, and makes him whistle immediately, and if he has to ascend a flight of stairs, he leaps up from one step to another like a Sahib. Such is man under the influence of

ignorance. Not only does he forget his real nature, but his behaviour gets positively transformed. In place of being a god in thought and deed, he behaves like a human being, nay, even like an animal.

III

We may consider for a while whether it is possible to reconcile this view of man as a divine descent, with the scientific view of him as an animal ascent. The principles of Vedanta fully justify a reconciliation. Vedanta admits evolution in matter; what it denies is evolution in Spirit. By its creative will Spirit manifests itself as the external universe. What is called evolution is the urge lodged within all manifested phenomena to go back to their pristine state as the Spirit. By the working of this urge we get different levels of evolution in the external universe. Each successive step in it is derived from the previous stage of the causal chain, but nevertheless they reveal altogether new qualities unaccountable by their antecedent conditions because of the increasing manifestation of the Spirit. Thus in matter the Spirit or the Divinity is unconscious, and its only expression there is as blind and mechanical force. At the pure biological level, as in lower organisms, it manifests itself as rudimentary vitality, which we call life pure and simple. Going still higher in the scale of evolution, we find the Spirit manifesting as consciousness in the animal, as self-consciousness in man, and as super-consciousness in the saint. In super-consciousness it finally realises its pristine purity as the Spirit. These various levels of evolution more or less correspond to what the Vedanta describes

as the five sheaths or vestments of the Spirit—Annamaya Kosha (material vestment), Pranamaya Kosha (vital or biological vestment), Manomaya Kosha (mental vestment), Vijnanamaya Kosha (intelligence vestment), and Anandamaya Kosha (vestment of pure bliss).

Now the scheme of evolution seems to be such that until the Spirit realises its true nature in the highest Samadhi, the evolving ego carries with it the essential contribution of the previous stage of evolution while at the same time revealing qualities unaccountable by it. Thus life, evolving from brute matter, reveals a new quality, but has its basis still in materiality. Consciousness is something more than life, but it emerges only in a highly organised combination of living cells, the body. So too self-consciousness, with its attendant functions of rationality, ethical sense, etc., comes into being only in the sense-bound mind of man, so strangely full of animality side by side with the higher emergent qualities peculiar to his level of evolution. In the same way super-consciousness manifests in the self-conscious human intelligence, no doubt only when it has largely been purged of its animality coming up from lower levels of evolution, by the influence of the higher qualities that are special to humanity.

Here we find the meeting ground between the scientific view of man and the religious view of him. Man's body and mind no doubt constitute an ascent from animality, and no one need therefore feel annoyed with the scientist if he shows in them the clear imprint of their previous stages of evolution. But man is at the same time a descent of the Divinity, in so

far as he is a stage in the Spirit's self-revelation, in so far as he manifests qualities totally disconnected with animality, and in so far as he has in him the immediate possibility of the full expression of the Spirit in Super-consciousness. Truly is man the offspring of Father Heaven and Mother Earth.

IV

In the state of ignorance man is not aware of his Divine affinity. This, however, is no reason for him to deny the Divine in Him. We see stars in the sky at night, but not when the sun rises. Can we therefore say that there are no stars in the sky during the day? So too it is not right for man to deny the existence of the Divine, because he does not perceive Him in the days of his ignorance.

The goal of human life is to break this spell of ignorance and realise the Divinity. And so to deny that Divinity, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is to make life completely meaningless and ununderstandable. Ciphers placed after a numerical figure get the value of hundreds and thousands, but they become valueless if you wipe off that figure. The same is the case with life. The denial of its basic Divinity, which is also its Divine goal, makes it as valueless as an imposing line of zeros.

But man ordinarily does not keep in view this highest truth of life, which is also the highest good attainable by him. In this respect he is like mice that come to danger, being enticed by the flavour of fried rice. At the doors of large granaries, the merchants place traps containing fried rice. The mice, attracted by the flavour of the fried rice, forget the rice in the gra-

nary and fall into the trap. In the same way man stands on the threshold of Divine bliss, which is like millions of worldly pleasures solidified into one; but instead of striving for that bliss, he allows himself to be enticed by the petty pleasures of the world and loses the Highest.

While the majority of men thus live practically disregarding the Divinity in them, it is not however a necessary law that they should be thus diverted from the highest goal. For man is born with two tendencies—Vidya or the tendency to pursue the path of liberation, and Avidya, the leaning towards worldliness and bondage. At birth, both these tendencies are, as it were, in equilibrium like the two scales of a balance. The world soon places its enjoyments and pleasures on one scale, and the Spirit, its attractions on the other. If the mind chooses the world, the scale of Avidya becomes heavy and man gravitates towards the earth; but if it chooses the Spirit, the scale of Vidya becomes heavier and pulls him towards God.

V

According to the dominance of these two tendencies, men may be divided into three classes—the Baddha or the bound, the Mumukshu or the struggler for liberation, Mukta or the emancipated, and the Nityamukta or the ever-free. The following analogy brings out the distinction between them: A fisherman threw his net in the river and had a large haul. Some fish jumped away even when the net was cast; some lay calm and motionless in the net, without exerting in the least to get out; others jumped but could not extricate themselves; still others somehow managed to force a

way out. The first type represents the ever-perfect, or those who manifest spiritual wisdom from their very infancy and never get entangled in the world. The Master compares them also to the fledgling of the fabled bird Homa. The Homa bird, which always soars in the sky, lays its eggs while on its wings. The eggs drop from such tremendous heights that before they reach the earth they hatch and the fledglings take to their wings. The ever-free are like these birds and the fish referred to; they go back to the Divinity even before they get entangled in the world. The second type of fish, namely, those that make no effort to escape, represent the bound souls who remain satisfied with the false security offered by the world. The strugglers for liberation are like the third, and the emancipated like the fourth type of fish.

From another point of view the Master classifies men into three groups with the help of the following striking analogy: There are three dolls—the first made of salt, the second of cloth, and the third of stone. If these be immersed in water, the first will become dissolved and lose its form, the second will absorb a large quantity of water but retain its form, while the third will be impervious to water. The first doll represents the man who merges his self in the universal and all-pervading Self and becomes one with It; he is the liberated man. The second represents the Bhakta or the true lover of God who is full of Divine bliss and knowledge. And the third represents the pure worldling who will not admit even a particle of true knowledge into his heart.

Men are thus of diverse natures and of different levels of spiritual deve-

lopment. But even in the most corrupt, there is the ultimate Divine background and possibility. None of these differences brought about by the evolution of the physical and mental vestments of man can destroy this Divine heritage. For men are from this point of view like pillow cases. The colour of one may be red, that of another blue, and that of a third black; but all contain the same cotton within. So it is with man: one is beautiful, another is black, a third holy, and a fourth wicked, but the Divine Being dwells within them all. This does not, however, mean that in our dealings with men we should not ordinarily make any distinction between the good and the wicked, the holy and the worldly-minded. The Deity Narayana (God), no doubt, broods over the element water, but every kind of water is not on that account fit for drinking. One kind of water may be used for washing our feet, another for ablutions, a third for drinking, while there are still others unfit even to be touched. So with men. But no one on this account is to be despised. Even those who are unfit to be associated with owing to the extreme degeneracy of their character, are to be saluted from a distance; for the Divinity dwells in them too.

VI

No one, however, is eternally debarred from the realisation of the indwelling Divinity, in spite of all the sharp differences of character we notice among men. No one, says the Master, has to go without food for the whole day. Some get their food at 9 a.m., some at noon, others at 2 p.m., and others again in the evening or at

sunset. Similarly, sometime or other, in this very life or after many more lives, all will, and must, realise the Divinity.

This succession of births and deaths with all the limited joys and sorrows attending it, is what befalls a man who neglects his Divine possibilities and pursues worldly enjoyments. The chain of re-births is broken only when man realises the Divine. When an unbaked pot is broken, the potter can use the mud to make a new one; but when a baked one is broken, he cannot do the same any longer. So when a person dies in a state of ignorance, he is born again. But when he becomes well-baked in the fire of true knowledge and dies a perfect man, he is not born again. A grain of boiled paddy does not sprout again when sown. Only unboiled paddy sprouts. Similarly if a man dies after becoming a 'Siddha' (lit. boiled), a perfect man, he has not to be born again; but an 'Asiddha' (lit. unboiled), an imperfect man, has to be born again and again until he becomes a Siddha.

Man's re-birth is determined by what he has been thinking about just before death. But no one can have thoughts of God at the last moment, if he does not sincerely cultivate them all through life with the help of devotional practices. For if a person is worldly-minded, only worldly-thoughts will occur to him at the last moment. There is not much use in merely visiting places of pilgrimage bathing in the holy Ganges, and counting beads; if there be worldly attachments in the heart, they are sure to manifest themselves at the dying moment. A parrot may ordinarily sing the holy name of Radha-Krishna, but when it is attacked by a

cat, it cries out 'ka', 'ka'—its natural cry. Hence constant and sincere devotional practices are necessary. If, by these, one's mind is freed from all worldly ideas, then the thought of God fills the mind in their place, and will not leave it even at the time of death.

Man's attempt in this direction will succeed only in proportion to the strength of his dissatisfaction with worldly life, the yearning he feels for God and the one-pointed zeal he has for Divine realisation. But men are like little children wholly absorbed in the dolls and playthings of worldly life. Being taken up with them, they have forgotten their Divine Mother, and the Mother does not go to them until they remember Her and cry for Her in utter distraction of the soul. The Divine, says the Master, is what a magnet is to iron. Why does He then not attract man? As iron thickly imbedded in mud is not moved by the attraction of the magnet, so the soul thickly imbedded in ignorance does not feel the attraction of the Divine. But when the mud is washed away with water, the iron is free to move. So when, by constant tears of prayer and repentance, the soul washes away the mud of ignorance that compels it to stick to the earth, it feels the attraction of the Divine.

In addition to this thirst for the Divine, man must be prepared to risk anything for Him and strive with patience and persistence for any length of time. Says the Master: There are pearls in the deep sea, but a person must hazard all perils to get them. If he fails to get them by a single dive, he should not conclude that the sea is without them. Let him dive again and again, and he is

sure to be rewarded in the end. In him not lose heart. Let him persevere the quest for the Divine, if the aspirant's first attempt proves fruitless, let him not lose heart. Let him persevere in the attempt, and He is sure to realise Him at last.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also 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. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

THE Holy Mother was talking with me in the morning.

Mother: While living at Kamar pukur after the passing away of the Master I said to myself one day when I was alone, "I have no son; there is no one for me; what will happen to me?" Then the Master appeared before me and said, "Why are you worried? You want a son. I have given you all these jewels of sons. In course of time you will hear many, many people addressing you as 'Mother'."

While I was going to Brindavan in the train, I saw the Master look at me through the window of the carriage. He said, "You have my golden amulet with you. See that you do not lose it." The amulet was in my hand. I used to worship it. Later on I gave it to Belur Math and they worship it there every day.

Disciple: Once that amulet was lost on the day of the Master's birthday anniversary. It was thrown into the Ganges together with the flowers and the *bael* leaves. They were careless about it. Then one day at ebb-

tide, while Rishi, the son of Ram Baboo, was playing on the bed of the Ganges, he found it and brought it back to the monastery.

Mother: It is his amulet. One should be careful of it.

The conversation then turned to the Belur Math.

Mother: Before the Belur Math was built I used to have a vision that there was a house, as it were, on the other side of the Ganges on the very site where later they built Belur monastery and where the plantain grove is now, and that the Master lived in that house. After the ground for the Math was purchased, Naren took me there one day and we walked along the boundary line to look at the land. He said to me, "Mother! this is your own place. You may walk here at will."

I went to see the monastery at Bodhgaya. The monastery was filled with various articles, and the monks had no lack of money. They were very happy there. After seeing this I used to weep before the Master and pray "O Lord, my children have no

place whereon to lay their heads. They do not get anything to eat. They trudge from door to door for a morsel of food. Would they had a place like that." Then the Belur Math was established through the grace of the Master.

One day Naren came to me and said, "Mother, I just now offered an oblation of one-hundred-and-eight *bael* leaves to Sri Ramakrishna that we may have some land for the monastery. I am sure this action will not be in vain. The monastery will surely be built some day or other."

After supper I went upstairs to get betel leaf and heard the Holy Mother saying, "Naren once said to me, 'Mother, for some days everything has been vanishing from before me. Really I find everything is disappearing.' I said to him, 'But see to it, my child, that you do not drive me away.' Naren said in reply, 'Mother, where would I be if I drove you away? The knowledge that destroys the lotus feet of the Guru is verily ignorance. Where does knowledge stay if the lotus feet of the Guru vanish?'" The Mother continued, "God and such things really disappear at the dawn of knowledge. The aspirant then realises that the Mother alone pervades the entire universe. All then becomes one. That is the simple truth...."

The Holy Mother was sorting *bael* leaves for the daily worship when I showed her one of the photographs of her that had been printed recently. I asked if it was a good likeness of her.

Mother: Yes, this is a good picture but I was stouter before it was

taken. Jogin (Swami Yogananda) was very ill at that time. I became emaciated worrying about him. I was very unhappy then. I would weep when Jogin's illness took a turn for the worse and I would feel happy when he felt better. Mrs. Sarah Bull took this photograph. At first I would not agree to it; but she insisted and said, "Mother, I shall take this picture to America and worship it." At last the picture was taken.

Disciple: Mother, that photograph of Sri Ramakrishna which you have with you is a very good one. One feels it when one sees the picture. Well, is that a good likeness of the Master?

Mother: Yes, that picture is very, very good. It originally belonged to a Brahmin. Several prints were made of his first photograph. The Brahmin took one of them. The picture was at first very dark, just like the image of Kali. Therefore it was given to the Brahmin. When he left Dakshineswar for some place I do not remember, he left it with me. I kept the photograph with the pictures of other Gods and Goddesses and worshipped it. At that time I lived on the ground floor of the Naha-bat¹. One day the Master came there and at the sight of the picture he said, "Hello, what is all this?" Lakshmididi and I had been cooking under the staircase. Then I saw the Master take in his hand the *bael* leaves and flowers kept there for worship, and offer them to the photograph. He worshipped the picture. This is the same picture. That Brahmin never returned; so the picture remained with me.

¹One of the two concert rooms in the Temple Garden of Dakshineswar.

Disciple : Mother, did you ever see the face of the Master to be pale at the time of his Samadhi ?

Mother : Why, I don't remember to have seen it so. On the other hand I have always seen a smile on his face in his ecstatic mood.

Disciple : It is possible to have a smile during the state of lower Samadhi ; but regarding the photograph of his sitting posture, the Master said that it was a picture of a very high exalted state. Is it possible to have a smile in that state ?

Mother : But I have seen him smile in all states of Samadhi.

Disciple : Of what complexion was he ?

Mother : His complexion was like the colour of gold, like that of *harital* (yellow orpiment). His complexion blended with the colour of the golden amulet which he wore on his arm. When I used to rub him with oil I could clearly see a lustre coming out of his entire body. Once one of the sons-in-law of the proprietress came to the Temple Garden of Dakshineswar. He had a very fair complexion. The Master said to me, "We shall walk side by side in the Panchavati. Please note which one is fairer." They did so and I noticed that he was one shade fairer than the Master.

When he would come out of his room in the Temple Garden, people used to stand in line and say to one another, "Ah, there he goes!" He was fairly stout. Mathur Babu gave him a low stool to sit on. It was a rather wide stool, but it was not quite big enough to hold him comfortably when he would squat on it to take his meals. People would look at him wonder-struck when he went with slow,

steady steps to the Ganges to take his bath.

When he was at Kamarpukur, men and women looked at him with mouths agape whenever he chanced to come out of the house. One day as he went out for a walk in the direction of the river, the women who had gone there to fetch water looked at him agape and said, "There the Master goes." Sri Ramakrishna said to Hriday, "Well, Hridu, please put a veil on my head at once or I shall throw away my cloth immediately." "No, uncle," said Hriday, "don't go naked here. What will people say?" The Master said that because he knew the women would run away if they saw him without clothes. Hriday quickly covered Sri Ramakrishna's face with his shawl.

I never saw him sad. He was joyous in the company of all, were it a boy five years old or a man of ripe old age. I never saw him morose, my child. Ah, what happy days those were! At Kamarpukur he would get up early in the morning and say to me, "To-day I shall eat this particular green, please cook it for me." With the other women of the family I would accordingly arrange his meal. After a few days he said, "What has come over me? No sooner do I get up from sleep than I say, 'What shall I eat, what shall I eat?' Then he said to me, 'I have no desire for any particular food. I shall eat whatever you will cook for me.'"

He used to go to Kamarpukur to get relief from severe diarrhoea from which he suffered at Dakshineswar. He used to say "Goodness, my belly is filled only with filth. There is no end to it." Suffering thus, he developed a kind of hatred for the body

and thereafter he did not pay much heed to it.

One day at Kamarpukur, he was going home from the river. There had been a shower. A catfish jumping out of the lake struck his foot. Addressing the fish as he gently pushed it back to the lake with his foot, he said, "Run away, run away ; if Hriday sees you, he will kill you right away!" When he got home, he said to Hriday, "Hridu, I saw such a big catfish jumping out of the lake into the road. It was yellow. I released it back into the lake." "Oh uncle," said Hriday, "what have you done! Why did you let such a big fish go? If only you had brought it home we could have enjoyed a nice soup."

Nowadays you see so many devotees everywhere. There is so much excitement and noise. During the illness of the Master one of the devotees ran away in order to avoid giving twenty rupees. The expenses for the treatment of the Master during his illness had been raised by subscription, and this devotee had been asked to contribute that sum. It is not at all difficult to serve the Master now. The food is offered to the Master but it is really eaten by the devotees. If you make the Master sit, he will sit. If you make him lie down, he will stay in that position. After all, he is now a picture.

The Master saw (in a vision) Balaram Babu² with a turban on his head and his hands folded standing by the image of Kali. After that Balaram always remained with folded hands before the Master. He never saluted the Master by touching his feet. The

²One of the foremost lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, designated by him as one of his five store-suppliers.

Master understood his thought and said to him one day, "O Balaram, my foot is aching ; kindly massage it gently." Immediately Balaram sent for Naren or Rakhal or one of the boys who attended the Master and asked him to massage the Master's feet.

Disciple : Once I asked Swami Brahmananda about Sri Ramakrishna's complexion. He said, "The Master's complexion was like ours."

Mother : Yes, he looked like that when Rakhal and other disciples met him. At that time he had lost his former good health and complexion. Look at me and see my complexion and health. Did I use to look like this? I was very pretty. I was not stout but later on I became so. When I lived at Dakshineswar I would never come out. The manager of the Temple Garden used to say, "Yes, we have heard that she lives here, but we have never seen her."

At that time I would see the Master perhaps once in two months. I used to console my mind by saying, "Oh mind, are you so lucky that you could see him every day?" I used to stand behind the lattice work of the porch and hear him sing as he improvised the lines of the music. It was standing there so long that gave me rheumatism in my feet. He used to say to me, "The wild bird that is kept day and night in a cage becomes rheumatic. Go to the village now and then for a walk." I used to take my bath at four o'clock in the morning. Then in the sunny afternoon I would sit on the steps and dry my hair. At that time I had a luxuriant growth of hair. I lived in the small room of the Nahabat. It was filled with various articles and for want of

space I had to keep many things hanging in a sling from the ceiling. Still I never complained of my discomfort. I really did not know any.

At that time there was much religious music and ecstasy too. Even Gauridasi³ used to go into an ecstatic mood frequently. She used to say continuously, "Where is Nitayagopal?"⁴ and I would answer, "Who knows where your Nitayagopal is? Perhaps you will find him in an ecstatic mood somewhere on the bank of the Ganges."

It was the time of worship. The Mother made herself ready to go into the Shrine Room. I came downstairs. After the worship was over I went

upstairs again to bring the Prasad⁵ for the devotees. As I took the leaves containing the sweets and fruits, suddenly my elbow touched Holy Mother's feet. "Ah," said the Mother, and saluted me with folded hands. "That's nothing," said I. But she was not satisfied with merely bowing down before me and said, "Come, my child, let me kiss you." She touched my chin with her hand and kissed me and so became pacified. Thus she used to respect her disciples as the manifestation of God, and at the same time show her affection to them as a mother does to her own children.

THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS—WHAT ARE THEY?

By Swami Satswarupananda

[Swami Satswarupananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. In the following article he contends that the Brahma Sutras of Badarayana do not aim at building a system of philosophy, but only at explaining certain obscure Shruti passages that admit of different interpretations and at reconciling some apparently different views of the Upanishads on certain minor topics. The fundamental and explicit doctrines of the Upanishads like the attributelessness of Brahman and the unity of Brahman and Jiva, which their author Badarayana thought indisputable by any student of the Upanishads, are beyond the scope of their discussion. On the basis of this theory the Swami shows the fallacy of those who consider a commentator like Sankara as being unfaithful to the Sutras but true to the Upanishads. The views he expresses herein are well-reasoned and deserve the attention of all students of Vedanta.]

I

HARDLY do we find a philosopher of note who has not been differently interpreted by his successors. Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and many others have suffered the same fate. The question of merits

and defects does not come in here; it is something inevitable, something that is in the very constitution of human intellect.

These different interpretations are due both to subjective and to objective causes. Men are born with cer-

³One of the women disciples of the Master.

⁴A young man very much devoted to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master used to

speak highly of his exalted spiritual state.

⁵Fruits and sweets offered to the Deity at the time of worship.

tain tendencies, which education and environment enhance and do not change. They learn what they love to learn and shun what their nature impels them to shun. Likes and dislikes, born of tendencies of past births, are the real deciding factors in our education. Others are a bagatelle.

Moreover facts cannot be learnt as they are in themselves, each fact being intimately connected with the whole world of them. What we can learn is but their selections, and in the act of selection we distort them and set values which either magnify or belittle them. We can remove our spectacles but not the pair of eyes, for they ensure vision. We can remove to a certain extent the prejudices that we have deliberately acquired but we are well advised not to interfere with the processes of selection and generalisation, for they constitute learning. Every act of learning presupposes one or both of them.

Then again there is the difficulty of language. Thinkers think and mystics see visions; but they have to translate them into understandable language if they want to share them with others. And this transformation of thoughts and visions into languages is as important to mankind as it is difficult. Visions are simple and their language, too, is similar; thoughts are comparatively complex and language too is necessarily so. But when they are meant for the general public, their complexity increases ten times.

Generations of philosophers and logicians and grammarians have tried their hands in coining words and phrases and framing rules for the proper construction of sentences with

the only aim of making language a true vehicle of thought. A fine (?) sample of such a laudable work we find in the terrible language of our Navyanyaya¹. Even then it is as unsuccessful as ever. Thoughts cannot be fully transformed into languages; they must lose something, which is not always unessential.

Difficult as it is to understand another's language, the difficulty increases hundredfold when it is put in the form of aphorisms without verbs or nominatives or both, and leaving wide gulfs in the train of reasoning to be supplied by readers and commentators. In fact aphorisms are hints and suggestions to both memory and reason. These collections of aphorisms have been written with widely different ends in view—some trying to give a complete philosophy, some enjoining social and other duties, and some others explaining the knotty Vedic passages, although the ultimate aim of almost all of them is to lead men gradually to perfection. The collections of aphorisms known as Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa are of the last kind, the former explaining and synthesising the rituals of the Vedas and the latter, their methods of meditation and philosophy. The primary aim of these two collections of aphorisms is to remove all misunderstandings of the Sruti by presenting a true explanation of all the doubtful Vedic passages that have given rise to many heterogeneous

¹Some of the Western psychologists are also approaching the highly technical terminology of the Navya-nyaya type. *Vide*, for example, John Wisdom's *Problems of Mind and Matter*.

opinions in social and religious matters.

This they have done by referring to the Vedas themselves as well as by means of reason, but logic has all along been allowed to play the part of a second fiddle only. The Brāhma-Sūtras or the Uttara Mimamsa has adduced reasons not only to support its own explanations but to refute other systems of thought that claimed their descent from the Vedas or stood as rivals to them. But all these are but by-products, though to modern students of philosophy they are more valuable than the explanations themselves.

The zeal to expunge unnecessary words has gone so far that we are left to guess, from a word or two of a Sūtra or even from an indirect hint, which particular passage is being referred to by it. The passages sought to be explained in particular Sūtras or sets of Sūtras and the passages referred to as supporting the Sūtrakara's own explanations are to be guessed. The Adhikaranas or the topics of discussion, Sūtras forming objections and conclusions, and even whether certain words form one Sūtra or more, are still undecided. The Advaitins,² no doubt, have made a comprehensive study of these and have solved the problems to their own satisfaction; but others would not accept them for the simple reason that such acceptance leads to the sure Advaitic conclusion. So, even to this day, it is extremely difficult to read the mind of the Sūtrakara (the author of the Sūtras) from the Sūtras only.

There is difficulty in accepting the fact that Sankara got the knowledge

²Others also have done it, as for example Venkatanātha's *Adhikaranasāvalī*.

from a man of realization who had got it from the direct line of disciples; for, the same claim has been made by all the founders of sects and all the commentators. What then is left to us is to refer the Sūtras back to the Upanishads, whose passages they seek to interpret and synthesize. But then there is already an opinion that Sankara is more faithful to the Upanishads than to the Sūtras, implying thereby that Badarayana's is not the true interpretation of the Upanishads. But this is held not by the followers of Sankara but by his critics.

Such an opinion, which is extremely dangerous for all honest researches, is not, however, held by all. They alone have a semblance of right, subject of course to all the limitations mentioned above, to study whether Sankara has truly interpreted Badarayana and the Upanishads or not. The verdict, however, can never be final, depending as it is ultimately on the mode of thinking of individual readers and critics.

II

We have stated that the primary aim of Badarayana was to explain some obscure Śruti passages that had, or would have, admitted of various interpretations by bringing out their real implications, as well as to reconcile some apparently different views stated in different Upanishads about some minor topics. To systematise Vedānta was not his chief aim, though he went a great way towards it. This was reserved for the commentators.

This view needs elucidation. Here the "Śruti passages" means the passages of the Upanishads. Now the

Upanishads treat of Brahman in two different aspects *viz.*, Saguna and Nirguna aspects. The Saguna Śrutis (or those Upanishadic passages which attribute certain specified qualities to Brahman) are meant for Upasana or meditation. These Upasanas are numerous and complicated—complications being enhanced by the fact that all the attributes that are to be thought of or meditated upon in one particular Upasana are not generally given in one place. They are to be collected from different Upanishads with great care and attention so that the qualities of similar Upasanas may not get muddled up. So whenever there is a danger of such mixing up, Badarayana as the true interpreter of Vedānta is bound to clear them up; and he has done so. But he is not bound to restate all the qualities of all the Upasanas, even of those which are explicit in the Upanishads themselves. That would have served no useful purpose. Interpretations are not meant for driving the original texts out of the market, but for creating greater taste for them. This being so, we shall see Badarayana always throwing light on the obscure passages only, leaving the clear ones untouched.

As with the Upasanas, so with a large number of terms. The same terms have been used by different schools of philosophy, almost all claiming their descent from the same source, *viz.*, the Upanishads. They have been used in widely different meanings, some (*e.g.*, "Prakṛiti") having been transformed beyond recognition. Then there were differences among the Vedāntins themselves as to whether the terms like Prana,

Akasa, etc., mean Para-Brahman, Jiva or any other thing. Again opinions differed as to the nature of Mukti or salvation or as to the possibility of attaining perfection even while one is living. All these the author of the Brahma-Sūtras is bound to meet and he has done it very faithfully.

Philosophy, of course, has crossed his path, and Badarayana has done full justice to the philosophical problems that have come in his way of elucidating obscure Vedāntic passages. For example, he had to controvert the Sankhya-Kāraṇa-Vāda or the Sankhya theory that the unconscious Prakṛiti is the ultimate cause of the universe. A cursory glance at the Brahma-Sūtras is sufficient to convince one as to how great was the influence of the Sankhya philosophy at that time and what great effort our author is making to prove it false. The refutation of all other theories are but secondary to him. The tussle with the Sankhya philosophy is from the very beginning. In fact it is even in the very second Sūtra where a definition or rather a description of Brahman is given. This description is of the nature of a challenge to the Sankhyas. This Sūtra is so worded as to form a direct contradiction of the Sankhya-Kāraṇa-Vāda. From here right up to the Tarkapada, and even beyond that, whenever any occasion has arisen, we see our extremely cautious author pointing out the falsity of the Sankhya theory. He is never weary of it, he has gone so far as to transgress the orthodox law of non-repetition. But the refutation of this Sankhya theory and of other schools of thought has come only by the way. For just after this rebutting

(in the Tarkapada), we find our author again engaged in the pleasant duty of explaining the Upanishadic texts and removing apparent contradictions in them. And in doing this he has dealt with God (Brahman), Nature, and soul and soul's bondage and emancipation—the things which form the subject matter of all philosophy. Still we say Vyasa has not given us a system of philosophy; for he has left certain fundamentals untouched.

III

What are the fundamentals that Badarayana has not made clear in his Brahma-Sutras, for which we are audaciously denying him the credit of a perfect system-builder?

Before discussing this we must make our own position a little more clear. Sankara and his followers do not find anything in the Upanishads which have not been taken up in the Sutras and have not been properly elucidated; and we, as Sankarites, share the same opinion. But others hold different views; and judging from the Sutras alone and putting on them the sort of literal interpretation that they claim to put, we have no objection to allowing them the right to do so. The inevitable result of such views and interpretations will be to deny Badarayana the honour which Sankara and Sankarites shower on him. Let us see how.

Badarayana has proposed Brahman-jijnasa or enquiry into Brahman Itself and into all matters relating to it as the subject-matter of his work. As such we can rightly expect of him an exhaustive treatment of Brahman Itself, if not of other things. But we find him observing perfect silence re-

garding the Nirvisesha Brahman or the Absolute. This is somewhat strange. Critics of Sankara are not to be jubilant over it. The Nirvisesha Srutis are too numerous to be ignored and too clear to admit of text-torturing. To explain away clear and unambiguous terms like 'Nirguna', 'Nirvisesha', 'Nishkala', 'Asthula', 'Ananu', 'Neti Neti', etc., are downright cases of text-torturing evident to all impartial critics. This being so, it seems strange that this aspect of Brahman should escape the eyes of one who is going to offer us a "system" on Brahman. Search throughout the Sutras without reading the Bhashyas, and you will never come across one aphorism that deals with the Nirvisesha aspect of Brahman.³ He has spoken of Brahman as "the Efficient and Material Cause of the universe" as "conscious", as "blissful", as "the indwelling Spirit," as "the Eater or Destroyer of everything," as "the Upholder of this earth and that", as "all-pervading", as "the Ruler of all", etc. Many of these attributes the Sutrakara ought not to

³Sankara, of course, finds it fully discussed in the Anandamayadhikarana. But other commentators differ. Taking the Sutras themselves, it will be evident to all that Vyasa's contention is that the term 'Anandamaya' refers to Brahman and to nothing else. In all the eight Sutras comprising the section he keeps mum over the nature of Anandamaya.

The same difficulty is experienced in the interpretation of the Anandadyadhikarana (3.3 11-13). The Sutras mean to say that Bliss, Knowledge, etc., are to be combined into one—as regards 'into what', the commentators differ. Sankara says it is no Vidya or Upasana; Ramanuja says it is. Vyasa's point is that the attributes should be combined to form an idea of Brahman.

have mentioned as they are implied in other attributes already mentioned in one or other of the preceding Sutras. But he is so very careful that he would not allow anything to be guessed, lest in guessing people should commit mistakes and get a wrong notion of Brahman.

But is it not very strange that one who is so particular about the Savi-sesha aspect of Brahman would be so oblivious as not even to mention the Nirvisesha aspect? Had he held views similar to or identical with those of the non-Advaitins, he ought to have mentioned such Srutis and brought out their true implications. Such taciturnity on the part of one who has moved heaven and earth to prove his points in the Anumanik-adhikaranam (1.4, 1-7), the Chamas adhikaranam (1.4, 8-10) and the Apasudradhikaranam (1.3.34-38), is quite surprising. The only conclusion that can be drawn from all these is that the Sutrakara has never aimed at building a system but has all along been trying to throw light on the obscure Sruti passages. He has not dealt with the Nirvisesha Srutis because they are too clear to admit of misinterpretation.

Another important point that has not been dealt with properly is whether Jivas or finite souls are *by nature* separate or distinct from Brahman. Such a statement is more astounding than what has gone before. Badarayana has devoted no less than 21 or 22 Adhikaranas besides some stray Sutras to clear the conception of Jivas as distinguished from Brahman. Beginning with Atmadhikaranam (2.3. 17), or more particularly with Jnadhikaranam (2.3.18) according to Ramanuja, and Utkrantigat-

yadhikaranam (2.3.19-32) according to Sankara, as well as in Sutras 1.1.16 and 17, the Sutrakara has laid down the distinction between Jivas and Brahman very carefully and, so far as his points are concerned, very clearly too.

Still the point that we have raised is undecided. The question is not whether the ordinary Jivas or Jivas in the clutches of Maya are distinct from Brahman, but whether they are *by nature*, i.e., as they are by themselves apart from the limiting adjuncts, distinct from It. Here we do not find a definite answer sufficient to silence the philosophical doubt. Nor can it be said that such doubts were uncalled for at the time of the Sutrakara; for there were at least three different opinions, viz., those of Oudulomi, Asmarathya, and Kasakritsna on the exact nature of the two entities, Vijnanatman and Paramatman. One finds numerous passages in the book where a sharp and clear distinction has been drawn between the two; but in all these cases Jivatman is spoken of as under Maya.

To get at its true nature we must see it when it is beyond Maya; and this we get in Sutras 4.4.5-7. But here too we are disappointed. Two contradictory views have been reconciled by one stroke of the pen by saying that they are not contradictory. No reason is given as to why they are not so and commentators are left to guess as they like. A vagueness as to the real nature of Jivatman with ample scope for the wildest guess-work is what the reader of the Brahma-Sutras gets as his reward, when he goes to close the book.

We will take up one more point, and perhaps the most important point, to show that Badarayana never aimed at giving us a "system" in the Brahma-Sutras. He has not said anything about Avidya. One might not take it in Sankara's sense. But that there is something somewhere which has veiled Brahman or God from us, that we are in our present state under a sort of hypnotic spell due to which we are wandering away from the Eternal Source of Bliss, has been accepted by all the commentators and perhaps by all the modern critics. It is no use objecting to the term Avidya. Call it by any name, but you are to explain this mystery of all mysteries.

If God is infinite and perfect, why is this world and what is it? To call it a mere play (2.1.33) is no explanation. Lila and Maya are philosophically the same thing. One who objects to Maya ought to object to Lila also, if one wants to be impartial; for both, in the last analysis, comes to the flat admission that this mystery baffles all understanding. Has he created it out of fun from within Himself? Very good, but what is the nature of this fanciful creation? Is it real or unreal? Is it like our own imaginings, only infinitely more complex, subtle and abiding? Or is it like our creation with the help of materials collected from outside, only in His case it is from *within*, there being no *with-out* for Him? As to this we are left in an awful silence. And why? Is it not one of the most fundamental questions of philosophy? If Sankara has no right to evolve his Adhyasa theory from the Sutras, Ramanuja or any of the modern critics of Sankara too has no right to posit that this

creation is real in the sense Sankara uses the term 'real'. For the Sutras do not say either.

A book, which is mute over such fundamentals, cannot be said to offer a system of philosophy. The philosophy is there in the Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Badarayana has added important, *sometimes* exhaustive, annotations. The writers of different commentaries have found in these very terse notes, such hints as have enabled them to understand the Vedanta more clearly and to evolve different schools of thought, each having its own beauty and each true so far as it goes.

IV

Those who have studied the Vedanta-Sutras both with and without the help of the Bhashyas or commentaries cannot but admit that each and every commentator has said many things which, from the mere words of the Sutras, we do not get but which may not contradict what have been explicitly indicated by them. The characteristics of Bhashyas sanction it.⁴ Bhashyakaras or commentators are given this privilege of adding new things provided they do not run counter to the Sutras themselves. But for this privilege, we could not have got any Indian philosophy worth the name. The ancients knew it and have given their sanction to such privilege. A Bhashyakara would not be entitled to that name if he has nothing to add to the already existing stock of knowledge; but he is never allowed to do so at the expense of the Sutras.

⁴ 'Sutrartho varnyate yatra padaih sutranusaribhih.

Svapadani cha varnyante bhashyam bhashyavido viduh.

But how is it possible to be faithful to the Sutras and at the same time add new thoughts? When we consider that interpretations are not truths but our ways of looking at them, we find it easy to explain this. We need not be torturing texts or be conscious liars. We can be true to ourselves and to the texts, and yet we can express them in a way that will be new to a great extent, for we look at them from different angles of vision. There are, no doubt, literary cheats and charlatans, but we leave them out of our consideration. Honest men, learned and intelligent, can both be faithful to the texts they go to interpret and add to the stock of the already existing knowledge. Naked truths, when they seek for expression, must put on modern garbs to appear in modern society.

So if we find a commentator saying anything that is not expressly stated in any Sutra or group of Sutras but is implied by them and appears to be the logical outcome of the reference of the Brahma-Sutras as a whole to its source, the Upanishads, we cannot condemn him; for he is perfectly within his rights as a Bhashyakara. Moreover if there are terms in some Sutras which admit of more than one interpretation, and if a commentator explains them one way rather than another, we have nothing to say against him, so long as it involves no internal contradictions nor goes against the source books. To say that it runs counter to the general trend of the Sutras is too weak a peg to hang such a weighty criticism on.

ON DEATH

By V. Subrahmanya Iyer.

[Mr. Subrahmanya Iyer, retired Registrar of the University of Mysore and a well-known philosopher of modern India, brings out in these paragraphs the significance of death according to religion and philosophy.]

THE sorrow that death brings is as universal as it is intense. There is no house that has not experienced this pain sometime and that most bitterly. When it comes, most men succumb to it for the time, and some continue to be unhappy for years. But a few feel provoked to enquiry and thought. It is these few that tell us that pain and sorrow could be overcome and that the chief means to it lies in knowing the meaning of sorrow, suffering and death.

Change, when perceived naturally, provokes thought which leads one ul-

timately to knowledge. Striking changes rouse deep thought. And one of the most striking changes or phenomena is death, especially because it causes pain, which sets the human mind a-thinking deeply. The thought is directed primarily towards seeking the means, if that be possible, to overcome pain or sorrow. This enquiry naturally takes one to the question of the meaning of pain and death.

The answers to the questions put, have varied with men's temperaments and intellects. The several solutions

may be broadly grouped under two heads : (1) Religious, and (2) Philosophical.

Religion finds satisfaction in the belief that after death, that is, after death of the body, there is another existence, which continues to eternity. Then will the soul of man realise its immortality and that in a spiritual or ethereal body. The soul will then find its compensations for all its sufferings or losses in this world. And it will also be duly punished for its wicked acts in this life. Lastly, will come God's grace and his blessings in a variety of ways. These compensations, punishments, graces and blessings vary with the hopes, actions and wishes that the believer cherished in this world.

Some religions tell us of an eternal future life with our dead kith and kin, others tell of a life with charming women and friends, or of a life lost in admiration of God's throne and glory. In short such is the immortality vouchsafed by Religion that one finds after death all that one wishes for. This belief is strengthened by a variety of impressive funeral ceremonies after death.

Such religious views imply a certain unreasoned autocracy on the part of God, the Creator; for, it is not clear why men should be prompted to do wicked deeds, why temptations should be placed before them, why they should be punished for their weaknesses. To avoid difficulties, the Hindus believe in re-birth, according to the law of re-incarnation, on earth, which makes man reap as he has sown in his past. But the religious solutions, though they have satisfied and do satisfy the immense majority of mankind, do not carry conviction to

some minds which do not feel assured of an immortality which is promised after death. And they do not find consolation in future immortality in spite of all the charms of existence after death; it is no solution of the real problem. What man is not pained at his death here in this world and death of this earthly body? Of what use is it to him to be told that there is no remedy against this mortality and that there is a future immortality of a something other than this body? The solution that Religion offers is therefore felt by some to be far from giving the satisfaction sought. Those that feel the futility of the religious immortality and set about studying the nature and significance of death, are called philosophers. Their first step is a scientific study of this striking phenomenon.

Plato, the philosopher, put into the mouth of Socrates the statement that all philosophy springs from the phenomenon of death: "Philosophy is the study of death." In fact the highest philosophy in India starts with the subject of death. For instance it is so in the Bhagavad Gita, the Kathakopanishad and the Chandogyopanishad. The aim of philosophy is to ascertain the meaning and the truth of all experiences including death. This enquiry has been carried to its farthest boundary only in India, where they have come to the conclusion that it is possible to overcome pain and death of this body, nay, all sorrow. It does not seek consolation in the deathlessness of a future body as in Religion. It wishes to make sure whether in this body, here on this earth and now, any remedy could be found against death. Vedanta has an answer in the affirma-

tive. It says that even this body is found to be the Brahman, that is immortal, by one that knows the Truth. Once upon a time even the Lord Buddha, when asked by a sorrow-stricken person to revive her dead child, said that the only remedy lay in knowing the truth about death and that there was no other way of freeing oneself from death or sorrow.

In pursuing Truth, science demands proof in the absence of which it relegates all beliefs to the world of unproven hypothesis, guess or imagination. The evidence for spiritual existence after death, advanced by the great scientist Oliver Lodge, leads at best only to hypothesis, but not to a certainty. He seems to be still under the influence of his old religious beliefs. For Hindu scientists and philosophers rely upon public or universal reason, and not upon private or individual experiences such as those relied upon by Oliver Lodge. According to Indian philosophers, to think that to be truth which pleases or satisfies one, is the religious mentality, whereas to seek satisfaction in what is proved to be true, is the philosophical attitude. Indian philosophy, like European science, studies first the material body as part of the material universe. It holds that death is a kind of change

not different from the changes observed in the world around us. In fact the body is undergoing change constantly, in other words, dying constantly. It looks strange, Vedanta observes, that one should be always dying and yet be afraid of death.

Philosophy in India begins by analysing experience or knowledge. It analyses all existence into two factors—mind and matter—mind including all that is called in Religion as soul or spirit, and whatever is said to be 'internal', and matter including one's own body and the 'external' world of space.

These two factors are named Drik and Drisyam, the seer and the seen, or the knower and the known, each of which is in turn analysed still further till what is called ultimate Truth is reached. The most determined pursuit of truth along the lines indicated above results in the philosophic solution, that all is Brahman the Eternal, and that nothing really dies. One who wishes to be convinced of this fact has to study Vedanta. Death is but a powerful call to think, to ponder, and to seek the goal of Truth, with a determination not to stop till the goal is reached.

SAINT ANTONIO OF PADUA: SOME GLIMPSES AND IMPRESSIONS

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 is afforded a glimpse of the character and teachings of Sant' Antonio of Padua (born in Lisbon on 15th August 1195 and dead on 13th June 1231), known as *il santo di tutto il mondo*, the saint of all the world. The life and message of this and other 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.]

"Just as in the image of the Lord or of the Blessed Virgin painted on wood one honours the Lord or the Blessed Virgin, and neither the painting nor the wood keeps anything to themselves, the servant of God is like a painting of God in which honour is rendered to God for the benefits given, but he himself must not arrogate anything to himself. For compared with God the wood and the painting are of less value, rather a mere nothing. So one should attribute to God alone glory and honour, and to oneself only dishonour and tribulation, so long as one lives amidst the miseries of this world." (Tommaso de Celano)

It is evening. In the soft twilight of the Basilica del Santo at Padua the candles burning on the altar and tomb of Sant' Antonio shed their mellow radiance on the walls of the little side-chapel that has been his resting place ever since the last transference of his bones in the year 1350. An atmosphere of great holiness and peace pervades it and imperceptibly penetrates into the hearts of all, of the worshipper and the sight seer. One after another the devotees of Sant' Antonio pass behind the altar, touch with their right hand the porphyry-slab behind which his last remains are enshrined, and become absorbed in intense prayer and contemplation, cut off from the bustle and noise generally prevailing in the rest of the immense church.

Young men and young women with faces beautified by their expression of deep reverence and recollection, silently voicing their yearning and hope to the 'Saint of all the World'

as he has been called—old people and invalids—an endless procession of human suffering and human aspiration after the Divine, all wrapt in the golden light of the votive candles, their figures mellowed and dimmed and, as it were, spiritualised, by the twilight around them. Centuries have passed by. Kingdoms and empires have come and gone, but still this stream continues without losing in intensity. Why? Because the human heart feels the need of a love like Sant' Antonio's, a love wholly given to God and embraces all and is beyond all doctrinal squabbles between the so-called orthodox and the so-called heretic, a love that knows only one aim—to sacrifice itself for others and for the highest ideals and aspirations of men.

Times have changed since the passing away of this great saint of Europe at the Arcella near Padua, but the human heart and its yearning are still the same as in his day, both being

eternally bound up with, and interpenetrated by, the Divine which never ceases to call them home to peace and harmony, and to that love which knows neither hatred nor condemnation but only sacrifice.

* * *

Born at Lisbon, Fernando of Bouillon, as Saint Antonio was called in his early life, possessed even from childhood an abundance of winning gentleness combined with infinite tenderness of soul, radiating the light of purity and inward greatness. With regard to his boyhood, legends tell us of his first temptation by the Evil One in front of the altar of the Virgin in the Cathedral at Lisbon. While he was wrapt in prayer, the Evil One appeared in a menacing attitude, but the purity and spirit of sacrifice of the potential saint triumphed over him. He heard the harmonious strains of a choir of angels singing Hosannah—the song of his first victory over lower nature. And it is said that crying with emotion, young Fernando made a solemn promise to the Mother of Christ smiling at him from the altar, vowing himself to God and His service and consecrating his whole life to Her for evermore. Thus this vision became the first stage on the long and thorny road to sainthood, which was never to be left again.

Fernando of Bouillon professed at the Augustinian Monastery of S. Vicente-de-Fora at Lisbon and received his theological training at the monastery of the Holy Cross at Coimbra. Led by his intense spiritual yearning, he became a Minorite brother afterwards, assuming the name of Brother Antonio to hide his noble lineage. It was here in the

solitude and quiet of the Franciscan retreat of the Oliveta that he underwent the necessary mystic and ascetic training, crowning the intellectual and theological knowledge he had acquired from his former Augustinian brothers. In 1224, while staying at Vercelli, he took some private lessons in Mystic Theology from the great commentator on the teachings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, Thomas Gallus. Sometimes later St. Francis, who saw in St. Antonio the true Minorite Brother corresponding to his ideal of devotion, simplicity, purity of heart and deep learning, made him the teacher of theology in his Order. In a famous letter addressed to Antonio after his first public sermon at Forli, St. Francis wrote: "It is my wish that thou shouldst teach the brethren theology, provided that the study of Holy Prayer and the spirit of Devotion prescribed by the Rule do not become extinguished in them."

This was the beginning of the Chair of Theology in the Minorite Order, inaugurating that famous Franciscan School, the rival of the Dominican Schoolmen.

St. Francis himself never really thought of converting the multitude with the help of the art of oratory and the weight of scholarly arguments. He was the minstrel of God singing for the mere joy of song, preaching compassion, forgiveness, peace and godliness in a spontaneous upwelling of the heart and superhuman meekness, and thus bridging the gulf that usually yawns between man and man. But he never reached the sonority and grandeur of a fugue with the majestic play of its recurrent motifs and the stateliness of its movement. S. Antonio, on the other hand,

always remained the Portuguese knight full of the spirit of chivalric adventure, boldly meeting the intricate problems of his day with his marvellous eloquence and erudition, enhanced by the saintliness of his life. His tunes may have been less sweet and touching than those of the Poverello di Dio, but they possessed greater sonority and all the charm of the varied pattern of contrapuntal themes poised on the deep note of a long-drawn-out organ-point—the Divine. Both led many a soul that had gone astray back to God, filling it with new hope and aspiration, and each was one of the greatest messengers of the Divine given to the West. St. Francis was like a seraphic vision passing over hill and dale, through city and village, and radiating mildness wherever he went. He drew the hearts of the people by his childlike simplicity, candour and innocence. S. Antonio was the chivalrous fighter of the Minorite Order, combining infinite love and tenderness with the strength and fearlessness of knight-hood. He preached in churches, in the public square, the market place, on the banks of the dreamy, slow-flowing rivers of the Northern plains of Italy, in borough and city, everywhere, and his words were like flashes of lightning, and many a time, even like thunderbolts falling on the heads of the wicked and the Machiavellian. He captured people by the power of his intellect together with the imperceptible attraction of his love, sweeping them along with the beauty of his parables and similes, and with unshakable conviction in his voice, winning the aristocrat and the scholar the farmer and the artisan. And even if his words often cut and lay open

terrible sores that had been cautiously covered by hypocrites or allowed to fester indefinitely in an indolent spirit of *laissez faire*, he never does so for the pleasure of condemning anybody, but only as the conscientious surgeon wishing to heal the wounds and tumours that had formed in the social and religious body of society.

He was no respecter of persons. Always remaining the chivalrous opponent, unwavering and unflinching before praise and honour, always proclaiming the truth to those in power as well as to the poor and homeless, to the dignitaries of the Church of Rome and to the most ignorant woman coming from some out-of-the-way valley or some hamlet in the marshes, he never suffered himself to be diverted from the path he knew to be right or from the point he was aiming at for the good of his fellow-men.

It was his great and glorious mission in life to resist the overbearing, the imperious, the dictatorial, the lustful,—in short, all those responsible for the decadence and deprivation of the people on the one hand, and on the other hand to lift up the suffering masses, the poor and ignorant, from this cowardly but all too easy oppression at the hands of their masters. On both sides he tried to foster the sense of the sacredness of life in all its forms through a true appreciation of the infinite charity of Christ who, to him, had a smile and a caress for every human pain, no matter whose fault this pain was or who suffered it.

All this makes the noble personality of the saint rise far above the general ruthlessness of the 13th century and gives him a special radiance guiding the thoughtful and shedding

its illuminating glow on the political, religious, moral and civic aspects of human life.

Even in the terrible fight against the so-called heretics of the 13th century, the Patarins, Catharists and Albigenses of the South of France and Italy, he is almost the only son of rank and influence of his Church who avoided the unspeakable crimes committed by power-intoxicated prelates, fanatical monks and rapacious Christian princes posing as the true and obedient sons of Christ, and who always refused to become the sophisticated assassin. Though a firm believer in the dogma of his Church, he never believed persecution could be a substitute to convincing people by example and peaceful persuasion. His love of Christ and the Virgin made him recognise that none was qualified to persecute another in the name of God, and his attitude in this respect is expressed in the words: "If I am not sufficient to correct and better people through preaching, exhortation and good example, I do not wish to become a hangman, punishing and whipping like the potentates of the world."

The exceptional greatness of St. Antonio which surpasses all the success of his eloquence and erudition lies in his deep and reverential love for humanity; and in his case it was true love, not that kind of love men generally give expression to in words, while continuing to hug their ego at the same time, and which, after all, can be one of the worst manifestations of arrogant worldly-mindedness. Antonio's heart burnt with a bright flame of infinite affection for his brethren, and deeply absorbed in God, he had on earth no other delight

than this feeling which, similar to St. Francis', embraced all creatures and all plants.

He who had stressed and exalted chastity and continence from the very days of his adolescence, knew but this living, pulsating, intense spiritual tenderness for all humanity, nay, for the whole of creation; and to lessen its sufferings and bring light to its blinded eyes he consecrated all the efforts of his apostolate, renouncing sleep and food and all amenities of life and all personal affections, so as to be able to pass his days in the inner aloofness of prayer and meditation for love of his fellow-men.

It is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that a deliberate and sincere will to be perfectly continent is capable of restoring a certain spiritual virginity even to those who had been leading an incontinent, immoral or a married life during a certain period. That which such persons have lost for good in body, can again be found in a certain way through Divine Grace in the path of penitence for the spirit. Freed from all forms of earthly love, the power of affection turns in a mighty blaze to the delights of the spirit and to the supernatural. S. Antonio knew purity of body and mind to be the *sine qua non* of spiritual life, but his heart went out in a mighty upwelling of love to all those who wallowed in the mire, who had even lost the right to be called by the name of man, because he knew that what had been lost for good physically, might with the help of sincere striving and grace be restored mentally and spiritually, and that in many cases the light would not have dawned for such persons but for the preceding dark-

ness and desolation of sense-life and inordinate personal attachments.

For S. Antonio, as for all mystics, the mission of man is to return to God through the well-known steps of purification, illumination and perfection, which, though different in expression, correspond to Yama and Niyama and Samadhi in the path of Yoga. And as a mystic St. Antonio never enters into long debates on the speculative side of theology and religion, does not philosophize, but exhorts and moralises. That is why we find very few traces of philosophical thought and speculations in the abstracts of his sermons. The home-coming to God finds its best expression in his 'Concordantiae morales Bibliorum' (Moral concordances of the Bible), where he says that, if a soul succeeds in being in direct touch with the Divine, all its vileness, all its imperfections and lowness are converted into glory, splendour and grace, and no trace of baseness is left. But in order to attain to this transformation the soul must always and everywhere yearn for its Lord and consciously practise all those virtues which are the means to the realisation of its sublime longing for union. S. Antonio gives us a list of these virtues. They are: Contrition of heart, confession by word of mouth, satisfaction of work, love of God and one's fellow-men, steady and unbroken practice of the inner and contemplative life and unshakable perseverance till the very end. With the help of these virtues practised with an indomitable will and purposefulness, the soul lifts itself up to God, borne aloft on the two wings given it by Divine Compassion *viz.*, fasting and prayer, to which must be joined humility,

charitableness, continence and deep contemplation of the Eternal and Divine.

In his mysticism S. Antonio was akin to the great Scotus Erigena, but his nature is more fiery and dynamic—the impetuous, easily inflammable nature of his race, the nature of a knight turned Godward.

It was a very characteristic trait of S. Antonio that he set his whole influence against those currents of his day which stood for relaxing the rules of the monastic life. He fought for the application of the strictest and most unrelenting principles of penance and austerity in their absolute integrity, and always asserted them with all the power of his marvellous eloquence. His character abhorred compromise because of his straightforwardness and force of conviction, because to him a child of the Virgin and Jesus could not haggle for Divine truths with the world, nor adjust his ways to those considered fitting and decorous by the worldly mind.

The following passages translated from the Latin abstracts of his sermons, scanty as they are, may give the reader some idea of St. Antonio's way of bringing truth to the door of everybody:—

"The air seems pure to us so long as it remains in the shadow, but as soon as a ray of the sun penetrates into the room, we see that the air is full of dust. That ray is the realisation which shows man the defects of his own conscience and reveals minutely what previously remained hidden. O City of Jerusalem! O soul created in the likeness of God! remember thy Creator who made thee and who shall judge thee. Remember this in the days of thy youth when thy age is inclined to err, but also quick to repent."

Always S. Antonio recommends charity as the power redeeming man

of his weakness and evil ways, charity as the great and irresistible saving impulse of man:

"Let us be compassionate, imitating the cranes which are said to balance themselves in the air when they go to a certain place, so as to be able to see from that height which goal they can reach. The one possessing the strongest voice precedes the whole flight and discovers the dangers and assembles the whole flock with its cry. If its voice begins to fail, another crane replaces it. All are agreed to help the tired ones, and if one faints, all assemble and support it until it regains its strength. Thus let us, too, be compassionate like the cranes so that, placed in the highest positions of life, we are given power to provide for ourselves and for others. Let us show the way to those who ignore it, and let us quicken the lazy and half-hearted. Let us relieve one another in our work. Let us support the weak and the diseased in order that they may not faint on the way. Let one stand up for all in the vigils of the Lord with prayer, contemplation and supplication. If anything in the world wants to attack us, let us cry, 'Be on thy guard!' And above all, let us flee from the round or the blind vanity and lustfulness of the world."

"O Thou, who cravest madly for knowledge, who understandest a little of everything, learn wisdom from the bees if not from the ants. The bee continuously goes to new flowers, leaving one to sit on another, but it only takes from one what it needs and returns to the hive therewith. Similarly, thou shouldst not care for strange words and the various volumes of diverse works, not leave one flower for another as do those who feel bored, who always open new books, perusing their pages, noting the words, but never attaining knowledge. But take from one only what thou needest and deposit it in the bee-hive of thy memory. For, as the philosopher says, a plant that is transplanted too often does not become strong, and there is nothing useful that can be of any profit if only just superficially taken note of."

"The wisdom of the world is to cover the heart with subterfuges, to veil the true sense of expressions, to show the false to

be true and the true to be false. This wisdom is learnt by the young by habit and is paid for in order that the children might be instructed therein. Whoever possesses it struts proudly about and despises the others. Whoever does not have it shows himself timid and subdued. He who holds it is in great esteem, him it teaches to seek the very summit of honours, to enjoy the vanity of mundane life, to pay back evil with greater evil, if this be possible, and not to stop at any obstacle; and if it so happen that one's strength fails one in a certain case, to simulate peaceful goodness and naturalness and thereby to attain what could not be gained by violence. This is wisdom full of vanity and misery. The wisdom of the righteous is not to make a show of anything, to speak what he thinks, to love truth and to flee from falsehood, to approve of what is good and rather to suffer evil than to commit it, to do wrong to no one, but to suffer it with great gladness for the sake of Truth. This is true and holy wisdom and worthy of eternal bliss."

Among the innumerable miracles attributed to S. Antonio there is even a very curious story of his having gone to India and especially to Bengal after his passing away, to preach there the message of Christ in its true meaning and purport. Even granted that S. Antonio possessed miraculous powers to an unusual extent, there is no doubt that many of his miracles belong to the realm of legend and are golden strands woven into the marvellous pattern of his life by the loving memory and unflagging devotion of the people and of his own brethren. When coming across such stories in Christian literature and books of devotion, one should never lose sight of the fact that the outgoing Western mind always finds in the miraculous the greatest proof of the grace of God and the high spiritual attainments of a certain person, and that in the beatification of any man

the miracles he is said to have performed before or after his death form a very important factor. And it is to be regretted that most miracles performed by Western saints are of so highly a material nature that they rather served to veil the spiritual essence of the Divine to the eyes of the people than to reveal it.

Slowly the dusk deepens and the play of the candle-light on the walls of the little side-chapel becomes brighter and brighter, while one after another the devotees salute the altar in deep reverence and quietly make their way to one of the principal portals of the great Basilica. And the more deserted the sanctuary becomes the more the solitude and stillness in-

crease, the greater and more sublime grows the intensity of Love and Holiness and Beauty reigning there and meditating on the good and the liberation of all those who are in the dark, in the barren wastes of moral desolation and worldly pleasures and in the gloom of ignorance, which separate them from the ultimate and unchanging values of life. The experience of this living Presence of Holiness sinks deep into the heart of the visitor who has prepared himself to receive it, and for a time cuts him off from all that is vile and low in him, filling him with a great radiance of beauty and detachment and deep inner peacefulness, so that only thankfulness and love remain in his heart and bring him nearer to the Divine.

A LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

By Jean Herbert

[The following is an interesting letter relating to the activities of Swami Siddheswarananda in Europe. We thought it good to share this letter with our readers as it gives one an idea of the pioneering work that is now being done to present the teachings of Vedanta to non-English speaking peoples of Europe in their own language. Monsieur Jean Herbert, the writer of this letter, is connected with the League of Nations, and is an important figure in French public life. He is a great lover of Indian culture, and is the translator of Swami Vivekananda's works into French.]

MY DEAR SWAMI,

I know that some of you have been rather wondering at not receiving much news about the activities of Swami Siddheswarananda since he came to Europe. I am fully aware of the great sacrifice which it meant for the Mission to send us one of your most capable men whom you entrusted with great responsibilities in India, and it is quite natural that you should have wondered whether that sacrifice was in fact justified.

As a matter of fact, we intentionally arranged things in such a way that the Swami should have as little activity as possible during the first seven or eight months of his stay in France. It is absolutely necessary for his work that he should have a thorough command of the French language, since trying to get into touch with French people without speaking their language would be just as Utopian as wanting to teach philosophy in Calcutta in Telugu or Kanarese. We

felt, however, that as soon as people began to come to him, all his time would be taken up and he would not be able to pursue his study of the language. In spite of our efforts, a number of people came to him individually and he even had to take up work with a few groups in and around Paris.¹

I am glad to say that Swami Siddheswarananda has now reached a point when he can read the most difficult French text with perfect ease, also read manuscript letters which have been sent to him in French, and that he can understand what is being said in French with very little difficulty. As regards talking, he is now able to handle private interviews and conversations without any outside help whatever, which is the most crucial point. He does not yet feel able to address large audiences or to write articles or even letters in French, but this is not so important and it will come quite naturally in the course of time.

¹ Although this report is not intended to cover the activities of the Swami in France, but only—by way of illustration—to give a short picture of what he did during a recent visit to Switzerland, it may be of interest to the readers to know that during the last four months the Swami has been directing the meditation classes of an important spiritual institution in Paris, the Buddhist Society. Under the auspices of that society, he spoke on March 21st., before a very large audience, on 'Philosophical Implications of the Phenomena of Dreams.' In November, he had addressed another important group on the Message of Sri Ramakrishna. For the last two months, the Swami has also given help to a group which meets alternately in Paris and Versailles. He has now begun to give them talks on the 'Bhagavad Gita', followed by a class for meditation.

When we realised that he had reached this point, we thought we would give him an opportunity of tackling a comparatively small centre and trying his hand there before starting any work on a large scale in Paris. For that reason we suggested that he should come to spend a couple of weeks in Geneva² and we arranged a full-time programme for him. The Swami very kindly consented and arrived in Geneva on the 27th of March. He remained here until the 11th of April with the exception of three days which he spent in Lausanne and Villeneuve. On his way back to Paris he stopped in Lyons for one day.

Before I mention in any detail the work which he did in Geneva during that fortnight, I should like to say that he made a most profound impression on all the people who came into touch with him. He showed himself perfectly able to meet each and every person on his or her own ground, giving each one the precise help and inspiration which happened to be wanted and appropriate. He met people of all professions, social strata, religious beliefs, etc. As it was not possible in the short span of time at our disposal to arrange private interviews with all the people who wanted to see him, we had a number of small group meetings to discuss various topics.

On two separate evenings we had talks and discussions on the most abstract metaphysical questions. The people who attended were University professors, professional psychologists, physiologists and leaders of various

² The Swami had come once before, but only for a couple of days, to establish contact with a few people deeply interested.

spiritualistic and educational movements in Geneva. On the first of those evenings, the Swami spoke for about an hour on the Vedantic approach to Philosophy, and on the second on the doctrine of Love, Predestination and Grace. Each of those talks was followed by an extremely keen discussion in which a number of people took part. The Swami was able to reply to all the questions in such a way as to command the deepest respect and admiration from all present, and even from those who held views entirely different from his. The professors and the psychologists were very much interested to see the presentation from two separate and distinct standpoints, one of pure philosophy and the other of religion. In those discussions, as well as in all those that followed, those view-points were clearly kept separate, and therefore there could not arise any confusion of issues. The French mind, which is so particular about the logic of a presentation, felt perfectly satisfied, as no fallacy could be discovered, reason and emotion being allotted their proper places in the pursuit of Truth.

The interest which people took appears clearly from the fact that it was nearly midnight when we had to suggest it was time to adjourn, and also from the other fact that practically every one of those present made a special request to be invited again during the next visit of the Swami to Geneva.

Two other evenings were devoted to the general principles of Raja Yoga and practical meditation. The people who attended were not so intellectually-minded as the other group, but had been selected because of their

special practical interest in the subject. There also the Swami began by a talk which was followed by a large number of questions and answers, and the evening closed with a methodically arranged and beautifully explained 'meditation', from which all present drew great inspiration. The enthusiasm shown was testified by the fact that a large number of the people who came asked the Swami to give them individual teaching for spiritual practices.

On two other evenings, the Swami led the discussion, study and meditation in a group which has been meeting regularly in Geneva once a week during the last two years, to study the works of Swami Vivekananda. Most members of that group had already the privilege of instruction from Swami Yatiswarananda, and were now most grateful to have a teacher with whom they could freely converse in their own language. I may mention that on the weekly meetings which followed the visit of the Swami, everybody showed an extremely keen desire to have Swami Siddheswarananda come again as soon as possible for a longer stay, when he could devote much more time for individual instruction.

In the course of another meeting which took place at the house of some other friends, the Swami spoke on the Hindu view of Christ. One prominent clergyman and several very active members of the Oxford Group were present and a great many questions were asked. The meeting lasted about three hours and would certainly have lasted much longer, if another meeting had not been arranged for the same evening. There also several of the people present asked for pri-

vate interviews either for themselves individually or for small groups of their family or of their friends.

Although we took great care that the Swami during this first visit should not be identified with any group already existing in Geneva, we found it impossible to refuse an invitation which was extended to him to speak in a small group devoted to spiritual research. The Swami spoke on spiritual life in modern India with special reference to some of the most famous matters of the last hundred years. A number of questions were also asked after the lecture and answered to the satisfaction of all present.

The Swami also addressed a fairly large meeting in a famous international school near Geneva. He spoke on the ideal in education and had a number of private talks with various members of the staff and other people.

Two other meetings, one in the evening and one in the afternoon, were devoted to a discussion of the 'Psychological Approach to Reality' with a few professional philosophers professors and practitioners.

In Nyons, a small town half-way between Lausanne and Geneva, the Swami spent the better part of a day with some prominent members of the medical profession and members of their family.

While in Lausanne, the Swami spoke in public on two successive evenings. On the first one, I had asked him to take my place in a series of lectures I was delivering on the various Yogas. The subject for that evening was Jnana-Yoga and the Swami spoke with great inspiration. Some people very deeply versed in Buddhistic and Vedantic scriptures

asked him a number of highly technical questions which he answered with perfect ease and great mastery of the subject. On the next evening he spoke in the Temple of the Rosicrucians on practical meditation and the evening ended with actual collective meditation in a remarkably serene atmosphere.

In addition to all those public functions, the Swami gave private interviews to a large number of individuals or small groups and his timetable was so arranged that he had an average of half a dozen of such appointments on each day. In order to enable him to have talks with more people, it was arranged that he should meet one or two practically every day for lunch or for dinner. Some of the people he met (professors, psychologists, etc.) had travelled very long distances by rail to have the opportunity of a talk with him.

One interview which is worth relating in greater detail is the one which the Swami had with Romain Rolland and his sister. It was a great day indeed for them all, and Romain Rolland, in spite of his advancing years and of the considerable amount of work which he has to do, had set aside a whole afternoon for that meeting. The Swami was very deeply moved at meeting the man who first broadcasted the names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the West and to whose books can be traced the interest of 99 per cent. of the people who now study the teachings of those two great masters in the West. Romain Rolland, on the other hand, was overjoyed at being able to converse for the first time in his life, with one of the spiritual children of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda with-

out the help of an interpreter. He welcomed the Swami like a long-lost son, and the feelings shown by the Swami were certainly very much akin to filial love. I suppose it will not be an indiscretion on my part to mention that Romain Rolland and his sister in a letter sent to me on the next day expressed the unqualified opinion that the Swami was certainly the very best man possible to bring the actual teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda to French-speaking countries.

During the day which the Swami spent in Lyons on the way back to Paris, two small group meetings were arranged, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Each lasted for several hours and was a continual exchange of questions and answers on the Vedantic view of all sorts of subjects. The people in Lyons were most grateful for the visit of the Swami and expressed the great desire that during his next trip to Switzerland he should stop in their city for several days.

I feel I cannot close this letter without paying a tribute to the admirable selfless work which has been done in

many parts of Europe and more particularly in Switzerland and in Paris by the Swami Yatiswarananda. Although Swami Yatiswarananda has now commissioned Swami Siddheswarananda to attend to France and to other French-speaking countries, so as to devote all his activities to other parts of Europe where he is very much wanted, it should not be forgotten that it is largely due to his exertions and efforts that the way was open for Swami Siddheswarananda.³ If it had not been for Swami Yatiswarananda's impressive personality which commanded respect and admiration from everyone with whom he came into touch, there would certainly not have been in Geneva to-day about one hundred persons who wished to receive individual instruction or to elucidate difficult points in the teachings of Vedanta.⁴ May the work of Swami Yatiswarananda, unostentatious as it is, be as successful in other countries as it has been in Switzerland.

Geneva, } (Sd.) JEAN HERBERT
26-4-'33 }

³Swami Siddheswarananda has often expressed his gratitude that in this distant part of the world he should enjoy the personal guidance and advice of Swami Yatiswarananda, a distinguished senior monk of the Order.

⁴It is also worthwhile to record the considerable influence of "Action et Pensee", a French philosophical magazine devoted

to psychological research and practice, under the editorship of Professor Baudouin, of the University of Geneva. For the last year, one half of that magazine has been exclusively reserved to "Modern Hindu Philosophy" under the sub-editorship of M. Herbert, and has published a large number of translations from great modern Indian Masters.

PURITY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present teaching the principles of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, on the basis of 'The Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda'. Instalments of these talks will be a regular feature of the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time.]

IN spiritual life, although you cut off your personal relations with others to a great extent, you come to have wider love and sympathy.

If some other person attracts you, just direct the mind into some higher channels, create higher attractions, and you may even for the time being 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 can be effaced so that you can look at that person with the same indifference as a stranger you have never known.

When one finds something higher, the lower automatically loses its attraction and is put aside.

In the beginning of our spiritual life we have to create our own images, but these are always 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 sense of the form, although they, too, call up the form. The same Being permeates both the form called up and the devotee as his own eternal being.

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 of you yourself and the whole universe, must never be lost sight of, because it is That which will be realised by you one day.

In this form of meditation the One becomes two, as it were, i.e., the Infinite Light becomes solidified into the object of worship and the worshipper.

Why love these petty miserable dolls, these small human idols of flesh and blood? If you really want to love, love the Ideal or the Divine, but not these puny ephemeral human forms.

Once a king was asked to lead a good life, but when he tried he naturally found it very hard, and was asked to practise also a little restriction in food. But he found that the holy man who was giving him all these instructions was taking very hot food. "How is it possible for you to eat all this hot stuff, and at the same

time to maintain your mental balance?" asked the king. The holy man replied, "I always have before me the thought of Death, and it is this that exerts a great influence on me."

We should practise a certain amount of control and discrimination regarding the food we take, but 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 the 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. And we have to see that our body-consciousness is reduced to a minimum if we want to make good progress in spiritual life.

So long as we allow the love for the world to dwell in our hearts and continue to cherish them, Divine love can never be born.

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 body, to purify your heart, to purify your mind as much as possible. Then the blazing fire of spiritual realisation will burn away all desires.

Banish all worldly thoughts with an effort of the will and with great sincerity, consciously and purposefully; and fix your mind on the Divine. One who does not lead a pure life and is not disciplined ought never to receive 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. Only one who has passed through tremend-

ous training and ethical discipline can have true self-surrender.

You must never associate too freely with people, and must always use discrimination. Once Sri Ramakrishna told Swamiji not to associate so much with Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great Bengali dramatist and actor. He said, "A cup in which garlic had been kept for a long time would still have some of the smell adhering to it even when it is well washed and cleaned." On hearing this from some other devotees, Girish felt very sad at heart and went to the Master to ask him about it. He asked, "Sir, what can I do to get rid of this smell?" And Sri Ramakrishna answered, "You have lit such a tremendous fire of Divine love in you that everything is burnt to ashes." Girish: "I heard you spoke in this strain, but bless me, that this garlic smell may go away." Sri Ramakrishna, "You have lighted such fire of devotion, and this will burn away all smell. No smell of your past life can cling to you." Afterwards Girish Chandra Ghosh said, "The Lord has taken away all my vices."

Only one who has really passed through strenuous self-effort can give up and surrender himself wholly and unconditionally at the feet of the Divine. Self-surrender can only come when our wings are dead-tired like those of the bird sitting on the ship's mast.

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.

Too much activity is very dangerous, because it usually becomes the

aimless activity of the monkey. What for? Nobody knows. This kind of activity is just restlessness and nothing more. But then you find a form of self-surrender, so-called self-surrender, which is nothing more than inertness, indolence, lethargy. And this is just as bad as aimless activity; perhaps worse.

Most people are so active, because they are terribly afraid to be left to themselves. They work and work and work, and go to cinemas and parties and theatres, read heaps and heaps of books. What for? Just to keep themselves busy, just to divert their minds from themselves.

The true aspirant should always try to combine both: activity of the right kind, and self-surrender.

Self-realisation is the ultimate goal and the ideal. And there must be an amount of asceticism, just as there must be perfect continence, Brahmacharya; otherwise the mind will be drawn away by the senses and become more and more outgoing and sense-bound. We must have only one centre of consciousness if we really wish to progress in spiritual life. Spiritual life without continence, Brahmacharya, is not possible, whatever some people may say. You cannot lose your body-consciousness without disciplining and subduing the body and its cravings.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

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

SUTRAS 16 TO 20.

In the next three Sutas Narada presents to us the views of three ancient Acharyas regarding the characteristics of Bhakti. On a careful perusal, it can be seen that these three views are selected because they represent three types of expression of Love in deed, word, and mind. The three views are not mutually contradictory and exclusive, but may be taken as supplementing each other.

SUTRA 16.

पूजादिषु अनुरागः इति पराशर्यः ।

पूजादिषु in acts of worship and the like अनुरागः devotion इति thus

पराशर्यः Vyasa, the son of Parasara.

16. Vyasa,¹ the son of Parasara, is of opinion that Bhakti expresses itself in devotion² to acts³ of worship and the like.⁴

Note 1. Vyasa.—It is not clear where Vyasa's view is represented as above; for it is Vyasa who has given us in his Itihasas and Puranas a complete description not only of this, but of all the various aspects of Bhakti. Perhaps it may be due to the fact that before he met Narada and was initiated by him into Bhakti, he used to

emphasise the dynamic aspect of spiritual life as in the Mahabharata. Even in the Bhagavatam, the scripture of Bhakti *par excellence*, the Bhaktas are delineated by him as living an intensely active life of worship and social usefulness.

2. *Devotion*—The word Anuraga ordinarily means only mere love, but in Bhakti scriptures it means the love that arises out of the recognition of the divinity and glory of the object of love, viz., God. Cf. Swapneswara's commentary on the second Sutra of Sandilya.

3. *Acts of worship*—Technically worship means all those activities, mental as well as physical, undertaken for satisfying a superior being on whom one is dependant, and for whom one feels a kind of reverence. It is a phenomenon, characteristic of all religions. It includes all kinds of rituals and ceremonies which are symbolic expressions of religious emotion. There is a general belief that formal worship is characteristic of only the first stages of Bhakti. But Narada here quotes the authority of Vyasa to show that worship may be continued even after realisation. Witness for example how all the Acharyas such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, Gouranga, Ramakrishna and others engaged themselves in worship even after their realisation. In fact it is only the realised man's worship that really deserves the name, as it is only he who has a full vision of the glory of the Lord whom he worships, and it is only he who can worship Him with his whole heart and soul untainted by the ego.

4. *The like*—Refers to sacred dance, celebration of festivals, build-

ing and renovation of temples, social service, acts of charity, works of art such as painting and sculpture etc.

SUTRA 17.

कथादिषु इति गर्गः ।

कथादिषु in sacred talk and the like इति thus. गर्गः the sage Garga.

17. The sage Garga thinks that it expresses itself in devotion to 'sacred'¹ talk and the like.²

Note 1. *The sacred talk*—Lovers always like to talk about the objects of their love.

2. *The like*—includes all verbal expression such as prayer, japa, Stotras, study and exposition of scriptures, lectures on spiritual topics, Harikathas, Sankirtanams, composition of songs and other poetical and theological literature. While external activities of the Bhakta are helpful to others by way of example, the verbal expressions provide help by way of precept also.

Thus the Gita X:9 says, "With their hearts fixed on Me, with their life absorbed in Me, they are contented and rejoice." Bhagavatam X:14 again says, "Which man other than a butcher, would feel reluctant to listen again and again to the recital of the excellent attributes of the most glorious Lord, constantly sung by persons free from desires?" Witness the example of Narada. He always goes about singing the glories of the Lord in mad ecstasy. Witness again how Vyasa and Valmiki and Tulasidas composed the epics under the inspiration of Bhakti. Witness also the songs of the Alwars, Mirabai,

Kabir, Tukaram and the host of other Bhaktas of Bengal like Jayadeva. Parikshit delighted himself in listening to the glories of the Lord recited by Suka. Sri Ramakrishna and Gouranga immersed themselves in Sankirtan. Sri Suka says in the Bhagavatam X:1.16, "Enquiry about the Lord Vasudeva's stories purifies three people—him that describes, him that enquires and him that listens." Bhishma thinks that the singing of hymns is the best of all Dharmas. (Vide Sahasranama). Even in the Rig Veda we read, "O glorious all-pervading Lord, we worship you by mere repetition of your name." The Mantra occurs also in the Yajurveda. The Bhagavan himself says that He is the Jpayajna among all Yajnas.

SUTRA 18.

आत्मरत्यविरोधेनेति शण्डिल्यः ।

आत्मरत्यविरोधेन without prejudice to the delight in Atman (Self) इति thus शण्डिल्यः the sage Sandilya.

18. The sage Sandilya insists that it must be without prejudice to the delight in the Atman (Self).

Sandilya probably seems to think of the danger of mere physical and verbal expressions which are possible even without the proper mental background of delight in Self. He therefore wants us not to take every such expression as in itself being a characteristic of Bhakti. Bhakti is more mental than physical or verbal, and only in so far as the physical or verbal expression is prompted by the fullness of heart it deserves to be considered as a characteristic of Bhakti.

SUTRA 19.

नारदस्तु तदपिताखिलाचरता तद्विस्मरणे

परमव्याकुलतेति ।

तु but तदपिताखिलाचरता the consecration of all activities by complete self-surrender to him तद्विस्मरणे if He were to be forgotten परमव्याकुलता extreme anguish इति thus नारदः the sage Narada.

19. But¹ Narada is of opinion that the essential characteristics of Bhakti are the consecration of all activities² by complete self-surrender³ to Him and extreme anguish⁴ if He were to be forgotten.

Note. 1. *But*—This is to draw our attention to the difference in view.

2. *All activities*.—This implies that Narada does not narrow down the life of the Bhakta to rituals, chanting sacred 'Namas' and similar activities that are strictly called devotional.

3. *Complete self-surrender*.—This inward attitude is the prime characteristic of Bhakti; and every action done with this attitude has a due place in devotional life. For self-surrender is only another name for the effacement of the ego, and any work that helps this has a place in spiritual life.

4. *Extreme anguish*.—Extremes always meet, the Bhaktas feel a great delight when they reach the stage of realisation when the slightest forgetfulness brings the pangs of separation, and consider that as the highest culmination of Bhakti.

5. *If He were to be forgotten.*—

It is not possible for a realised man to forget God at any time. This is therefore meant to show that there is no possibility of forgetting Him as the mind is automatically prevented from such forgetfulness by the anguish which it would have to feel if he were to forget Him.

SUTRA 20.

अस्त्येवमेवम् ।

एवमेवम् thus and thus अस्ति does exist.

20. Examples do exist, indeed, of such perfect expression of Bhakti.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Life and Teachings of Zoraster : By Dewan Bahadur T. Bhujanga Rao. To be had of the Manager, Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavangudi, Bangalore. Pages 32. Price annas 4.

This is a very lucid presentation of Zoroastrianism in all its aspects. The Hindu reader will find it specially useful because it brings out the affinity between the religion of ancient Iran and Hinduism represented in the Veda.

An Eight-hundred Year old Book of Indian Medicine and Formulas : By Elizabeth Sharpe. Published by Luzac & Co., 45, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1., London. Pages 135.

This book is described as a translation from a very old manuscript in a peculiar form of Hindi, supposed to have been written by a pupil of the great Jain priest Hemchandra. It gives a very large number of recipes for the cure of many forms of diseases. Of course no one can vouch for their actual medicinal value.

Sri Ramakrishna : By Subodh Chandra Dey, B.A., (Bengali). Price Rs. 2. Pp. 430. Copies can be had of the author c/o Ramakrishna Math, P.O. Wari Dacca.

This nicely got up and handy biography of Sri Ramakrishna written in elegant Bengali prose, bringing out with essential details and reflections the master's great character as revealed through his unparalleled spiritual discipline, realizations and message, is not redundant, although other larger and smaller works already exist on the subject. An orderly presentation with the available

details regarding the relation which large number of disciples and admirers had with the Master, form distinguishing feature of this volume. We recommend with pleasure this publication to the Bengali knowing readers.

Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky : Compiled by Mary K. Neff. Published by Rider & Co., 34, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pages 323. Price sh. 18.

The compiler of this work is to be congratulated for the very successful way in which she has been able to produce what is virtually an autobiography of the celebrated founder of the Theosophical Movement, nearly forty-five years after her death. For, but for connecting links and critical remarks here and there, the larger portion of this book consists of extracts from the letters, conversations, etc., of Madam Blavatsky, together with confirmatory evidence of the events referred to in them from the writings and utterances of contemporaries of Blavatsky and the chief associates in her life and work. Besides utilising materials already published, the compiler has incorporated a very large body of hitherto unpublished materials from the archives of the Theosophical Society. The book has therefore the appearance of a full-dressed autobiography and one can follow in it the life of Madam Blavatsky in her own words almost from year to year. One gets also details of her life prior to the formation of the Theosophical Society. Besides being an admirable production from the literary point of view, the work will be of much interest to occultists too. The book also contains twelve excellent illustrations.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Math and Mission

We are requested to announce that Srimat Swami Suddhananda has been appointed President, Srimat Swami Virajananda Vice-President, and Swami Madhavananda Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. These changes have been necessitated by the passing away of Srimat Swami Vijnanananda, the late President.

The Ramakrishna Mission 29th Annual General Meeting

Progress of Work in 1937 : The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held on Good Friday at the premises of the Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Mission, with Swami Madhavananda in the chair. A large number of monastic and lay members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. Srimat Swami Virajananda, the Secretary, then presented the report for the year 1937. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of the work done by the Mission exclusive of the work done by the Ramakrishna Math and its branches in India and the centres in N. and S. America, England and Europe.

Centres : There are at present 100 centres of the Math and Mission in India and abroad. At the end of 1937, the total number of centres of the Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Straits Settlements was 48.

Activities : The Mission conducted both Temporary Relief and Permanent Work. Temporary Relief Work was done in times of distress caused by flood, fire and small-pox in Puri and Bankura Districts.

Philanthropic : 29 out of the 48 centres conducted one or more of three kinds of work, viz., Indoor Hospital Work, Outdoor Dispensary Work and Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds.

In all there are 7 Indoor hospitals including the Maternity Hospital and Child Welfare Centre at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, and there are 30 Dispensaries including the Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi. The philanthropic centres are flung in different parts of India, and some of them are situated in Benares, Hardwar, Brindaban, Allahabad and other places of pilgrimage, and in cosmopolitan cities and towns such as Rangoon, Bombay, Cawnpore and Lucknow. The Sevashrama at Benares is the most prominent. The Rangoon centre treated 2,39,369 cases in 1937.

Philanthropic work was done also by rural centres such as Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Jairambati in Bankura and Sargachi in Murshidabad.

The Indoor Hospitals treated 9,007 patients in 1937, as against 7,707 in 1936. The Outdoor Dispensaries at the Headquarters and branch centres treated 11,37,794 cases as against 10,29,349 in 1936, the new and the repeated cases being in the proportion of 2 to 3 nearly.

Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds was done by 30 centres.

Educational : The Educational Work of the Mission falls mainly into two divisions, viz., (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, as well as Night Schools, Adult Schools and Industrial Schools; (2) Students' Homes, Hostels and Orphanages.

Mass education for adults and juveniles through Day and Night Schools formed a feature as usual.

Out of the 48 centres 34 conducted some type of educational work or other. In all the centres together there were 19 Students' Home, 4 Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools, 6 High Schools, 4 M. E. Schools and 3 Industrial Schools. The total strength of these 96 institutions in India, Ceylon and Straits Settlements was 8,250 in 1937.

Rural educational work was done by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contail in Midnapore, Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha has nearly 500 boys and girls in its schools.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the arts, crafts and industries which may be grouped under the following heads: (1) Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, (2) Spinning, weaving, dyeing, calico-printing and tailoring, (3) Cane-work, (4) Carpentry, Cabinet-making, (5) Shoe-making. In the Industrial School at Madras the Mechanical and

Automobile Engineering course covers a period of five years and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habigunj conducts two shoe-factories to provide better training to the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Societies for the benefit of the cobbler.

The Sister Nivedita Girls' High School at Calcutta had 529 girls in 1937. The educational centre at Madras is the largest. It had 1,784 pupils in 1937, in all its institutions. The Mission Residential High Schools at Deoghar and Perianaikenpalayam (Coimbatore), and the Students' Home at Dum Dum near Calcutta also did valuable work.

Libraries & Reading Rooms: There were more than 55 Libraries and as many Reading Rooms in the Mission centres. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent library work and had an attendance of over 34,000 in its reading rooms in 1937. The Students' Home at Madras had more than 21,000 volumes in all its libraries. The total number of books in the Mission centres may be roughly computed to be over 65,000 in the year under review.

Missionary: The monastic members went on propaganda tours in India and abroad. A Swami was deputed on invitation to Fiji, and another to Paris, where they did successful preaching work. The teachings of the Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were disseminated chiefly through the English periodicals—the *Prabuddha Bharata* (Mayavati), the *Vedanta Kesari* (Madras), the *Message of the East* (Boston), the *Vedanta* (Switzerland) and the *Voice of India* (Hollywood) and through the *Udbodhan* in Bengali and *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil, as well as through translations of the Sanskrit scriptures, and the publications of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in English and some Continental languages.

More than 2,500 classes were held and more than 250 meetings convened during the year under review.

There are colonies for the Harijans and other backward classes conducted in Trichur

(Cochin), Shella (Khassia Hills) and other places by the monks of the Mission.

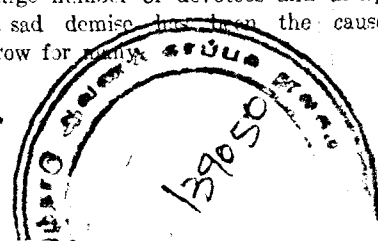
Expenditure: The total expenditure for the Mission work in 1937 was Rs. 5,74,963-3-5.

The Ideal of Service: Swami Vivekananda, the Founder of the Mission, sounded the clarion call for self-dedication and service of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. Such a noble ideal alone is capable of giving peace and light in the world to-day with its clash and conflict, darkness and despair. Will not the young men of India respond to the call?

*
Mahasamadhi

Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj passed away on April 26th at Ottapalam in the Malabar District, at the age of about 72.

In his early life, the Swami was known as Tulsi Charan Dutt, and was the son of Deva Nath Dutt, belonging to a well-known Datta family of Bosepara in Baghbazaar. While he was young, he had the good fortune to meet Sri Ramakrishna at the residence of Balaram Bose at Baghbazaar. After the Master's demise he joined the Baranagore Math, and was thenceforth known by the name, Swami Nirmalananda. He was much loved by Swami Vivekananda. He was sent in 1903 to America to assist Swami Abhedananda in his work there. In 1906 he returned from America and spent the following few years in pilgrimage and spiritual practices in various holy places of North India. In 1909 he was sent by the Belur Math to assist Swami Ramakrishnananda in carrying on the work in the Ashram at Bangalore, which the latter had started. For over 20 years he was the president of Bangalore Math, during which time he spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in various places in South India and established monasteries in Kerala. He was an effective speaker and possessed an undaunted spirit. He leaves behind him a large number of devotees and disciples. His sad demise has been the cause of sorrow for many.



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