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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

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JANUARY, 1938

[No. 9

HINDU ETHICS

स्वधर्ममनुतिष्ठत्सु धैर्यादचलितेषु च । स्वर्गमार्गाभिरामेषु सत्त्वेषु निरता ह्यहम् (श्रीः) ॥
सुसंमृष्टगृहाश्वासन् जितस्त्रीका हुताग्रयः । सन्तुष्टभृत्यसचिवाः कृतज्ञाः प्रियवादिनः ॥
यथार्हमानार्थकरा ह्रीनिषेवाः यतव्रताः । उपवासतपःशीला प्रतीता ब्रह्मवादिनः ॥
नैनानभ्युदियात् सूर्यो नचैवासन् प्रवेशयाः । अर्धं च रात्र्याः स्वपतां दिवा चास्वपतां तथा ॥
कृपणानाथवृद्धानां दुर्बलानुरयोषिताम् । दयां च संविभागं च नित्यमेवानुमोदताम् ॥
व्रतं विषण्णमुद्विग्नं भयार्तं व्याधिपीडितम् । हृत्स्वं व्यसनार्तं च नित्यमाश्वासयन्ति ते ॥
नैकोऽनन्ति सुसम्पन्नं न गच्छन्ति परस्त्रियम् । सर्वभूतेष्ववर्तन्त यथात्मनि दयां प्रति ॥
नित्यं दानं तथा दाक्ष्यं आर्जवं चैव नित्यदा । उत्साहोऽयानहंकारः परमं सौहृदं क्षमा ॥
नेवाकाशे न पशुषु नायोनौ न च पर्वसु । इन्द्रियस्यविसर्गं ते रोचयन्ति कदाच न ॥

Persons aspiring to be favoured by Shree, the goddess of prosperity, beauty and love, should perform their life's duties with unshaken fortitude, joyfully setting their steps on the heavenward path. Their homes are to be immaculately clean and their servants and helpers heartily satisfied. They should themselves be grateful for every good turn ; never uxorious ; regularly worshipping the Deity in the holy fire ; sweet and obliging in address ; taking up only works fit and proper ; gifted with the sense of shame ; self-controlled by means of solemn vows ; undergoing fasts and austerities ; continuously cheerful ; mindful of scriptural studies ; waking up before sunrise and not lounging in bed at morning hours ; sleeping only half the night and never at day ; habitually happy in showing kindness to distressed, helpless, aged, weak and sick fellow-beings as well as to womankind in general ; ever ready to console the alarmed, the cheerless, the anxious, the terrified, the diseased, the deprived and the afflicted ; averse to partake singly savoury dishes, never knowing others' women ; regarding others with deep love as they would themselves ; permanently disposed to charity ; and skilful, upright, persevering, forgiving, perfectly friendly, shorn of all arrogance, and never indulging in debauchery.

Mahabharata : Santi Parva, Chapter 235.

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THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

[This is the month in which the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's birthday falls. In memory of it we give in the following paragraphs a brief exposition of the principles of Indian nationalism which Swami Vivekananda placed before his countrymen a few decades ago.]

I

IT may be of considerable interest in these days of national awakening to consider in brief the theory of nationalism propounded by Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest of India's national leaders in modern times. Under the state of affairs obtaining at present in our country, we are accustomed to equate a national leader with a leader of a political party or with one who has distinguished himself by fighting the Government and by courting jail and sufferings of various kinds. Swami Vivekananda was not, however, the leader of any political party, nor had he led any political agitation. Yet in the evolution of Indian nationalism Swami Vivekananda occupies a very important place. For the occasion when the Swami appeared before the Indian public was the first time when anything like national enthusiasm manifested itself in considerable volume in India ever since she had lost her political freedom a century back. In all the big cities that the Swami visited after his return from the West, crowds, unprecedented in the histories of these cities, gathered to listen to the Swami's addresses. At the present day we are accustomed to mammoth meetings held in open air in connection with the visits of well-known political leaders; but in those days such things were unknown, and except for some important Government functions and

for religious festivals, any gathering that could be called huge was practically very rare in India. That the Swami could for the first time evoke an enthusiasm of such a magnitude without the help of any all-India organisation or planned propaganda, shows positively that there was in the personality and message of the Swami something that had a startling appeal to the conscience of India. There was no doubt a strong religious strain in this appeal, but there was something more in it. Very large sections of people who were attracted to the meetings that the Swami addressed were not perhaps much interested in the philosophical doctrines expounded by him, but they felt that he stood for something of much wider interest than abstract philosophies.

If we would enquire into what this wider interest was, we would be led to the spirit of nationalism that the Swami represented. Before the Swami's time many an Indian had gone to the West; but all of them had gone there to learn, to admire everything that was of the West, and to come back and tell their countrymen that they were a worthless lot and that their only hope lay in following the footsteps of the West. Our educated men, who had been educated into this state of mind, watched with wonder the fortunes of this strange young monk in the West, and were surprised to see how he contradicted all their pre-con-

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THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

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ceived notions by his example. For he went to the West not to learn but to teach, and his teachings were listened to with respect by large numbers of cultured men belonging to that very race which dominated India politically and whose cultural domination too educated India was gradually learning to accept. In the very centres of Western civilisation they found him declaring quite fearlessly, and with the conviction of a prophet, how India had plenty to teach the West, and how India alone, of all nations in the world, could do this particular work. It was in fact this bold stand that the Swami took, the courage with which he declared a truth which no one till his time was bold enough to declare, that created a stir wherever he went, and roused the sleeping Indian nation to a state of self-consciousness once more. And it is on the basis of this—his re-assertion of India's cultural self-respect—that the claim of Swami Vivekananda to be one of the greatest national leaders of modern India rests.

II

The Swami pointed out to his countrymen that India is one of the greatest historical puzzles. She is the only country in the world that has survived the test of millenniums. There were civilisations other than her own—the cultures of her contemporaries in the past—that thrived vigorously for some length of time, founded huge empires, organised powerful armies, carried on extensive trade, and also spread the light of culture in the surrounding areas. Such were the civilisations of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome. But these civilisations, whose glory depended mainly on their military strength,

have disappeared from the face of the earth after having lived a vigorous national life for a few centuries at the most. But quite different has been the case with India. She had never been a conquering country, but was on the other hand invaded several times by powerful foreign armies. But through all the vicissitudes of her history she has preserved the integrity of her culture. The same Vedas are honoured to-day as they were done three or four thousand years ago. The same Upanishads that came out of the minds of the ancient Aryan Rishis continue to satisfy the spiritual aspirations of the noblest minds of this country. In social organisation, in rules of domestic life, in the systems of law followed, in the matter of literary traditions—in fact in every field of life we find the same ideals followed, as in the hoary past, and wherever there have been changes, even sweeping, in the application of these to details of life, there is preserved the distinct continuity of tradition. In other words, if the Vedic Rishis came to India to-day and studied the kind of culture prevailing in the country at present, they would, at their first contact with it, recognise it to be in the direct descent of the culture which they themselves had created a few thousands of years ago.

Swami Vivekananda points to this unique historical fact again and again, and asks the Indian nationalist to ponder over its significance. In Nature nothing is allowed to survive when it has ceased to fulfil any useful function. When a body ages it dies. So a culture, too, when it has thrived for some length of time, degenerates and perishes. In fact the vitality of a culture depends on what it has got to contribute positively to the develop-

ment of mankind as a whole. When it has lost all its creativeness, and self-indulgence has become the only function of the nation or nations representing it, then Nature wipes off that culture from the face of the earth, handing down whatever useful contributions it has made, to new people who are better fitted to promote human welfare. According to the Swami, this fact that India has lived through these thousands of years, and yet retains her vitality, is a positive evidence showing that, unlike her contemporaries of the past, who are only memories at the present day, she has yet got to make great contributions to the collective life of mankind.

III

As to what that contribution is, the Swami ascertains from the study of India's past. Every nation, according to him, stands for some particular idea or ideal, and its national life centres round that ideal. In some countries it may be politics, in others social reform, and in still others industrial organisation. The life of a nation is at its greatest vitality when the people and their leaders remain faithful to their particular ideal, and the nation declines in proportion to its incapacity to keep that ideal bright and remain true to it. To illustrate this point the Swami often refers to the story of the ogre who could not be killed because his opponent did not know that his life resided not in his body, but in a bird that lived on the branch of a certain tree. Unless that bird were killed, the ogre could not be killed. So too in the case of a nation, its life lies in its particular national ideal, and the furtherance or hindrance of its destiny in life depends on the integrity with which that ideal is preserved.

The ideal round which India's national life is organised is religion. In other countries too people have religion, but it is only one of the many concerns—and that too only a minor concern—of life. But here in India all branches of culture have centred round the conception of man's spiritual destiny, and our individual and collective life have been organised in such a way that it is conducive to the production of the highest type of spiritual men. Our great leaders of the past, whose memory still remains green in the nation's mind, are incarnations and saints like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya and others. Even in her recent history, India has been producing mystics and saints of the highest type, the like of whom are not to be seen in countries that occupy the highest position in the political and industrial life of the modern world. In spite of the condition of backwardness in education and industrial life, the Indian people show a keen appreciation of true religious spirit and a capacity to recognise men of spiritual genius.

The Indian nationalist, if he really desires to serve the nation, must remember this fact clearly in mind. Rightly or wrongly, the people of India have, through the strenuous efforts of centuries, developed a particular bent of mind suited for actualising spiritual ideals. India's strength in the past lay in that, and the contribution she has made to the general good of mankind has also chiefly been in the spiritual field. Whenever any powerful race, Persian, Greek, Roman or whoever else it might be, built a mighty empire, knit the highways of the world and brought distant countries into mutual communication, then India always came out of her aloof-

ness, and deluged the world with the spiritual ideas which she had been conserving in the bosom of her national culture.

To forget this particular bent of India's mind, her national ideal, and reconstruct her collective life on ideas of political greatness or military achievements, will be as vain as it will be disastrous, according to the Swami. It is impossible to drive the Ganges back to its source after it has traced its way up to the ocean, and even if this impossible task is attempted, the consequences are only bound to be disastrous. So too the momentum which the nation has gained through the work of centuries cannot be thwarted, and any attempt in that direction is bound to have only repercussions of a very injurious type. In fact India has made the selection of her function in the collective life of mankind in the distant past, and that consists in contributing to the spiritual enlightenment of mankind. That choice cannot now be nullified. And after all it is not a bad choice. To give the life-giving waters of spirituality to the nations of the world, to direct their thought from ephemeral concerns like conquest, empires, money-making, etc., to the eternal verities of life, to speak unto men with the strength of conviction about the existence of God, about the nature of the soul and about the ways of realising our highest spiritual destiny—this is not in any way a mean and ignoble function.

And the way in which India discharged this function in the past brings credit to her name. All other nations have spread their culture in the world with the help of the sword and their military strength. Every idea they contributed to the world had to be soaked in the blood of millions before

it could find general acceptance. But India on the other hand has always inculcated her ideas in a spirit of peace and goodwill to all. Her influence has always been like the gentle dew falling unnoticed but bringing the fairest roses into blossom. She lives to-day after weathering the storm of millenniums because hers has been the most glorious contribution to the good of humanity, and this contribution has been made without robbing others of their land and without shedding their innocent blood.

The Swami is certain beyond the shadow of a doubt that in the modern world too India is bound to play the same role as in the past. In the British Empire, in the English language and in the modern methods of communication the Swami sees that interlinking of the world which has always been the occasion for India to broadcast her spiritual ideas to the world at large. The Vedanta philosophy of India is according to the Swami the highest achievement of man in the quest after God, and to his mind it is the only system of religious thought that can stand the test of reason and science, without applying which the modern mind is not in a mood to accept any religious system. With her natural aptitude for understanding and realising spiritual ideals, and with her familiarity with this wonderful philosophical tradition of Vedanta, India is the land fitted in every way to satisfy the spiritual hankering of man at the present time.

The Swami is convinced that India's future is closely interlinked with the degree to which she remains faithful to her spiritual ideal, and the earnestness with which she prepares herself to fulfil the great work of ministering to the spiritual needs of

men. To those who ascribe India's downfall in the political and economic field to her pre-occupation with religion and spiritual ideals, the Swami would say that her downfall was not due to religion but due to a misunderstanding and misapplication of it. To set right that religious back-bone of the nation is the only way of remedying her ailments in all fields of life. The Indian patriot should inculcate healthy political ideas and new ways of social organisation to the Indian masses through religion and not by disparaging it. It is no doubt true that politically and economically India is a down-trodden country, and it is very essential that immediate attention should be bestowed to better her condition in these respects. But an improvement of her political and economic conditions are necessary for India not because the attainment of the premier position in these respects is to be her highest aim, but only because sufficient food to eat and a sense of national self-respect are essential as conditions required for developing the higher faculties of the mind. To forget this, and to love politics and economics in themselves, to make the attainment of the dominant position in these fields as the be-all and end-all of our national life, is, according to the Swami, the surest way to bring India to her ruin. For then she would have violated her cherished national ideal, proved unfaithful to the mission entrusted to her, and there would be no useful purpose to be served by her in the collective life of humanity. The result will be that, like the civilisations of the past which have been swept away from the face of the earth because they made material prosperity and success their highest aim in life and thus became in course

of time unfit to contribute anything useful and constructive to human welfare, Indian culture too will vanish from the face of the earth and become a mere memory for antiquarians of the future to busy themselves with.

IV

Such were the principles of Indian nationalism which Swami Vivekananda championed. It would be seen that there is in it no reference to present-day politics, nor to any form of national hatred to which professional politicians generally appeal in their nationalistic propaganda. This may appear a weakness in the Swami's nationalism, and many impetuous patriots of to-day, caught as they are in the economic and political struggle with the powers that hold them down, and they may therefore be tempted to ignore his message as something unworthy of attention. But there is one point which such minds ought to bear in mind. A healthy and enduring nationalistic spirit cannot be built on hatred. One may for a time rouse the people's political passions by creating an intense hatred in their minds for those whom they consider their oppressors, rivals or enemies in worldly struggles. But suppose India gains political freedom. How is the patriotic spirit of a healthy type to be sustained afterwards. In many an independent country the nationalist politicians in the past, and even to-day, manage to keep the people's enthusiasm at a high tension by creating hatred of their neighbours, or by inculcating that immoral land-hunger that goes under the name of imperialism. Or as some politicians prefer to do to-day, they may preach the doctrine of class war, heap hatred upon hatred, provoke reprisals

worse than what they inflict, and ultimately bring about a state of affairs in which no one has any liberty of speech or even of thought, and every one thirsts for the blood of his neighbour.

In contrast to this ephemeral and disastrous type of nationalism, stands the glorious, eternal gospel of nationalism that Swami Vivekananda preached. To-day India may think that political struggle and economic reorganisation should form the essence of her nationalistic policy, but a day shall

come, after she has been comparatively relieved of her difficulties in these respects, when she shall look for a more enduring basis than passing hatred for the organisation of her national enthusiasm, and then she shall see the light she is searching for, in the eternal mission of India as the spiritual teacher of mankind—in the inspiring and elevating spiritual nationalism of India which Swami Vivekananda preached so eloquently.

—:o:—

HALF AN HOUR WITH SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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

[Mr. Ghosh is the retired professor of Philosophy, of the Hazaribagh College. The incidents he narrates reveal an important trait in the character of Swami Vivekananda.]

AT the request of the Editor of *The Vedanta Kesari*, I venture with hesitation to relate an incident of my life which I have kept to myself now for about 40 years. To be precise, except a short notice published by the well-known poetess, Mrs. Kamini Roy, in the now defunct Bengali monthly, the *Navyabharat*, I do not think the incident has found a place in any public journal.

At this advanced age of mine, the diffidence of my early youth may be got over, and this momentary episode in the life of Swami Vivekananda may have its place in public print to show that he could be great even in small matters and that he could behave like a simple child of nature with school boys. These lines are jotted down in the hope that as full a narrative as my memory would now permit may be of interest to those who are eager to know all about the great Swamiji.

The art of writing biography in this country is still in its infancy. Many good biographies have been written on some of our worthies. We come across in them a record of their achievements, but human touches, even of their failings which give colour and flavour to their earthly lives, are in many cases conspicuous by their absence. This incident may be of interest to the readers of this journal as showing an interesting human side of the great Swamiji.

I was a student of the Matriculation class of Baidyanath Deogarh High School in 1898. Once in the month of November of that year our Headmaster, the late lamented Kavibhushan Jogindra Nath Bose, the biographer of our poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, told us that Swami Vivekananda of the Chicago-Parliament-of-Religions fame had come to the town for a change of weather. The Swamiji,

said our Headmaster, was a classmate of his and if any of his boys cared to see this remarkable man, that was the time.

The great impression that Vivekananda made at the Parliament of Religions in America in 1893 produced quite a sensation in this country and considerably enhanced the self-respect of our people. This reputation of an Indian monk reached us, the veritable striplings in schools, and filled us with pride. The words Vedanta, the Gita and Advaitavada, reached our ears, but their significance was beyond our comprehension. The thought that Swami Vivekananda had no time to waste with school boys did not deter us. My friend Satish Ch. Mazumdar, now of the India Government Secretariate, and I made up our minds to take our chance and wended our way in an afternoon towards the hill stream Durwa which forms the western boundary of the beautiful town of Deogarh in Santhal Parganas. Swamiji had taken up his residence in a house near by, lent to him by one of his Calcutta disciples.

With palpitating hearts, we entered the compound of the house and enquired of a man who looked like a helper in the household about Swamiji's whereabouts. He silently pointed out to a majestic figure clad in a yellow robe which slowly emerged out of the western side of the house, with an umbrella in hand. We had no difficulty in knowing who it was, took up courage, approached with hasty steps and stooped low to touch the feet of Swamiji, for verily it was he. But he quickly stepped back and did not allow us to touch his feet and inquired who we were and what was the object of our visit.

We told him that we belonged to the local High School and came to pay him our respects. He asked us to follow him and stepped into the public road in front of the house, leading to the stream Durwa. We felt proud to have the Swamiji all to ourselves and the privilege of being able to have a quiet walk with him.

The house was situated in a most beautiful quarter of the town. A well-laid road crossed the hill stream Durwa at a distance of half a mile from the place and traversed a high ridge beyond it and then disappeared in the midst of yonder hills. It was a lovely early winter afternoon; the sky was beautifully clear and the distant range of mountains clad in charming vegetation stood overlooking the plains below.

While we slowly walked with the Swamiji, he seemed to be troubled with hard breathing. On inquiry he replied he was not keeping good health and came to rest for a few days in that health resort.

He thought his heart was sound, there seemed to be some trouble with his lungs. We came with the idea that the moment the Swamiji would get an opportunity he would talk to us on the Vedanta philosophy. But we tried in vain to draw him out in that direction. He seemed to follow St. Paul and wanted to be all things unto all men. He reserved his Vedanta for those that were fit for it; he talked of health, hygiene and sanitation to us, a couple of representatives of thousands of our school boys who are ruining health over their studies, mis-called education. He turned his eyes towards a distant range of hills that stood majestically against the western horizon and inquired whether we

had ever been to them. He expressed surprise at our answer that we had not the good fortune to go so far as yet. He then pointed out the utility of making long excursions occasionally for the benefit of our health, and told us that one of the best ways of utilising Sunday noons was to take some refreshments with us, spend the whole day in communion with Nature on chosen spots in yonder hills and to come back refreshed in the evening.

He enquired about our studies and the dietary arrangement in the hostels, and, hearing that we took some amount of ghee regularly, told us, with a characteristic emphasis on the word 'indigestible', not to take ghee overmuch because it is indigestible and it is better to take butter instead. It now appears from a distance of time that his sojourns to the Western world must have convinced him that butter is more useful as an article of food than ghee, which is of much use in this country. Scarcely one out of ten healthy men in this country who are not used to western mode of living would care to take butter in preference to ghee.

In the course of conversation, when he came to learn that we belonged to Eastern Bengal, he told us that he had been to our parts of the country years ago and found people take sufficient quantity of good fish as an article of food. This was all to the good. Common facts of life and living which escaped the notice of the ordinary Sannyasin had interest for him if it had anything to do with individual health and well-being.

After talking in this strain for a while, we reached the hill stream Durwa. Stopping on its bank for some time, we retraced our steps.

While we walked silently we noticed that continuous talk made him tired and the deep breathing caused a discomfort. We realised to some extent that a mighty spirit was struggling with a physical frame that bore the impetuosity of a strenuous youth and was bending under it. But we did not know that it was to give way at no distant future and to liberate the spirit that could not be shut up within its confines.

Many thoughts childlike or serious were coursing through our youthful minds that seemed to be already under the fascination of a great soul. We enquired whether he was going to deliver any public discourses at the station and whether we could come to him occasionally. He replied to the effect that he was asked to take complete rest by his medical advisers and the period of his stay in the town was uncertain.

But Swamiji now once stood in the middle of the road and we stopped with him not knowing the reason why. He stood, a stately figure his physical weakness notwithstanding, just before me, looking curiously to the spot where my feet lay. In fact he found fault with the way in which the latchets of my shoes were tied, having both the ends of each latchet turned one way. He asked me to have them properly tied. Born and bred up in an out-of-the-way Eastern Bengal town, I failed to take the hint thus conveyed. I turned to my shoes, but could not detect the cause of Swamiji's uneasiness. His concern over the matter seemed to me to be inexplicable. His subtle perception of fitness of things in the matter of ordinary gear, showed not simply the keenness of his observation, but a high sense of propriety of the modern art

of living. My friends have never complimented me with the neatness of my dress. At times indifference to these matters may have degenerated into slovenliness. But in the present instance my fault was that, though I had put on a new pair of shoes on this auspicious occasion, instead of tying the latches keeping the ends turned to opposite directions as the general custom is, they were turned in one way. This did not escape the notice of the keen-witted, clear-sighted Swamiji. I stood still before him, almost stupified, not knowing what to do. He asked me to have them tied properly. This added further to my embarrassment. He then pointed one of his fingers to my shoes. This made the confusion worse confounded. Finding me irresponsible, he stooped low and blurted out, 'Well, let me have it.' This made me mechanically put forward my right leg towards the Swamiji; in a couple of seconds he tied the latchet properly keeping the two ends in two opposite directions and asked me to set right the other one. The whole behaviour seemed to be so natural and so strange, so instantaneous yet so significant, that sense seemed to be knocked out of me for the time being, and I failed to act up to his request. This makes me uneasy even at this distance of time at the thought that I failed at the moment to rise up to his expectation. A city-bred lad could have easily adapted himself to the situation, and would have gained approbation of the Swamiji. Not knowing the disease, I could not take to Swamiji's suggested remedy. Fortunately for myself he could easily understand that I got nervous and did not press the matter further. My wits returning to myself I atoned for my unconscious and seeming disobe-

dience, by trying to touch his feet, but he stepped back and did not allow me to take the dust of his feet in the orthodox Hindu fashion. The great Swamiji to touch the latchet of the shoe of an obscure schoolboy—what a great humanity and humility! How many educated men and women both here and abroad would have considered themselves fortunate to have the privilege of touching his feet. This utter self-forgetfulness on his part was so charming and so noble and compassionate that the matter needs no further comment. This momentary episode raised him immeasurably in our estimation and made his sacred name dear to us for life. Time came to bid him good-bye and we tried in vain for the third time to touch his feet.

We came back to the hostel after dark—the story got speedily circulated in our student world, and streams of friends came out to examine the latchet which was sanctified by the touch of the Swamiji; they would not allow me to untie the latchet and take off the shoes. This was however done late at night not without some misgivings and with heavy heart. The day has passed away, but its memory still clings to me and will do so as long as I live. The episode has revealed to me Swamiji's deep humanity and childlike simplicity that only a great man of his calibre could possess. While harbouring great thoughts in his mind and planning great schemes for social amelioration, he knew how to love children, lowly and simple folk *Trinad api sunecchana*.

We saw him for the second and last time a few days after in a railway compartment at the Deogarh station, by the side of Srijut Girishchandra Ghosh, the celebrated dramatist, on

their way back to Calcutta. Swamiji was then dressed in what looked like his travelling gear,—in half pants and coats, smoking tobacco in his pipe in the right Indian fashion, and chewing betel nut and pan. An ordinary Sannyasin would hesitate to come out in this way in public lest he might offend orthodox sentiments. But no Sannyasin had a scantier respect for social conventions than the Swamiji. This was a source of his strength and also the cause of his unpopularity with a certain section of his own people. He was indifferent to both as a Nishkama Karmi.

One thought more. Emerson has somewhere related the story of a nun who was reported to have performed miracles near Rome. This made the then Pope uneasy. His Holiness

deputed St. Philip of Neri to report on the matter. St. Philip went to the Convent where the nun was staying and sought permission of the Head for an interview with her. This was granted. He waited in a room for the nun and on her arrival put his dusty and heavy pair of boots on a chair near by and requested the nun to take them off his feet. The nun got offended and turned away. St. Philip left the room in a moment and came running to the Pope and reassured His Holiness there was no cause of apprehension. The nun was not humble and there can be no miracle where there is no humility.

Yes, the source of Swami Vivekananda's almost miraculous powers was in the hidden humility of his soul.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN INDIA

By Sir Francis Younghusband

In the following article, reprinted from *The New York Times Magazine* for September 26, 1937, Sir Francis Younghusband gives the impressions he gathered during his visit to India in March last, regarding the religious awakening in this country.]

I

INDIA for thousands of years has been a fountain-spring of spirituality. Perhaps it is the influence of the Himalayas upon its people drawing their souls up to unbelievable heights. May be it is the onward sweeping grandeur of its deep-flowing rivers. Perhaps it is the climate making possible the sweeter intimacy of life lived close to fellow-men and beasts and birds and trees and flowers in open-air brightness. Whatever may be the cause, the Indians have always had a special aptitude for closing with the essential spirit of things. They

have been particularly sensitive to the imprint of the surrounding world upon them. And they have been keenly responsive to that impress and eager to express it so that all may know of the joy which it has brought them.

And, while this special capacity for appreciating and enjoying the things of the spirit is always latent in Indians, there are times when they are particularly impressionable and bursting to express their impression. The present is such a time. There is in India a veritable spate of spirituality. Not for centuries have Indians been so spiritually alive.

Public attention is mostly directed to political events ; the new constitution is what is most talked of. And when "improvement" is referred to, what is usually meant is such material improvements as the extension of railways and irrigation canals, the construction of better roads, the erection of more factories, the use of more motor cars. But these are mere surface trivialities in comparison with that uprush of spirituality which is now pouring itself over the land. Not only in the sphere of religion but also in the sphere of art wonderful personalities, like Rabindranath Tagore and Iqbal in poetry, and Abanindranath Tagore in painting and Dilip Roy in music, are appearing all over India. A true renaissance is now in progress.

II

In the sphere of religion the great souls have to be sought out. Indians in this respect are very reserved. Like a flower, an Indian saint may produce the honey but those who would partake of it must come to him. The two most deeply religious Indians of to-day live in far retirement. One, Arabindo Ghose, though sufficiently versed in English culture to have been able as a young man to pass the very difficult examination for the Indian Civil Service, lives in almost unbroken seclusion in Pondicherry. And Ramana Maharshi, made known to Western readers by Paul Brunton, lives a most retired life in Southern India. These will probably not be appreciated to the full till after their deaths.

But for the last year there has been celebrated the centenary of the birth of one who in his lifetime lived a similarly retired life, known only to a very few. This was Ramakrishna.

And now that since his death in 1882 his disciples have made his life and work known throughout the world, we can better understand these great religious personalities and realise what their spiritual awakening in India actually is. We can see what it means to Indians. And we can form our own opinions of its worth.

III

Ramakrishna's parents were very poor and he was born in a mud hut in an ordinary Bengal village. But he was of the Brahmin caste and therefore had centuries of spiritual culture ingrained in him. And he was, even for an Indian, of a particularly sensitive disposition. When he was quite a boy, the sight of a flight of cranes against a dark cloud sent him into a trance.

Besides the impressionability he had an exceptional capacity for entering into the life and thoughts and feelings of others. He loved acting. Once when acting the part of a divine hero in a sacred play, he so entered into his part that again he passed into a trance. He was thus quick to receive impressions. He could live the lives of others and think their thoughts.

The one absorbing passion of this most sensitive creature was to 'realise God'. He was brought up in the traditional belief that the world was governed by God, and in those conversations, which, as a boy, he eagerly sought with itinerant holy men passing through his village, he learned of the joys of realising God. He therefore madly yearned to have this experience. He would so purify his whole self that it would be sensitive to the most delicate impressions which might be made upon it by God—by the Almighty Spirit of the Universe

which he had been taught was working through him as through all about him. And he would so enter into the spirit of the universe that he would be filled with it to more than the saturation point.

These efforts to attain the highest spiritual experience succeeded. By devoting his whole life to this one end, by deliberately searching for the holiest persons and profiting by their experience and by undertaking prescribed spiritual exercises, he rendered himself so sensitive that even the sound of men chanting the Holy Name would send him into a trance.

In this state of Samadhi, as it is called by Indians, he would experience bliss untellable. The 'realisation' or experience of God would make him swoon with delight. He would long to be ever with God. He would yearn to bring all others to him. And those who came near Ramakrishna told of an attraction which drew them to him again and again.

IV

Indeed, of such a sympathetic nature was Ramakrishna that he could feel with the followers of all religions. He was a Hindu of the Hindus and he remained a Hindu to the end. But for him Hinduism was not the one and only true religion. If each man followed his own religion through to the end, he also would find God ; he also would enjoy the same experience which Ramakrishna had known. All religions lead to God, he said. And by personal experience he had tested the truth of this assertion.

For some time he had lived the life of a Christian. At another time he lived as a Moslem. Through both ways he had reached God. By his practice and teaching he had there-

fore promoted the harmony of religions. This was his great contribution to the world. And the revitalizing of India was his contribution to his own country. He put new life into the dry bones of Hinduism.

This new life was very evident in the culminating act of the centenary celebrations of Ramakrishna's birth—the Parliament of Religions recently held in Calcutta. It was not exactly a parliament, as there was no discussion. It was more a series of meetings at which addresses were delivered by followers of different religions. But the point was that these addresses did arouse real interest.

I was invited to attend the Congress and had the honour of presiding at one of the sessions. And what I particularly noticed were the earnestness and patient attention with which the huge audiences, morning and evening, listened to the speakers. For the speeches varied much in quality and no one who was not in dead earnest could have sat through many of them.

V

As compensation, however, at every session there was at least one really striking address. Some holy man whose saffron robes showed that he had devoted his whole life to religion would in his own language, with concentrated fire of energy, drive home his point and rouse the enthusiasm of the meeting. Or, again, some Indian of distinction, like Rabindranath Tagore, would deliver an address in the most polished English and excite the loud admiration of the audience. And over all the meetings there was a refreshing informality, un-self-consciousness and good humor. People were there to enjoy themselves—to

enjoy a feast of the spirit. And quite evidently they went away with their expectation fulfilled.

In the week following the parliament, sacred plays were performed in a gigantic tent holding at least 3,000 persons. All were seated on the ground, the men on one side, the women on the other. The stage was merely a dais about three feet high, set in the middle of the audience, and there was no 'scenery.' Here, again, what was noticeable was the keen, rapt and reverential attitude of the audience. The tent was packed to capacity and crowds outside were trying to peep through. And in the plays themselves what was remarkable besides the first-rate acting was the occasional humor of even the most sacred characters—even of Krishna; he was human all through, as well as divine.

The appeal of Ramakrishna to modern India was again evident in the final act of the celebrations, a festival in which from 150,000 to 200,000 people must have taken part. Men, women and children, by road, on foot, on bicycles, in motor buses, and by river in steamers and in country boats, all day long from every direction streamed towards Belur Math, the monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission.

VI

In the great tent, around the big portrait of Ramakrishna, a most beautiful flower garden had been arranged, and all, as they entered, paid obeisance to the saint. In the centre of the tent a Kirtan, a sacred dance with singing, was performed. And in all parts of the grounds little village parties were holding their own Kirtans—dancing and singing with the most

burning religious fervour. Joy was apparent everywhere. If the sessions of the Parliament, presided over as they were by some of the most intellectual men in India, had shown that Ramakrishna had appealed to the most conservative cultured men in India, this festival was a sure sign that he had no less touched the hearts of the ordinary village folk.

I have dwelt particularly on the life and ideas of Ramakrishna because we are now at about the right focal distance to view them in their true perspective. But during his lifetime, he was hardly known beyond a small circle, and there may be in existence to-day a no less spiritual genius.

In Calcutta alone many Indians came to me with descriptions of living saints, each with his own following. Some told me, for instance, of a girl saint with wonderful powers of divining the inner essence of men and things. Her whole being, I was told, had been illuminated by contact with the Spirit of God. A celestial radiance emanated from her. And her composure and sweet smile carried away the worries of all who approached her.

As it was in Bengal so was it also in Southern, Western and Upper India. Everywhere one heard of some special genius who had arisen. And what was noticeable was that the followers of each were keen to claim their leader as the one and only and superior to every other leader. Probably the leaders themselves were far too humble to make any such claim. Certainly Ramakrishna never did. All he was anxious for was that others should experience the joy which he himself had known.

VII

When my visit to India ended, what then was my impression of present happenings there? Those impressions are probably different from what a Pope of Rome would have if he were to visit India. A viceroy might have a still different view. In now giving mine I do not claim for it any absolute truth. Still less would I wish to impose it on any single person. I only give it as a personal impression in the hope that it may help others to come to their own conclusions. And I had this advantage, that I was born in India and had spent over a quarter of a century in official and personal dealings with Hindus, Buddhists and Moslems.

I found that the great effort everywhere was to 'realise God'—to get in touch with whatever might be the central motive power of the universe, the fundamental source of all being. Very varied were the experiences of different individuals who had made this effort, but all agreed in this, that 'realization of God' resulted in a joy which was well-nigh unbearable—in an ecstasy of rapture beyond all expressions. And all yearned to share with others the joy which they had experienced and which in their view was of more worth than all the rest of life put together.

But I came quite definitely to the conclusion that, like bees in search of honey in the flowers, we must go to them and not expect them to come to us. Indians do indeed come to lecture in Europe and America. But it is not their natural way of communication and we do not see them at their best on a public platform. It is not thus that they can impart what is most precious. If we want that precious thing, we must go to them.

VIII

And it is worth going to them at the present time, for the revitalizing and spiritualizing of India are of value to the whole world. We Westerners may have to put away our airs of superiority and recognise that, if India has much to learn from us in the way of scientific progress, mechanical inventions, big business and the art of government, we have much to learn from her in just those things of the spirit which we sadly need to possess. We may learn from Indian spiritual leaders that balanced yet intense inner activity, that blend of unruffled composure with tremendous energy, and that capacity for appreciating and enjoying the very highest forms of happiness of which the organisers of the Ramakrishna celebrations furnished such valuable practical examples.

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 the quickening of the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of Sannyasin and householder devotees of his, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

It was the day of the full moon. With gentle steps evening was descending on the earth. All noise and bustle had subsided. In the far away temples the conch and the bell were being sounded for the evening service. In the monastery also, the auspicious sound of the conch had announced the call to evening prayers. The monks and the devotees were going to the Shrine, their gait expressive of their spirit of devotion and reverential attitude. Sri Mahapurushji also went to the Shrine as usual. Prostrating before the Master with great devotion, he took his seat on a deer-skin in the south-eastern corner of the room. He was seated in deep meditation with his hands folded and his eyes steadfast. The ceremony of waving the lights had begun. The calm, deep music of the evening service was leading the mind of the devotees towards concentration; especially the serene appearance of Mahapurushji was drawing everybody's mind more inward. By and by the service was over. All who were assembled began to sing in unison the song in praise of Sri Ramakrishna. Mahapurushji also joined his sweet voice with that of the rest, and sang in an absorbed mood. After the song was over, prostrating before Sri Ramakrishna one by one, many began to go away to their respective places

for meditation and other duties. With his eyes closed, Mahapurushji again became absorbed in meditation. His face became radiant with the sublime glow of Samadhi. This state lasted for a pretty long time.

At about 8-30 p.m., Mahapurushji was coming back to his room. A song which he was humming to himself almost inaudibly was expressing the joy of his heart; the voice was very sweet and full of love. A few monks and devotees desiring to meet him were awaiting his return. After Mahapurushji had taken his seat in his room, all of them made respectful prostrations before him and took their seats. The room was almost silent as if none desired to talk. After the silence was broken, there began a conversation on spiritual practices.

In a self-absorbed mood, Mahapurushji said, "Night is the best time for spiritual practices. Meditation and Japa (repetition of God's name) should be done every day with great steadiness; for that purifies the mind. If meditation and Japa are done with steadfastness for some time, a Godward disposition will be permanently awakened in one's mind, and one can get a taste of the Divine bliss. One should not go away leaving one's seat immediately after meditation, as that would not render the spiritual mood

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CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

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strong. After meditation it is better for one to reflect on the subject of one's meditation for some time at least, keeping to the same seat. After that, one should read some select devotional hymns or such other pieces that are favourable to contemplation. The contemplative mood and the Divine joy become deeper and continue for a longer time by that. Even after leaving one's seat, one should be revolving about God in one's own mind, without entering into conversation with anybody. As a result one feels as if that exhilarating mood of meditation is still persisting. This not only brings great delight in one's heart, but also greatly helps one to live inspired with high thoughts."

A monk : Maharaj, is it not necessary on our part to go out now and then for the practice of austerities and spiritual exercises? Would it not be favourable to the life of the monk to wander in various places and holy spots as a pilgrim or an itinerant ascetic?

Mahapurushji : My boy, in ordinary parlance they say, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Can mere gadding abroad bring religious merit or the realisation of God? However, it is good sometimes to subsist on Madhukari Bhiksha* or live in a solitary place without any arrangement for support or to travel from place to place for some period, in order to destroy one's egotism and arrogance, or to cultivate complete reliance upon the Lord.

Undoubtedly spiritual welfare results from that. But there is no use

* Cooked food, sufficient for one, received by monks from several houses as alms, as a honeybee (Madhukara) gets nectar from various flowers without harming them.

of doing so year after year continually. Swami Adbhutananda used to say at times, "Where will you go wandering about? If you are a child of Sri Ramakrishna, stay in one place." This is rightly said. One who finds Him here, finds Him outside also. Where shall you wander about and why? He is already in our heart. It is indeed because of this that the Master used to sing almost daily, "Oh, my mind, abide within yourself; never go under anybody else's roof. Whatever you want, you shall get seated here alone; only you make a search in your inner chambers. That supreme Treasure is the philosopher's stone, capable of giving you whatever you want. Many a jewel lies scattered at the door of the dancing room of that Chintamani (wish-yielding gem)."

Mahapurushji sang this song in his sweet voice again and again. After a brief silence he continued, "Towards the end of the song is taught a great truth about God that many a jewel lies scattered at the door of the dancing room of Chintamani. Everything lies at Her door—enjoyment, freedom, even knowledge of Brahman. My boy, but then you have to search after and ask for it with great eagerness. This search itself is what is called spiritual practice. She bestows Her grace as soon as one prays to Her sincerely. And if out of Her grace She opens the door a little and awakens the Kundalini (latent Divine power), you can perceive that everything exists inside. But if one fails to receive Her grace and Kundalini is not awakened, then nothing will be gained."

A devotee : Yes, Swami Brahma-nandaji also used to say that the door to the Knowledge of Brahman will be

opened as soon as the Kundalini awakens at the Mooladhara and ascends through the path of the Sushumna (spinal column).

Mahapurushji: It is exactly so. If the Kundalini does not become awakened, nothing can be realised. It is for this reason that the Master used to pray to the Mother, with copious tears in his eyes, "Mother, wake up! Mother, wake up! O Mother Kundalini, wake up!"

Reciting the first line, Mahapurushji himself went on singing the song, "Oh Mother Kundalini, wake up. You are of the nature of the Eternal Bliss, you are of the nature of Divine beatitude (Brahmanandam) and are residing as a sleeping serpent in the lotus of Moolaadhaara (lowest Yogic centre) On the triangle (of the Chakra of Manipoora) the fire burns, and your body has become heated. Consort of Siva, the enclosure of the self-existing Siva, you give up the Moolaadhaara. Make your way through the path of Sushumna, and rising to view in Svadhishtana, be in movement through Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna. Giver of Satchidananda, being united with Supreme Siva in the thousand-petalled lotus in the head, you have your wonderful play." Oh, what a self-absorption! It cannot be expressed in words. Thrice Mahapurushji sang the song and gradually assumed silence. His face became illumined with a calm sweetness; the room was pervaded by the spirit of the song amidst the silence that prevailed all round. A considerable time elapsed

in this state. Mahapurushji then uttered repeatedly, in a plaintive tone, "Mother, Mother, Mother of the Universe," as if a child that had lost the mother were crying. Slowly he regained his ordinary mood and said in a low voice, "Numberless are the days I have heard this very song from the lips of the Master. On certain days he would sing this song while fanning the Mother with chowry in his hand. With what self-absorption he would sing the song! We would all be at a standstill. He would lose his physical consciousness. The chowry would move slowly and he would sing in his ecstasy. And what a sweet voice he had! It is difficult to make you understand that spiritual state. Everyone's heart would melt completely. Could the mother be but awakened at such earnest prayers? And that Mother has become Brahma-Kundalini. Swami Vivekananda used to say, 'Don't you know that the Cosmic Kundalini Herself has awakened this time?' She at whose wish creation, preservation and destruction of this universe take place, that Mahamaya, the Cosmic Kundalini, has become awakened at the prayer of the Master. What is there to wonder in that the Kundalini lodged in each one will become awakened? That is the very reason why there is a great awakening throughout the world. And that Primal Energy has, in a sportive mood, manifested itself through the body of Sri Ramakrishna for the good of the world. And now what cause is there for anxiety?"

THE ETHICAL SIDE OF SPINOZA'S PHILOSOPHY

By Prof. Sheo Narayan Lal Shrivatsava, M.A.

[Professor Shrivatsava of the Hitakarini City College of Jubbulpore brings out below the ethical implications of the doctrine of 'degrees' in the revelation of Reality advocated in Spinoza's system of thought. It may be noted with interest that this doctrine equally answers the objections raised against all other parallel systems in which Divine immanence and the theory of nescience play the central role.]

SPINOZA's theory of reality seems *prima facie* to leave no scope for ethics. In his metaphysics there seems to be no place for such a thing as the attainment of an Ideal or Perfect Life; for, according to Spinoza's theory of reality, 'good' and 'bad', 'perfect' and 'imperfect' have reference only to *our* partial apprehension and do not express the nature of things *pre se*. Reality throughout its infinite variety of forms is governed by an immanent necessity, and its manifestations are what they ever can be, and cannot be otherwise. Natural effects follow inevitably from their efficient causes. Every natural product is necessarily all that it is capable of being. What it has not in comparison with other things is a want only when viewed from *our* limited perspective, and does not belong to the essential nature of the thing. In and for themselves, things are neither good nor bad, perfect nor imperfect, but necessarily what they ought to be. 'Good' and 'bad' are terms relative to us.

Such a view seems to rule out altogether the idea of an Ideal Good or Perfection to be sought for by man and to be eventually attained by him.

But, there is a deeper strand in Spinoza's philosophy which makes ethics significant and the ethical endeavour the supreme felicity of human existence. Spinoza recognises an

ethical standard of good and bad on the basis of his doctrine of 'degrees' of expressing Reality. That doctrine runs thus: Although all things are equally real, being equally dependent on God, yet all things do not express the nature of God (the Reality) to the same extent or in the same degree. We have a progressively higher manifestation of Divine nature as we ascend the scale of being from the earth and stone through plants and animals to man. Man expresses the nature of God more than trees and stones. Further, man's manifestation of the nature of God is in direct proportion to his appropriation in himself of thought or reason which is the very essence of divine nature. In thinking, man realises himself in God whose essential nature is thought or intelligence. Intelligence is the distinguishing characteristic of man which marks him out from all other creations of nature; and the highest end is realised when his intelligence attains its fullest development, that is, when God thinks in man or when man becomes conscious of himself and of all things *in union with God*. This is the highest moral ideal to be attained by man. From this point of view, we can speak of a 'good' and a 'bad' for man. Whatever helps man to approximate to this moral ideal is good, whatever hinders its realisation is bad. The difference be-

tween the good and the evil man is the difference between their levels of dependence upon God and their powers of expressing the divine nature. All things strive to express their own essential natures ; so does man. This striving to express one's essential nature is the basis of morality. The essential nature of man is intelligence or reason. Man approaches his moral ideal in proportion as he manifests reason in himself. In fact, man is *himself* only when he acts rationally.

The life of reason is the life of the free man. To follow 'passion' is slavery. The man who is impelled by passions does not act from his free choice, but is passively subject to external forces. The subjection to passions arises in Spinoza's view, from an inadequate apprehension of them or from not having a clear and distinct knowledge of them. "An emotion which is a passion ceases to be a passion, as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea thereof." The more we clearly apprehend an emotion, the more it comes under our control, and the less passive is the mind in respect to it.

We can have a clear and distinct conception of all our bodily modifi-

cations ; and emotions being nothing but ideas of the modifications of bodies, we can have clear conceptions of them. By having a clear and distinct knowledge of the emotions we should learn to dissociate them from their external causes and associate them with the idea of God. When emotions are cut off from their connections with external causes, they cannot exist.

But the adequate knowledge of things implies the knowledge of God, for without God nothing can be or be conceived. God is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the entire knowable reality as much as He is the *ratio essendi* of entire existence. Therefore to know God is the highest virtue of man. It is essential for every rational man to know the eternal and infinite essence of God and this is the common goal of all mankind. The knowledge of God is the crowning fulfilment of man's ethical life.

The true religious life in Spinoza's view consists in the performance of actions originating from the knowledge of God. Ethical life comes to its highest fruition when God is seen in all things and all things are seen in God.

THE SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE OF Fr. LALLEMANT

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 Father Louis Lallemant, the French Mystic. 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.]

"Ledich van ons selven ; wi : Goeds vri-eigen ; God : onse eigen".

(Freed from ourselves we become the unlimited property of God ; God becomes our very own)—Jan van Ruysbroeck.

WHEN taking up the Spiritual Doctrine (La Doctrine Spirituelle) of Louis Lallemant, the French mystic, one is principally struck by two things—on the one hand by the poverty and weakness of the philosophy propounded therein, which (in common with many of the orthodox Christian teachings) shows a very crude and materialistic conception of the miracles, resurrection of the dead and salvation, and on the other hand by the deep sympathy and knowledge revealed therein, of the practical training required for spiritual life, without which none can hope to attain to union or communion with God. Knowing full well that spiritual life will ever remain an idle dream for all those who cling to their worldly attachments and affections, and who thus do not follow Christ's advice, "First make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean", Lallemant stresses the preliminaries of spiritual life again and again, showing the innumerable pitfalls and temptations that may obstruct the path of the aspirant.

As Sri Ramakrishna has said, there are mistakes in all religions although everybody thinks his religion is true and unfailing. So let us not dwell on what seems to us to be poor and dogmatic in his work, but on that which is true and helpful for all times. Although Christ Himself has taught His true followers the necessity and secret of non-attachment in many ways, the world—and above all that part of the world which professes to be Christian—does not care to listen to such sound advice, and rather looks for some easier and more comfortable interpretation of His sayings. Such was not the interpretative teachings of Father Louis Lallemant. In all his works there is a strain very much akin to that of Christ when He says, "Call none your father upon earth : for One is your father Who is in heaven", a teaching which is so much forgotten in our present-day world, writhing in agony as it is in the clutches of countless self-created forms of attachment, and even idealising any and every attachment to kith and kin, or tribe into sacred duty. For Louis Lallemant human duty means service to

God, which may take many forms, it is true, and may find many expressions, but which can never be degraded into the service of individual or collective selfish interests in the name of some far-away God for Whom all such 'dutiful' servants do not really care in the very depths of their hearts.

Voices like that of Louis Lallemant come down to us through the ages calling us back to truer values of life and to real human duty which eternally stands above and beyond the realm of all those valuations given to life by the machine-bound and thought-mechanizing age in which we live.

Forgetting the unchangeable background of life without which life becomes senseless, man has degraded himself into the slavery of his own creation, the machine, and is now whirled headlong towards destruction by the very forces he has made into his God.

When Father Louis Lallemant says, "We are so full of greed and illusion and so little on our guard against the deluding charms of creatures and of the created that we deceive ourselves ceaselessly", he gives expression to an eternal truth which all the great seers and prophets of mankind have recognised and taught in many ways and in many languages. More than ever "woman and gold", as Sri Rama-krishna used to call those two great enemies of man, go on leading the world to a mad dance of destruction and hallucination. So in those sainer and quieter moments, when the enthralling charm of these two is broken, we should try to turn to the words of men who themselves came to know something of the truth of life and thereby stopped being lifeless puppets

in the hands of forces which man lets loose on himself when he loses his true manhood and clutches at the phantoms called up by his feverish brain.

There is a passage in the Spiritual Doctrine, reminding us of the words of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita, of which it is almost a literal repetition. Louis Lallemant says, "In the beginning Divine things seem to be insipid, so that one has great pains to enjoy them. But afterwards they become sweet and so much to one's liking that one enjoys them with pleasure and comes to have nothing but disgust for the rest. Whereas the things of the world are delightful and flattering to our senses and highly pleasing in the beginning, but in the end nothing but bitterness is found in them."

Our world, to-day perhaps more than ever, has entangled itself in the mere appearance of things, overrating the glory of power and intellectual knowledge, and after having enjoyed for a short time the dazzling glamour of these, it is just beginning to feel the bitterness they always bring in their train till man awakes from his intoxication and again installs the eternal value of life in their rightful domains.

Father Louis Lallemant was born in the year 1578, the son of the bailiff of the country of Vertus, at Chalons-sur-Marne and was sent by his father at an early age to the College of the Jesuit Fathers at Bourges. From his very childhood he had a great horror of vice and impurity and had a very high conception of the service of God, cherishing the inner life more than all worldly prospects. He professed in Paris on October 28th, 1621.

It was one of his greatest maxims that one progresses in perfection only

to the extent one has progressed in purity of heart, saying again and again that this was the shortest and surest way by which to arrive at Divine Union, and the one infallible means to prepare oneself properly for the great communications of God. And he applied himself more than to anything else to the practice of keeping his soul pure, without any stain, never allowing it to become soiled by ever so little, by watching ceaselessly over his interior and over all the movements of his heart and mind. Besides this he had a great love for poverty and never permitted himself to possess more than was absolutely necessary.

His greatest pleasure was to have intimate converse with God at the time of his prayers, giving to contemplation and the practice of recollection more time than to anything else. Nothing touched or affected him except the love and the interest of God. His mind was continually busy with discovering the wishes and aims of God and to execute them as soon as he came to know God's will, whatever troubles and privations this might cost him.

His life was a blessing for many young souls whom he helped over the first difficulties in the spiritual path and to whom his guiding hand was that of a father's. He died on the 5th April 1635 at the age of 57 years, twenty-nine of which he had passed in the Jesuit Order.

In the 'Doctrine Spirituelle' Louis Lallemant describes in beautiful words the ordinary condition of the human heart which always feels, as it does, some supreme dissatisfaction and which always tries to remedy it by filling itself with some transient form or affection that deserts it again

and again. The motive-force of happiness is deeply laid in every human being and, as such, he is right. It even serves to show us that we are meant to be happy and free and loving, and that love is meant to be unchanging, but only through many a bitter experience in the course of its various lives does the human soul come to recognise its folly and begin to turn towards that which knows no decay and has been waiting within it from time immemorial. Although the doctrinal background of Lallemant's words is naturally that of the Roman Catholic Church, which means taking the soul's descent to earth as happening but once, yet the truth he proclaims in them is not tied down to any dogma and can be taken as a guide by all.

He says :—

HOW THE VOID IN THE HUMAN HEART IS TO BE FILLED

"God is the king of the hearts and of the inner life. The other kings have but power over the possessions and over the bodies of their subjects. They can only govern the interior by the exterior. Their empire does not extend to their hearts. Of these God alone has reserved for Himself the dominion, and He is so jealous of it that He does not wish to share this dominion with any creature. All our affections must be subjected to this law, and we owe Him the tribute of all the movements of our heart."

"We have in our heart a void which no creature can fill. It can be filled only by God, who is our beginning and our end. The possession of God fills this void and makes us happy. The privation of God leaves us in this void and makes us unhappy."

"Before God fills this void, He puts us in the path of Faith. And on

condition that we always look upon Him as our ultimate goal, making use of the creatures with moderation and bringing the use we make of them only to the service of God, contributing faithfully to the glory He wishes to draw from all created beings. He will give Himself to us so as to fill our void and to render us happy. But if we be lacking in faithfulness, He will leave us in this void which, when not filled, will be the cause of our greatest misery."

"The creatures want to take the place of our ultimate goal, and we ourselves are the first to desire to be our own end. Some creature says, 'Come to me, for I shall fill thee.' We believe him. We are deceived. Then comes another and again another who speaks the same language to us and deceives us in the very same way, and this goes on as long as our life lasts. On all sides creatures call us, promising to satisfy us, but all their promises are nothing but lies. In spite of that we are always ready to allow ourselves to be deceived by them. It is as if the bed of the sea were empty, and someone just took a little water in his hand to fill it. Thus we are never content, for the creatures, if we attach ourselves to them, drag us away from God and throw us into the element of pain, trouble and misery, which are qualities as inseparable from creatures as joy, peace and happiness are inseparable from God."

"Beyond the Incarnation we must no longer admire anything. It is dangerous to give our admiration to the creatures. Only God Incarnate deserves this. To admire something belonging to the natural order shows how small is the virtue that we possess."

"For two reasons we cannot find in the creatures that joy and that peace which are the fruits of the Holy Ghost. In the first place because the possession of God alone strengthens us against troubles and fears whereas that of the creatures causes us a thousand anxieties and apprehensions. Whoever possesses God is not troubled by anything, for God is his all in all, and all the rest has become naught to him. In the second place, because not one of the created things can suffice or satisfy us fully. Empty the sea of its waters and then go and put there one drop of water. Will you fill therewith that immense void? If God created an infinitude of beings, of greater and greater perfection, they all put together could not fill our soul, for it has a void which can only be filled by God."

"Only God has the right of sovereignty over our hearts, neither the secular powers, nor even the Church Herself, can ever extend their dominion so far. Our perfection and happiness consist in subjecting our heart to this kingdom of God. There is none but God who can satisfy it, for the heart has a void which can be filled only by God and by no one else."

THE PURIFICATION OF THE HEART

"We must direct all our care to the purification of our heart, for there lies the root of all our troubles."

"We are so full of wrong notions and erroneous judgments, of inordinate affections, passions and malice that we would be ashamed if we but saw ourselves as we really are. Let us imagine a muddy well, from which water is being incessantly drawn. In the beginning that which is drawn is almost all mud, but by continuing to

draw, the well becomes more and more purified and the water clearer, so that finally that which is drawn is perfectly crystalline. Similarly purifying our soul without ceasing, the bottom is gradually revealed, and God manifests there powerful and miraculous effects which He works in the soul and through it for the welfare of others. When the heart is well purified, God fills the soul and all its powers, memory, understanding and will with His Holy Presence and with His Love. Thus the purity of the heart leads to Divine Union, which cannot be reached by any other paths. To make ourselves like unto God we must needs renounce the likeness of the devil which consists in pride, in vanity, in presumption, and that of the animal which consists in the passions and in the disorderly movements of the sensual appetite."

"Every vice produces four evil effects in the soul; (1) it darkens and blinds it; (2) it soils it; (3) it troubles and inconveniences it; (4) it weakens it. But among these vices that which particularly blinds the mind is pride, and that which particularly soils the heart is voluptuousness."

"To have stifled in one's heart the movement of one single passion or one irregular inclination, to have torn from one's soul one single imperfection, such things signify a greater gain than acquiring the possession of a hundred-thousand worlds for eternity. And even had we not gained anything else by working the whole day like porters, but to free ourselves from one useless thought, we should esteem ourselves more than rewarded for our pains."

"Ordinarily we carry in our soul certain things which spoil our whole

interior. It may be some inordinate affection, some plan or some desire for a certain place or employment or charge. We must apply ourselves to attain complete indifference and not to seek anything but to possess God in this very life, so that everything else may become indifferent to us!

"A soul that by mortification has well cured itself of its passions and which through purity of heart has become established in perfect health, enters into an admirable knowledge of God and discovers things of such grandeur that it can no longer act through the senses."

THE EVIL EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENTS AND PASSIONS

"In the worldly-minded person passion extinguishes the light of faith and reason. Inordinate affection corrupts judgment, and makes him afterwards fall into the greatest disorder. The attachment to pleasure has corrupted judgment to such a degree that no light is left but for that. Vanity, sensuality and the attachment to our petty comforts extinguish in us those lights which make us see the evil which lies in such faults. We deride as scrupulous those who by great subtlety of conscience follow a different conduct. And so as to flatter ourselves in our blindness, we palliate by a thousand fine pretexts the passion which blinds us. We lay claim to good intentions and after that we just pass over all the movements of grace within us."

"The ruin of souls is produced by the multiplication of venial sins which cause the diminution of Divine Light and Inspiration, of grace and inner consolation, of true fervour and courage to resist the attacks of the enemy. From that follow blindness,

weakness, frequent falls, bad habits and insensibility ; for our affection once drawn aside, we sin without having any feeling for our sins."

" Those who scrupulously avoid venal sins, generally feel deep devotion and have in their souls a moral certitude that they are in a state of grace. On the contrary, those who permit themselves to commit without any scruple venal sins, no longer feel the elevation of true piety, and the Holy Ghost does not give them any assurance that they are in grace."

" So long as we are subject to our passions and inordinate affections, we are the slaves of the evil one who gives them their motive power, very much like the organist does to the keys he touches. He awakens the memory of objects and the phantoms of evil imaginations and then presents the idea in a way which is capable of exciting the particular passion he wishes to bring into play. And if we are not on our guard, he generally succeeds in his intention."

" But the worldly-minded, who are in perpetual servitude, do not even aspire to freedom. They love their chains, and, as Job says, find their delights among the brambles and thorns which tear them. Concupiscence and passions insensibly put out those infused supernatural lights of understanding and in the end succeed in killing them completely. That is why one comes across eminent minds which are nevertheless very blind regarding spiritual matters. There are people who have very good eyes, but this does not mean that they are very intelligent. Thus in matters regarding perfection all disorders begin with some passion or some inordinate affection for some object. It gradually de-

bauches the understanding, till this finally allows itself to be caught and henceforth only judges in favour of the passion of which it is being warned. One looks at some object or at some employment which one finds attractive and which has great splendour. Passion is stirred. One desires this employment. First the understanding, illumined by the light of grace, resists this desire and condemns it ; but as the passion goes on increasing in strength and the light of grace becomes gradually extinguished, the understanding no longer offers any resistance. It succumbs to the irregular inclinations of will. It approves of them. It finds reasons for their justification, and wholly corrupted by will, it, in its turn, helps in corrupting the same, giving it false maxims by which to authorise its irregularities."

" We are by nature disposed to let ourselves be charmed by the splendour of honour, by the applause and estimation of men and by the glamour of pleasure and the satisfaction of the senses, because we allow grace but little sway over our mind. It is for the same reason that if someone says a word about our faults, we cannot bear Him. He will awaken in our heart countless movements of fury, grief, bitterness and impatience."

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

" Let us try to approach God without ceasing, to bind ourselves to Him through our thoughts and through our love, and to give room to nothing which might distract us therefrom, except to actions done in His service, for which one must leave everything, even prayer and communion with God."

" As soon as we find some void in our occupations, let us turn usefully to God within us or to Jesus Christ, in order to kindle anew in us our devotion. From this will result that our mind, being always occupied in some saintly way, will not give entrance neither to vices nor to useless riches, and it will become noble and venerable to itself and to others, breathing a continual fragrance of saintliness."

" Let us trust in God who is faithful and never fails those who, having given themselves completely to Him, do but seek to please Him in all things."

May the voices of the great mystics of the East and of the West help in calling the present-day world back to truer ways of life and in making it realize that the deeper problems of life can never be solved by any 'ism' nor by selfishness, be it individual or collective, and that neither baseless dogmas nor any doctrinal bias can be made the starting point for a true solution of them, being as they are but another and even more noxious form of the human ego and its craving for power. The glorification of 'I and Mine' in all the fields of life, individual, social, national and religious, leads man hopelessly astray into the bottomless morass of ruthlessness and brute force, and throws him into deeper and deeper darkness and misery. This fact was well-known to the ancient seers of India. So they sang:—

" When a man gives himself up to wrong ideas, his mind enters the sinful way. His own actions are soon tainted, and he is flung into deep woe. But striving habitually after the good, with faith, self-control and courage, men progress to greater and greater

felicity. There are certain persons among us who do not make righteousness the principle of life. They are like chaff in the grains and like flies among birds. Whoever he may be, man cannot escape the effect of his prior actions ; he cannot outrun it " (Mahabharata).

At a time when all valuations of life are thrown mercilessly into the crucible, let us learn to listen again to these dispassionate voices of old and to turn inward so as to make ourselves fit to receive the light of truth with our whole being and act up to it according to the best of our power.

Let us pray from the very depths of our heart with the Venerable Louis of Blois :—" O Lord, Thou torrent of priceless treasures, draw myself to Thee, and make me hurry to the sweet fragrance of Thy perfumes with inextinguishable fervour. Give me the grace to love Thee with all my heart and from the very depths of my soul, because it is Thou who lovest me first. May my tenderness for Thee, O only and highest Good, be a blazing furnace ! May my whole soul be consumed ! May it be absorbed by the great sweetness of Thy Love and become intimately united with Thee for Thine own eternal glory. O Dear Beloved, deign to prepare for Thyself a pleasant and delightful habitation within me. Give me a pure and upright heart, free from attachments and detached from the representations and images of creatures, free, tranquil, serene, limpid ! O Sweet Light, loveable Light, infinitely beautiful, illumine me with Thy rays, penetrate into me, satiate me for the sake of the glory of Thy Name ! "

SCIENTIST AND SEER

By Sister Devamata

[Sister Devamata of Ananda Ashrama, California is well-known to the readers of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The limitation of the objective method of science and the need for the gift of insight for understanding Nature both internal and external, form the theme of her present article.]

SCIENCE in the nineteenth century moved forward on the level. It grew in breadth rather than in height. It had a "horizontal outlook", to borrow the expression of the eminent psychologist, C. C. Jung. With the 20th century has come a radical reorganisation of the scientific platform. The mechanical, materialistic view-point is breaking down, and to-day so great a physicist as Sir James Jeans can write: "The law and order which we find in the universe are most easily described—and also, I think, most easily explained—in the language of Idealism." And again: "... The physicist of to-day must needs have some acquaintance with ideas which used to be considered the exclusive preserve of metaphysics."

In his recent book, "The New Background of Science," Jeans seems to draw close to the theory of created things propounded by the early Indo-Aryan Sages of the Forest Books or Upanishads. The approach is, I believe, unintentional and unconscious but it is as if scientist and Seer clasped hands across the centuries. Those ancient Seers had no well-equipped laboratories, they offered no empirical proofs, yet they arrived at the same conclusions as those reached by observation and experiment in the laboratories of today. It was because they possessed an instrument more finely-tempered, more penetrating, than any

made of steel; one that disclosed more than prism, lens, test-tube, or mathematical formula could reveal;—the instrument of the human consciousness, raised to the highest point of efficiency in the superconscious state, the state of subjective vision.

By means of this, Indo-Aryan Seers were able to pierce the shifting clouds of material phenomena and perceive the causal realm behind. Viewed from this lofty height, the universe appeared to them evasive and ever-changing. The more they studied it, the more illusory it became, the more it seemed to escape them. Gradually, out of their subjective researches, they built up the Theory of Maya which has remained ever since one of the fundamentals of Indo-Aryan philosophy.

The theory of Maya declares that in the created world there is no absolute reality, no absolute existence, all existence is relative. Objects exist and are known only in relation to other objects; and this knowledge is necessarily impermanent, because each object varies according to the object to which it is related. It is small in relation to a larger object, large in relation to a smaller one, blue in relation to one colour, purple in relation to another. Thus all knowledge of material things must be shifting.

Modern science has come to a similar conclusion. The further it goes

in its investigation, the more it questions, the more it is forced to recognise its inability to touch Reality. "A scientific hypothesis," writes Sir James Jeans, "does not attempt to portray the reality of Nature, but only what we see of Nature. It may reproduce all the phenomena within our cognisance with perfect fidelity, and yet may differ from reality in the essence just as much as a photographic print differs from a living face."

In the light of Western science the entire phenomenal universe appears to hang in the balance. The only definite point seems to be the mathematical equation. Distance, ether, the constitution of heavenly bodies, even space and time, are under indictment. They may or may not have any real existence. F. H. Bradley, in his "Appearance and Reality," speaks thus of the problem: "We either do not know what space means and if so, certainly we cannot say that it is more than appearance." "Time is not real as such, and it proclaims its unreality by its inconsistent attempt to be an adjective of the timeless. It is an appearance which belongs to a higher character in which its special quality is merged. Its own temporal nature does not there cease wholly to exist but is thoroughly transmuted. It is counterbalanced and, as such, lost within an all-inclusive harmony.... It is there, but blended into a whole which we cannot realise." And Jeans writes:—

"True time implies the existence of a body at rest in space. Not only have we no means of discovering when a body is at rest in space, but there is every reason to suppose the phrase is meaningless. On these grounds, Einstein maintained that all time is "local"; there are as many

local times as there are planets, or stars, moving through space, and none of them is more fundamental than any other. This implies that it is just as impossible to locate an event in time in an objective way, as to locate an object in space in an objective way."

It is an interesting fact that in the Homeric poems there is no word for either time or space.

The objective method of research falls short in this, it dismembers the object it would study. It breaks up the atom or molecule to learn its nature. Sir James Jeans, with that scientific fairness which characterises all his writings, acknowledges this. He says: "Trying to observe the inner workings of an atom is like plucking off the wings of a butterfly to see how it flies..... Each observation destroys the bit of the universe observed." The result is that the physical scientist deals with a dead rather than with a living world; the living remains an enigma to him; and he comes to the conclusion expressed by Jeans, "That the advance of knowledge is at present reduced to what Einstein has described as extracting one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible."

The Seer, on the other hand, concerns himself less with phenomena, and more with causes. He strikes deep into the heart of things and discerns their nature and purpose. His findings are more fundamental, but they are also more essentially individual. He cannot take his fellow-searchers into the laboratory and by experiment prove his statements. They rest solely on his own word. This is why subjective investigations seem unscientific to the objective scientist; but, in reality, both objective and

subjective researches rest upon the same groundwork of proof—a consensus of findings. If a number of seers in the same state of consciousness perceive the same thing, we infer it is true; just as we lend credence to a postulate of material science when it is confirmed by the observations of many different scientists.

It may be claimed that the mental equipment required for the subjective method is so highly specialised that it is available to the few only. Not many can attain the state of concentration necessary to its application. When, however, we consider the accuracy, the tireless patience, the long vigiles, and the discerning vision demanded for outer observation and experiment, it would seem that the ob-

jective method calls for an equally specialised equipment. It was told me by one who knew, that when Thomas Edison was at work on a new problem, he spent long hours in deep reflection—so deep that his meal would be brought, left and carried away again and he would know nothing of it.

In the final analysis, every scientist must be a seer, if he would penetrate beneath the surface and observe Nature at work. And every seer must be a scientist, if he would share the fruit of his researches with others. Nature does not confide her secrets casually. She reveals them to that one alone, whose purpose is single, whose spirit is undaunted and whose life is dedicated to truth.

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 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.]

The description of the realised man is continued further in this Sutra also. It is pointed out that no particular standard or uniformity of behaviour and conduct can possibly be expected of a realised man. Having surrendered his whole being completely to the Lord, and having merged his individuality in Him, the Bhakta is not conscious of doing anything of his own accord. He feels that like a dry leaf at the mercy of the wind, he is made use of by the Lord Himself as His instrument to carry out His inscrutable purpose in this world. So

far as the Bhakta himself is concerned, he is always immersed in the bliss of Self-realisation. To all external appearance, however, he may sometimes behave just like any ordinary man, scrupulously discharging all the duties pertaining to his station in life, and thus set an example to men of lower spiritual evolution than himself. Often times, however, he may even be seen to break all accepted code of conventional social morality and rules of propriety, so as to break the chain that clogs the wheels of progress, and become thus liable to

scorned and criticised by the unservatively-minded. At other times he may appear to be inactive, being immersed in the bliss of samadhi, and appear dead to his surroundings like stock or stone. Thus Narada wants us to understand how difficult it is to judge from a man's external behaviour whether he is a realised man or not, as some of our modern behaviourists would advocate. Even when he is active externally, he is internally calm and quiet, so that he may be said to be an extraordinary combination of calmness and activity at the same time.

यत् ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मा-
रामो भवति ॥ ६ ॥

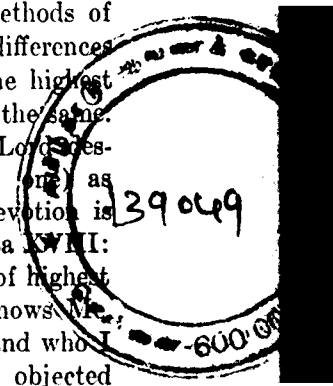
यत् which ज्ञात्वा knowing (पुमान् man) मत्तः intoxicated (इव as if) भवति becomes स्तब्धः paralysed or fascinated (इव as if) भवति becomes (यतः because) आत्मारामः one who always enjoys the bliss of Atman भवति becomes.

Knowing¹ that,² man becomes intoxicated³ and fascinated,⁴ as it were, because he is completely immersed in the enjoyment of the bliss of the Higher Self.⁵

Notes—1. *Knowing*. As in the last Sutra, note here also the change of the verb used (Jnatva, i.e., knowing), and the consequent transition from the idea of attainment to the idea of knowing. It is meant to suggest that spiritual realisation is not really an attainment of something external to the aspirant, a status or power or a different world like heaven or Brahmaloaka. It is not something produced as a result of action, whether

in the nature of external rites and ceremonies or internal meditation, severally or in combination. It is only a recognition or realisation of man's real status, his own inherent nature, the truth behind the phenomena, which is always self-existent and self-effulgent but was obstructed by ignorance and egotism. Both spiritual practice and grace of God referred to in the previous two Sutras are required only for removal of obstructions. Had spiritual realisation been otherwise, it would never be permanent, as it is the law of Nature that everything that comes into existence in time must inevitably pass away into oblivion also.

There is again a subtle suggestion that there is no real distinction between Bhakti and Jnana in their higher reaches, just as the radii of a circle, however divergent they may be towards the circumference, must inevitably meet at the centre. The differences in nomenclature are based only on the differences in the methods of approach and consequent differences in expression in life. In the highest stage of realisation they are the same. Thus in Gita VII:17, the Lord describes the Jnani (knowing one) as Ekabhakti (one whose devotion is centred in one). Again in Gita VIII:55, it is said, "In the stage of highest devotion (Bhaktya), he knows Me, knows what in truth I am and who I am." It may, however, be objected that Sankara speaks of Bhakti as the stepping stone to Jnana. But in understanding the meaning of this statement, we should not forget that what he refers to is the lower Bhakti which is only a Sadhana and as such only a means to Jnana or highest realisation. On the other hand, when Ramanuja and other Acharyas speak



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of Jnana as a stepping stone to Bhakti, Jnana to them means only the lower intellectual knowledge which is a Sadhana leading to the higher realisation. It is in the very nature of things impossible to conceive of a higher stage than the highest realisation. In his Bhaktirasayana Madhusudana Sarasvati also raises the question whether Bhakti and Brahman-vidya (the science of Brahman) are the same, and if so what necessity there is for a treatise on the doctrine of Bhakti. In reply he points out that there is a necessity for a separate treatise as the two are different in respect of four things, viz., Svarupa (form), Sadhana (means), Phala (result), and Adhikara (qualification). He points out that in Bhakti the mind melts out of Love and takes the form of the Beloved, whereas in Brahman-vidya there is no such melting of heart and the mind is concentrated on the undifferentiated Brahman. Whereas in the former the mind is Savikalpa (with modification), in the latter it is Nirvikalpa (without modification). With respect to the means he points out that whereas Brahman-vidya is dependant on the study of the Mahavakyas such as 'Thou art That', Bhakti arises by a study of such treatises as describe the glories of the Lord. With respect to result, love of God is what is aimed at in Bhakti and destruction of ignorance in Brahman-vidya. So far as qualification is concerned, every living being is entitled to Bhakti but not so to Brahman-vidya which is only for specially qualified aspirants. It will be seen from the whole discussion that the topics discussed, namely Bhakti and Brahman-vidya, have reference only to the stage of Sadhana and not to the stage of realisation. But unlike

other Acharyas, Madhusudana gives an equal and independent status to both as methods of Sadhana.

2. *That*.—Refers to the Prema of Sutra 2 and Amrita of Sutra 3.

3. *Intoxicated*.—The word Maththa means either intoxicated or mad. Taking it to mean intoxicated, the Bhakta is like the Maththabhringa or the bee which gets intoxicated by drinking honey. It is quite common in Upanishadic literature to compare the Atman to Madhu or honey. The Sufis often compare it to wine. The use of wine in Christian liturgy, of the Soma juice in Vedic Yajna, and of liquor in the Sakta worship is meant to symbolise this enjoyment of the sweetness of Divine Bliss. The realised man is in uninterrupted enjoyment of this honey or wine which is so sweet and health-giving. Just as people under the influence of wine are sometimes seen to develop strength and express their latent talents, so the realisation of God and constant enjoyment of Divine Bliss make man spiritually and morally pure and healthy and fit to undertake any kind of hard work in the service of God and of man. It makes the dumb eloquent, and the lame cross mountains, as the poet says. The fool becomes a poet and the weak and cowardly become heroes under its influence. Witness how Jesus, the carpenter's child, became the wisest man of his age, and brave enough to defy the might of the Roman Empire, or how Prahlada dared to disobey his father whom all the world dreaded and obeyed.

In the next place, the realised man is a law unto himself. His conduct and behaviour are sometimes as inscrutable as are the ways of the Lord Himself. No man can foresee

or predict what he may or may not do under particular circumstances. He has no will of his own, as he has already surrendered it completely to the Lord. He is not the slave of so-called common sense or reason, which often makes a man cold and calculating and selfish, nor is he in the grip of conventional laws of society or Sastra. He is under the benign influence of a power higher than human, and his behaviour and conduct depend upon how this higher power makes use of him for its own inscrutable purposes. He is simply an instrument in the hands of God, and is happy to be made use of as He thinks best. His conduct and behaviour, being sometimes strange and queer, and at other times not understandable from the standpoint of ordinary human reason and experience, may often appear similar to those of lunatics or drunkards.

A St. Francis of Assisi preaching to birds, his little sisters as he calls them, or his persuading a wolf, whom he calls his brother, to a better life; a Buddha offering to sacrifice his life to save a goat; a Christ atoning for the sins of mankind and forgiving the enemies who brought about his death; a Ramakrishna daring to slap his patroness on the face and refusing to accept a gift of ten thousand rupees; a Vivekananda giving up his prospects of worldly prosperity—are these not supreme examples of madness from the point of view of common sense realists?

Narada is not alone in characterising a Bhakta as intoxicated. Nambalwar used to say, "If men were drunk with the love of God, they ought to dance like mad men in the streets. If they cannot do that, they are not love-smitten." Sri Rama-

krishna says that a true devotee who has drunk deep of the wine of Divine love is like a veritable drunkard, and as such cannot always observe the rules of propriety. He also speaks of the god-intoxicated man as being unconscious of himself or the external world just like a drunkard. He once said that when he saw the feet of the Mother, he felt intoxicated, as if he had drunk five bottles of wine. According to Sri Ramakrishna, the Bhakta may be found sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, and at other times dancing and singing, being moved by different emotions, and may even be found moving about like an unclean spirit or a mad man.

European mystics also often compare the state of realisation to a state of intoxication or madness. Thus Plato somewhere describes it as 'saving madness'. Again when the Christian mystic says *Sanguis Christi, inebria me*, he is asking for such a gift of supernal vitality, a draught of that wine of Absolute Life which runs in the arteries of the world. In the Fioretti, it is told of John of Parma how he was drunk of the chalice of the spirit of Life delivered by Christ to St. Francis. Again Mechthild of Magdeburg says, "I would drink, for a space, of the unmingled wine." Emerson in his essay on the Oversoul points out that a tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense in man as if he is blasted with excessive light. The trances of Socrates, the union of Plotinus, the Vision of Porphyry, the conversion of Paul, the Aurora of Behmen, the convulsions of George Fox and the Illumination of Swedenberg are all of this kind.

We thus see how Narada is justified in characterising the realised man as

intoxicated or mad. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that all people are mad, the only difference being that while some are mad after women and gold, others are mad after God. We should take care, however, to remember that we cannot make queerness or unreasonableness a test of realisation. For while some realised men may appear mad at times, all need not necessarily be queer always; neither need a mad man always be a spiritually realised man.

4. *Fascinated*.—The word *Stabdha* is also used metaphorically to denote absence of activity. When the devotee is in the presence of his beloved in deep Samadhi, he becomes fascinated and loses all power of action, just as a rat becomes unable to move its limbs when it is fascinated by the looks of a cobra who is about to swallow it, or as a man dead drunk loses all capacity for independent motion, or as a bee which has drunk too much honey is not able to fly. Moreover, when he has reached the stage of perfection, there is no further

possibility of any activity by way of Sadhana as he has nothing more to achieve. This does not, however, mean that he is idle. But even while he appears to be active externally when he is not in Samadhi, it is no more the devotee that is acting but it is God who acts through him. This is the whole burden of the teaching on 'work' contained in the Gita. Among mystics, Ruysbroeck describes the life of one who has achieved this state as 'ministering to the world without, in love and mercy, whilst inwardly abiding in stillness and utter peace.'

5. *Immersed...Higher Self*.—This gives the reason for the apparent queerness of conduct described above. The Higher Self is the same in all so that to be immersed in the Higher Self does not preclude service of the world. *Atmarama* (delight in *Atman*) is quite consistent with *Loka-hite rata* (delighting in the world's welfare). Cf., Gita V:24 & 25 where the two characteristics are coupled together.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Thought and Reality—Sankara & Hegel: By P. T. Raju. Published by Allen & Unwin, London. Price 10sh. 6d.

The term Idealism in European and Indian philosophy has a very vague connotation. There are as many shades of Idealism as there are Idealist philosophers. The grand Idealistic tradition of European philosophy is represented fully in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel. Kantian Idealism was denounced as too formal and was considered too intellectualistic. The Aristotelian attack on Plato was fully developed in the objective Idealism of Hegel. Plato believed in the company of a set of Universals. These universals manifested themselves in the particulars and the particulars participated in the Universals. The particulars were imperma-

nent and the Universals eternal. The unity of Universals was considered by Plato as the constitutive stuff of reality. As against this type of Idealism the objective Idealists took objection. Hegel after Aristotle was the first man to define clearly the doctrine of the concrete Universal. Hegel held that neither the Universals nor the Particulars could be found apart from each other. The Universal was never found apart from the Concrete Particular. Reality for Hegel was the Concrete Universal expressing itself in the dynamic dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Reality was Thought and the Rational was the Real. The British development of Hegelian Idealism is found in the Philosophies of Bradley and Bosanquet. The Italian development of Hegelian Thought is the philosophy of Croce

and Gentile. The American development of Hegelian Thought was found in the philosophy of Royce. The philosophy of Bradley is the nearest approximation to the philosophy of Sri Sankara.

Hegelianism believed that Thought and its categories were enough to account for Reality. The dialectic method of Hegel points out the very logic of life. Hegel makes human history the autobiography of the world spirit. Hegel's method deduces the higher from the lower. There is no thrill of an adventure in the Hegelian metaphysics. Hegel's method is constructive and scientific. It cannot scale the spiritual summits of Advaitic Ananda. We discover by intuition and explain by logic. Thought is after all an adventure of the mind. It is not coeval with Reality. Reality is experience. Life is above logic. Beauty above harmony and the Upanishadic spirit above consistency.

The Advaita dialecticians have followed a very critical method. They have taken sufficient care and necessary pains to examine the categories of human knowledge, such as cause, quality, generality, etc. They have found all of them contradiction-ridden. They have laid down the satisfaction of two criteria as characterising the Ultimate Reality. They are: (1) it should not be sublated and (2) it should not be uncognisable like the horns of an hare or the barren woman's son. The world of knowledge—multiplicity is neither Real nor Unreal, nor Real-Unreal. It is not Real because it is sublated in dreams and deep sleep. It is neither Unreal because it is cognised. So the world is Real as well as Unreal. It is this mysterious perplexity that is explained by the notoriously misunderstood term *Maya*. We cannot commit ourselves as to the nature of the phenomena. The doctrine of *Maya* asks us to wisely suspend and not recklessly repudiate the affirmations about Reality. The academic Advaitin is interested in pointing out that every other position held by the opponent is untenable. The unity of knowledge in Advaita is derived from the unity of experience.

On the dialectic side, the Advaitins strongly oppose the doctrine of difference and the author of the book under review has a very fine chapter under the dialectics

of difference. Dr. P. T. Raju has tried his best to point out to the academic world that Advaita is not a cheap, emotional experience based on the alleged declarations of scriptures. The dialectics on difference of Mandana, Vacaspati and Chitsukhi are glorious examples of pure logic. The Advaitin is not attracted by the fatal fascination of the concrete Universal. Reality for the Advaitin is identity. It is not a transmutation of the lower into the higher 'somehow'. It is not an identity in difference. It is an identity which is impartite experience. The lower world of phenomena is negated in Brahman. It is not the method of mere contradiction. It is experience not contradicted. It is based on the rock of experience not on the sandy foundations of empirical thought. The higher is not deduced from the lower. The lower is negated in the higher. Advaita advocates adventure. The adventurer feels giddy as he mounts the last steps of swaying spire of an ancient Gothic Cathedral. It is all experience of a self-certifying nature. Sankara at once supplements and corrects the dry idealistic metaphysics of the West. Sankara-advaita had the most perfect concept of Unity which is experience. Spiritual experience and its expression in Revelation, are at once the bed-rock and the differentia of Indian philosophy from the rest of world thought.

P. NAGARAJA RAO, M.A.

Dialogues from Upanishads: By Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh. Published by Em. Auri, Editor, "Ideal Home Magazine," Amritsar.

This is one of the useful books among the writings of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. The author has selected and translated important sections from all the principal ten Upanishads, except *Isha* and *Mandukya*. The sections selected are mostly those occurring in the conversational form in the Upanishads, and hence the name 'Dialogues from the Upanishads'. The students of Upanishads know very well that many of the precious teachings of these books are couched in conversational form and are presented in the setting of stories. Hence Swami Sivananda has done well in

bestowing his attention on these, and producing the present book which will be found an excellent Introduction to the Upanishads by the lay reader. The simplicity of style and the non-technical way of translation adopted, enhance further the usefulness of the book in this respect.

But we wish to make a general criticism of certain aspects of this book, and that would be applicable to the writings of the Swami in general. We note in his books, for example in the Introduction to the present book, a tendency to adopt a prophetic role, and couch his writings in the language appropriate to world-teachers and messiahs. We do not approve of this, for messiahs and world-teachers are few and far between, and when every spiritual aspirant writes in such a strain, the common people are likely to carry impressions that are not conducive to their spiritual progress. We would also have liked that a good book like this did not carry the prefatory article entitled "In Quest of a Sat Guru" by Swami Yogananda Saraswati; for any man with critical spirit would feel it to be a blatant advertisement of the author, which spiritual men in this country are never supposed to encourage or to tolerate. Without these features, the value of the work would have been much greater.

Srimad Bhagavata : Condensed in the poet's own words by Pandit A. M. Srinivasa-chariar and translated into English by Dr.

V. Raghavan. M.A., Ph.D. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price Re. 1-4.

On the same plan as their abridgement of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, Messrs. Natesan & Co., have now made available to the English-reading public the great devotional scripture, the Bhagavata, in a condensed form. The book contains the abridged Sanskrit text, and a very good translation of the same in English.

While the reader who has no access to the original Bhagavata, or who has not the patience to read the full translation of it, will feel grateful to the publishers for this good book, we have to remark that the difficulty in preparing an edition of this kind is much greater in the case of the Bhagavata than in that of the other two books. One may doubt what value an edition of the Bhagavata can have when all the soul-inspiring invocations and philosophical discourses are left out. For in the Bhagavata there is nothing like a plot as in the Ramayana or the Bharata, and all the charm of the original arises from the deep devotional fervour pervading the whole of the book. A condensation of this kind cannot be expected to bring out this all-important aspect of the work. Yet it is useful in its own way to a certain class of readers, especially to those who want to satisfy themselves as to what the subject-matter of the Bhagavata is.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna Temple at the Belur Math An Appeal

Swami Madhavananda, the Acting Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, Belur, has issued the following appeal :

Readers of the Life of Swami Vivekananda are aware that when he succeeded in finding a permanent home for the sacred remains of his great Master Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math near Calcutta, in the year 1899, he heaved a sigh of relief as having discharged a heavy responsibility. It was his firm belief that the Master would live in that sanctuary, for ages to come, 'for the welfare of the many, for the

happiness of the many'; for did he not say to his beloved Naren, "I will live wherever you will carry me"? That the place has a peculiar attraction for men and women from all parts of the world holding diverse beliefs, is patent even to a casual observer who watches the ever-increasing crowds of visitors that gather there every day, particularly on festive occasions. A large percentage of these people come with sincere religious hankering in their hearts, and never fail to experience an inward peace and blessedness. All this is attributable to the divine presence of Sri Ramakrishna, who was the embodiment of purity, love and spiritual power.

Swami Vivekananda had dreams of erecting a temple of Sri Ramakrishna on the grounds of the Belur Math. He had even prepared under his directions a plan and design of the temple, which was to be an imposing stone structure with a spacious Natmandir or prayer-hall capable of accommodating a thousand devotees. But he did not live long enough to carry out his project. The cruel hand of death cut short his eventful life in its very prime. The plan and design he left for his proposed temple remained a sacred heirloom with his brother-monks, who could not get together the necessary funds for such a big undertaking. Recently, however, an offer of help came from an unexpected quarter. Some self-sacrificing Western devotees proposed to contribute Rupees six lakhs and a half exclusively for this purpose, with a request that the temple be completed as early as possible. Accordingly, a plan and design of a part stone structure consisting of a Garbhmandir (main shrine) faced with Chunar stone and a Natmandir (prayer hall) partly faced with it, were prepared on the basis of the plan and design left by Swami Vivekananda, and construction started under the supervision of Messrs. Martin & Co., Calcutta. The completed edifice will be a unique work of beauty and grandeur, which will harmoniously blend some of the salient features of Oriental and Occidental architecture and be strong enough to withstand the ravages of time for centuries to come.

But the donation from the West, although princely, has proved insufficient

for the purpose, and needs to be supplemented by other contributions to the extent of at least Rupees one lakh and a half to finish the temple and to construct other necessary works connected with it, such as, a kitchen and store-rooms, a landing ghat and a protective embankment. The construction will be complete by March next. So the above sum has to be collected forthwith. It occurs to us that there may be thousands of devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna all over the country who sincerely feel that the temple erected in his honour at the Belur Math must be as strong and imposing as possible, and they would naturally like to contribute their quota in materialising the cherished project of Swami Vivekananda. We therefore consider it our duty to acquaint the public with the present situation regarding the temple and invite their kind co-operation. Our reticence in this matter has led many to conclude that the whole of the estimated cost has been subscribed, and that consequently no further help is necessary. But it is not so. Now is the time for our countrymen to demonstrate their admiration and regard for Sri Ramakrishna according to their means. Here is an opportunity for them to join hands with our Western friends, so that both East and West may unite in paying homage to this great Prophet of the Harmony of Religions, whose advent was for the good of the whole world. Any contribution sent to the President, Ramakrishna Math, P.O., Belur Math, Howrah Dt., mentioning the Temple Fund, will be thankfully received and acknowledged.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION

Mr. B. Sreeraman, the Hon. Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samithi, Rajahmundry makes the following announcement :

The following are the results of the Competitive Examination held by the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samithi, Rajahmundry, in October 1937.—

11 Sub-Juniors—	FIRST PRIZE:—	No. 90, D. Maulana, Ellora.
	SECOND ..	No. 37, G. Krishnadas, Tenali.
	FIRST CLASS:—	No. 99.
46 Juniors—	SECOND ..	No. 37, 92.
	THIRD ..	No. 70, 73, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 117.
	FIRST PRIZE:—	No. 107, Y. Hari Srinivasa Rao, Ellora.
	SECOND ..	No. 50, V. V. Satyanarayana, Masulipatam.
	FIRST CLASS:—	No. 3, 49, 50, 57, 75, 107, 109, 116, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 127, 132, 133, 136.
	SECOND ..	No. 59, 103, 125.

THIRD CLASS No. 4, 12, 13, 14, 20, 32, 45, 48, 54, 55, 58, 64, 77, 111, 112, 113, 113-A, 115, 118, 119, 126, 130, 131, 134, 185, 197.

5 Seniors — FIRST PRIZE :—No. 83, R. Ramakrishnan, Udumalpet.
No. 91, K. Sitaramaswami, Rajahmundry.
FIRST CLASS :—No. 83, 91.
SECOND .. No. 89.
THIRD .. No. 84, 87.

Prizes and Certificates of merit will be sent to the address of the Chief Superintendent in due course.

The next examination with the same text books will be held at 3 P. M. on 16-10-1938 at all places from which 8 candidates apply.

Vedanta Society of Denver, Colorado

A friend from Denver writes :

To realise the evanescence of the time element, those who have been absorbed in helping to establish the Vedanta Centre in Denver have only to recall that it has been a year and a few months since the arrival of Swami Vividishananda. So rapidly have the weeks and months gone, so happy have been the associations, and so sublime the inspiration of the Swami as leader ! To many of the students it has been the happiest year of a lifetime—a privilege long awaited !

Following the arrival of the Swami from Washington, D.C., on May 19, 1936, a series of open lectures was given on the various phases of Vedanta and the general life and culture of the people of India, some of which were illustrated by his beautiful collection of slides. The response to all of these lectures was so good that, though late in the season, it was decided to organise regular classes for the study of Vedanta. The Sunday lectures continued until the end of June, and due to the fact that Denver is a vacation city and health resort it was decided to hold the week-day classes right through the summer. Even in the heat of an exceptionally warm season the attendance was sufficient to keep a nucleus of interested students together.

During the first week of August, 1936, the visit of Swami Akhilananda of Providence, Rhode Island, left a deep impression. In order that the new student might meet him, a reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Thom who have for many years been connected with the Vedanta Movement. Swami Akhilananda was pleased to see the earnestness and sincerity

of the group and gave a talk, bringing out what Vedanta stands for and what it would mean to Denver to have a center established here.

Towards the end of September, 1936, a second series of public lectures was arranged in one of the most spacious and well-located halls of the city. These lectures were also well received and followed by newly organised classes and the work continued throughout the season.

The regular week-day classes have been held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the Y.M.C.A., Building, located in one of the most accessible parts of the city. The Sunday evening lectures since last October have been held in the Cosmopolitan Hotel, one of the finest hotels of Denver. A medium-sized auditorium was engaged. Soon after this arrangement the management of the hotel redecorated and furnished the auditorium in a pleasing and dignified manner. The texts studied in the classes have been the Bhagavad Gita on Tuesday evenings and Patanjali's Aphorisms on Yoga on Thursday evenings. Early in the year the Katha Upanishad was studied and short courses given on Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga.

For several months following the special lectures in September, Swami Vividishananda found it necessary to organise a special day class for those who could not attend the evening classes. This class continued until the pressure of spring activities made it necessary for the majority of the members to discontinue with the understanding that the routine be re-established next fall.

Every student who has attended the classes consistently has only high praise for the Swami's methods of teaching and ex-

position of such profound subjects. His friendliness and sympathy in his personal relations with the students have done much to deepen the effect of the class work.

Naturally, the outstanding events of the year's work were the celebrations of the birthdays of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna.

On the evening of February 12, 1937, Swami Vividishananda, the members and several invited guests met at the home of Mr. Elsie Green for the special celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday. After a most touching devotional service led by the Swami, a program of short informal talks and readings by the students followed. Everyone entered into this heartily and as the Swami started showing slides depicting interesting scenes and prominent personages of the Order, a spirit of love and enthusiasm for the work of the Ramakrishna Mission swept the entire group.

The public service commemorating the birth of Swami Vivekananda was held in the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Sunday, February 14, 1937. Special invitations were issued as a result of which the auditorium was filled to capacity. Swami Vividishananda gave an eloquent discourse on the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. Following this tribute slides were shown illustrating the theme "Gorgeous India." Many lingered after the service to felicitate the Swami and express their deep appreciation.

Immediately following these activities, preparations were started for a fitting celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna. It was decided to have three separate functions, namely, a banquet for members and friends with Hindu food served, the public service, and lastly a public entertainment, the object of which was to familiarize the general public with the spirit and aim of the Vedanta Movement in a popular way.

The banquet of Hindu food was the first of its kind ever given in Denver and left an indelible impression upon all the guests. It was held in one of the fine old homes of the city. Friday evening, April 2, 1937. Following the enjoyment of the exotic and never to be forgotten food, a programme was given. After several musical numbers and talks by students, the Swami closed with a touching and inspiring review of the life and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna.

To many it was the first time they heard of the great Prophet and Seer of Modern India. All in all, it was a memorable evening. Among the guests were several from distinguished social and intellectual circles of the city.

The public service commemorating the Master's Birthday was held in the regular lecture room of the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Sunday, April 4, 1937. The service was well attended. Swami Vividishananda reached his usual heights of eloquence as he took for his subject, "Ramakrishna, the Man of God."

Since the entertainment, which took place on Wednesday, April 7, 1937, was to share with the public some of the spiritual and cultural traditions of India, the chief feature was an illustrated talk by Swami Vividishananda entitled, "See India with Me." As usual the audience was most appreciative. This was followed by readings from the poetry of Swami Vivekananda Rabindranath Tagore and Madam Sarojini Naidu by Mrs. Clarence Thom, in Hindu costume, which readings were very impressive. There were several piano solos and the concluding numbers were beautiful ballet dances given by Miss Glennyth Woods. The program was given in the social hall of the Y.M.C.A. Building and was considered a success.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the work of the young Vedanta Center is the number of outside speaking engagements filled by the Swami in the weeks following the birthday celebration.

Each year the last week of April is celebrated in America as the International Poetry Week. Denver being the cultural center of the midwest, this festival is celebrated with many public gatherings featuring the poetry of many nations. It is significant that the Swami was asked to speak upon two occasions, on the poetry of India. At Chappell House, a cultural centre of the city, he addressed the Colorado Poetry Society, his subject being "The Mystical Element in Indian Poetry." The Swami gave a second discussion of this subject later in the Poetry Week at a public luncheon at the Argonaut Hotel, being introduced by Mrs. Elizabeth Quereau, in charge of the international program. There were many distinguished poets and writers present, and the friends of the Swami were

not the only ones who were openly enthusiastic over his speech.

Following the Poetry Week engagements, he was asked to give an illustrated lecture before the Explorers' Club where he was introduced by Professor W. E. Sikes, head of the Sociological Department of the University of Denver. This lecture was so well received that the Swami was asked to speak again before the same club next winter. On May 12, 1937, one of the several Denver chapters of the P. E. O., a national educational society invited Swami Vividishananda to give an illustrated talk upon the scenic beauties of Kashmir. This talk was also well liked. Then on May 13, 1937, before the Occult Metaphysical Group the swami spoke upon "Spiritual Unfoldment and Planes of Consciousness." All present expressed their appreciation and the hope that they would have the pleasure of hearing Swami Vividishananda again. Later, on the 27th, before one of the largest classes of boys and girls in literature of the University of Denver, the Swami was asked to speak upon "The Doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation." The Swami was nicely introduced by Professor F. MacFarlane and Dr. M. Nakos-teen, both of whom belong to the faculty. The lecture made a very good impression upon the students and promises to lead to others before appreciative University classes.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore

The report of the Ashram for the year 1936 gives an account of the many-sided activities of the institution in the city of Mysore and its neighbourhood. The Ashram conducted ten weekly classes on religion and morals in different parts of the city, mostly in schools and hostels for the student population. The Study Circle for the benefit of the Swamis of the Order consisted of five monastic members, and under the assistance of some university professors and other learned friends they underwent a course of study in sociology, biology, logic, scientific method, Western philosophy and Mandukya Karika. A special building for the members of the study circle was com-

pleted. The Ashram library was enriched with 65 new books. The number of residents in the Students' Home attached to the Math was eight. With a building grant of Rs. 2,000 received from the Mysore Government the Home building was released from the mortgage debt on it.

An important item of the Ashram's work is the welfare work conducted in the Paduvarhalli village. A night school, meetings to discuss the village problems and lectures by prominent gentlemen of the city on topics affecting village life formed the important items of work in the village. The village has also a co-operative society with 62 members and a share capital of Rs. 1,500.

During January and February of 1937 the Ashram held a one-week celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth-centenary which has given a great fillip to the movement in Mysore. In memory of the centenary the Ashram published a new edition of Mr. K. V. Puttappa's book on Swami Vivekananda and a translation of Mandukya Karika by Swami Nikhilananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Cawnpore

The Ashram conducts worship everyday, and on Sundays holds religious classes followed by discussions. Besides, it organises public meetings, of which there were 21 during the year 1936. The Brahmancharins of the Ashram also go on preaching tours. The Ashram runs an out-door dispensary with Allopathic, Homoeopathic and surgical sections. The total number of cases in all these together for the year was 26,550. The Ashram students make collections in kind and coin on Sundays, and use this to assist stranded strangers with food and money. In 1936 the Ashram undertook relief work in Uno during the Ganges flood. The Ashram conducts two free primary schools and a free night-school, besides a Students' Home for poor students. There were 12 inmates in the Home during the year. The Ashram runs an efficient institute for physical culture, and a reading room for Harijans.

Works By Swami Ramakrishnananda Sri Krishna, the Pastoral and the King-maker. (FOURTH EDITION)

This book gives a clear idea of the full and varied life of the Incarnation, Lord Sri Krishna. It reproduces faithfully and accurately the glowing narratives of Srimad Bhagavatam—the inspired work of Vyasa—with all its wealth of descriptive detail.

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[No. 10

HINDU ETHICS

समासदानां वृद्धानां सतां कथयतः कथाः । ग्राहसन् अभ्यसूयंश्च सर्ववृद्धान् गुरुन् परान् ॥
युवानश्च समासीना वृद्धानपि गतान् सतः । नाभ्युत्थानाभिवादाभ्यां यथापूर्वमपूजयत् ॥
मातरं पितरं वृद्धमचार्यमतिथिं गुरुम् । गुरुत्वाभ्याभ्यनन्दन्त कुमारान् नान्वपालयन् ॥
न शौचमन्ववृषन्त तेषां सूदजनास्तथा । मनसा कर्मणा वाचा भक्ष्यमासीदनावृतम् ॥
अन्तर्दशगृहे चाभ्रन्ति गवां क्षीरं विचेतनाः । क्रमदोहं न कुर्वन्ति वत्सस्तन्यानि भुञ्जते ॥
उच्चैश्चाभ्यवदन् रात्रौ नीचैस्तत्राभिरज्वलत् । अनायां कृपणां भार्या भ्रन्ति नित्यं शपन्ति च ॥
मार्जारकुक्कुटराणैः क्रीडां कुर्वन्ति मानवाः । इव्योपकरणं सर्वं नान्ववैक्षत् कुटुम्बिनी ॥
प्राकारागारविम्बंसान् न स्म ते प्रतिकुर्वते । आश्रमस्थान् विकर्मस्थां प्रद्विषन्ति परस्परम् ॥
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बालानां प्रेक्षमाणानां स्वयं भक्ष्यमभक्षयत् । तथाभृत्यजनं सर्वमसंतर्प्य च दानवाः ॥

(Moral degradation of the following nature brought about the extinction of the prosperity and glory (Shree) of the Danavas :) They laughed out of court respectable elders of higher attainments in the assemblies, and cherished animosity towards them. When revered elders came, the younger men, seated at their ease, refused to honour them by getting up and saluting them respectfully. Mothers, fathers, aged seniors, preceptors and guests were not shown respect due to their exalted position. They neglected the upbringing of children. Their cooks grew unclean in their work, words and thought, and left articles of food exposed. Not allowing even ten days to pass, they would milk a newly calved cow heartlessly. The cows were milked improperly, and calves were deprived of their share. During nights they made much noise and kept all places improperly lighted. Daily they thrashed and abused their helpless, pitiable wives. Petting cats and dogs and fowls became the hobby of the people. The housewives took no care of wealth and household articles. Houses lay in ruins, but no repair was done. Becoming delinquent in the duties proper to their respective stations in life, people of different orders indulged in mutual hatred. Deceived by sensuality, women became impure, ill-behaved and immodest, and took to the habit of always standing by the windows of houses. Without giving to the servants, and in the gaze of children, people ate delicacies all of themselves.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 235.

DOCTRINES OF SUPERMAN I

[We have given below a brief review of the conceptions of the highest type of human beings in two of the great world religions. The word Superman is used here not in the Nietzschean sense, but in its spiritual significance so as to include all the varying conceptions of perfection found in the important religions of the world.]

I

THE best revelation of God to man is in the life of persons who truly embody the ideal of holiness. But most of these holy men are limited in powers. Most of them begin their spiritual career from a sense of suffering and insecurity in this world of mortality, and end by reaching a state which gives them a certainty regarding the ultimate nature of things, and a feeling of aloofness from the struggles and sufferings of the world. No doubt those who come into close contact with them receive light and inspiration from their example, but they leave little behind that can stir the imagination of men far removed from them in time and space. For without the quality of adventure, without a vivid participation in the hopes and fears of men, a life, however well-lived according to the commonplace standards of goodness, can do little to rouse the enthusiasm of vast numbers of men. Thus holy men of the ordinary type lack dynamism of personality, and the saving grace that manifests through them can uplift only themselves and a few disciples, but not men in general. Then again they have no message to deliver unto the world, their teachings being confined to the exposition of established spiritual tradition. It is not given to them to give a new lead to thought, to fuse the past with the present, or to give

solution to varieties of new problems with which the past was never confronted.

As a result, while men have venerated such static types of saintliness as conservers of traditions and as exemplars of the ideal, they have always reserved the most deep-felt adoration of their heart to holy men of a different stamp who combine in themselves all the virtues of the static type in addition to certain unique powers of personality. Such men are known by different names in different religions—as the Prophet among the Muslims, as the Buddha among the Buddhists, as the Christ among the Christians, and as the Divine Incarnation among the Hindus. As we shall presently show, there are wide differences in these conceptions of different religions, but they are all at one in distinguishing the types of persons denoted by these expressions from ordinary holy men. For through them has mankind received new spiritual ideas, and through them has descended into large communities a new enthusiasm for striving after high ideals. And by the sheer power of their personality they have brought into existence new types of character which gradually gain wide prevalence in society and set an indelible stamp on the culture that produces them.

II

Having mentioned above the distinguishing characteristic common to

the highest type of humanity cherished by all the religions, let us now consider in brief the distinctive features emphasised in the conception of such exceptional men held by some of the great world religions. Of these the Islamic conception is the simplest. Islam is perhaps the one religion that makes the most uncompromising distinction between the natural and the super-natural, and scrupulously discards any theory that has a tendency to equate anything in the natural or the created world with God or the super-natural. Hence, while every other religion tends to identify the exceptional spiritual man with the Deity, Islam, though maintaining the former's uniqueness, has categorically denied his divinity. The highest type of spiritual men are known to Islam as Prophets or Messengers of God. These personages are in no way embodiments of the Deity, but only souls specially commissioned by Him to reveal his law unto ignorant mankind. There have been a succession of such prophets, and in fact there is no nation or country to which no 'warner' of this kind has been sent, nor a 'book' revealed. But the divine revelation became perfect when the Quran was revealed through the Prophet Mohammed and Islam, the natural religion of man, was founded. This final revelation includes in itself all that is good and universal in the past revelations, and abrogates what is local and temporary in them just as a sovereign abrogates an imperfect or temporary law by a more perfect one. Hence Mohammed, though a Prophet like all others, is distinguished from among them as the seal of Prophets, because there will be no more Prophet after him since revelation has become complete with

his message. But he is not on this account anything more than man. He is a created being like all others, and is only the first among Muslims. Hence no such term as Divine incarnation or son of God is to be applied to him. He is an ideal character, and has shown man how to behave in different situations of life. For this reason man should follow his footsteps, and revere his personality. But he is not to be worshipped; not even a picture or a statue of him should be made. For worship, or rather man's prayerful self-surrender, is due only to God, and the Prophet is not God in any sense.

The Islamic conception of the Superman, like all other doctrines of that religion, is simple and clear, without any complications resulting from philosophical subtleties or mystical vagueness. Though the Prophet did not claim, nor was awarded, the status of the Divinity manifested on earth, no one can say that he was a whit below those marked with such super-human distinctions in the matter of inspiring his followers with a consciousness of their spiritual destiny, in regenerating the life of a large section of humanity in the light of a new spiritual ideal, in leaving a distinct stamp on the culture that produced him, and in bringing into existence a new type of character based upon his life and example.

III

From Islam, which is Semitic in origin, let us now pass on to Buddhism, a daughter of the great Indo-Aryan family of religions. There can perhaps be no more impressive study in contrasts than between these two religions—the first with its simple faith in God, its philosophical barrenness,

and its freedom from mystical influences, and the latter with its sublime scepticism, its ethical fervour, and its insatiable tendency to clothe itself in the subtlest forms of metaphysical thought and sometimes even in weird types of mysticism.

The Buddhist doctrine of the Superman, at least in its earlier forms, does not, as in most other religions, centre round any theory of descent of Godhead into the world or of the coming of exceptional souls that bring a divine message of hope and redemption. For Buddhism, to start with, did not so much inculcate a belief in the existence of God as a faith in the possibility of evolving man into a God or a God-like being. And accordingly its theory of the Superman too is not one of Divine descent but of human ascent.

There are two types of perfect men recognised in Buddhism, the Arhat and the Buddha, of which the latter alone can be called Superman in the true sense of the term. An Arhat is a person, who, being dissatisfied with the life of the world, takes to the ascetic life, passes through the Buddhist system of moral training, practices the methods of meditation and investigation into the truth of human personality, and finally attains the supreme peace of Nirvana which transcends all categories of understanding, and cannot therefore be described either as 'is' or 'is not.' The Arhat, no doubt, frees himself from the sufferings of life and attains a state of peace and blessedness, but he cannot, however, be called a Superman as he fails to unfold certain yet higher possibilities latent in man. These higher possibilities can be realised not through a life of mere introversion and pre-occupation with one's own salvation, but by a combination

of dynamic virtues that are born of an active life of positive self-sacrifice, and the wisdom and insight which are the fairest fruits of a contemplative life. The one who gains this higher development is the Buddha, the true Superman.

The attainment of Buddhahood is the result of the long and arduous practice of the discipline of self-sacrifice. The nature of this discipline has been made plain, and given in all its graphic detail by the sacred books of the Buddhists, which describe the preparatory period that Gautama Siddhartha had to undergo in order to become the Buddha. At the very start a Buddha in the making, or a Bodhisattva as he is technically called, must have fairly advanced on the path of Arhatship, or the type of perfection that ends in individual salvation without any social or cosmic significance. But overcome by great pity for the sufferings of living beings (Mahakaruna), and by a burning desire to work for the good of all (Mahamaitri), he abandons the goal of Arhatship and its promise of speedy cessation of all sufferings for himself. In place of that, he takes up the cross, and irrespective of all considerations of personal sufferings, devotes himself unreservedly to the service of others, so that by the power of his self-sacrifice he may in the long run engender a spiritual energy that will open a way of redemption for all living beings.

Gotama the Sakyamuni, who is known to us as the Buddha, is one of those who had undergone this discipline, and it is by virtue of it that he attained Buddhahood and the unique spiritual power associated with it, which distinguishes him from an ordinary man of spiritual illumination (Arhat). In one of his previous

births, as the Bhikshu Sumedha, when he had far advanced in the path of Arhatship, he took upon himself the vow of world-deliverance, and entered on the series of lives as the Bodhisattva—a long and strenuous period of discipline in which there was no thought of individual welfare or salvation, but which was characterised by a supreme readiness to sacrifice all personal interests for the good of others. Men suffer heat and cold for selfish ends, would they not suffer the same for the sake of the world?—this was the motto of the Bodhisattva. He practised as Bodhisattvas are expected to do, the ten Paaramitaas or transcendent virtues consisting of giving, morality, renunciation of the world, wisdom, energy, forbearance, patience, truthfulness, resolution, love and equanimity. Each of these virtues could be practised in three stages—giving, for example, from bestowal of alms, through the sacrifice of wealth and limb, to the surrender of child, wife or life. The Jataka stories, which depict the previous lives of the Buddha as the Bodhisattva, show that Gautama practised all these virtues in all their three stages. It was due to the spiritual energy generated by supreme self-sacrifice in hundreds of births as Bodhisattva that Gotama, the Sakyamuni, attained in his final birth the status of the Buddha or the Enlightened One—a state that differs from that of the Arhat or perfected man in that the latter gives one the power of saving oneself alone while the Buddha, by renouncing the idea of individual salvation and by repeatedly devoting himself to the service of others even at the cost of great personal suffering, gains the capacity to redeem the world. Such is the Superman of Buddhism.

From the foregoing facts it would be clear that Buddhahood is a state, that there is a definite way of training oneself for it, and that it is open to all who put themselves to the required training. Accordingly Buddhist scriptures maintain that there have been many Buddhas, and that there will be many more, Gotama Siddhartha being only the latest of them. Their number is, however, smaller than those of Arhats, because few are able to overcome the attraction of individual Nirvana, and engender in themselves the ethical passion of the Bodhisattva or the Buddha in preparation, without which Supermanhood is impossible of attainment.

But the Buddhist doctrine of the Superman did not, however, for long maintain what may be called its ethical basis and its democratic colouring. With the gradual assertion of the natural instinct of man to believe in a God, if not as a creator, at least as a redeemer, Buddhism imperceptibly changed from a faith that merely asserts the spiritual possibilities of man into a full-fledged religion with its own doctrine of the Deity, His lower manifestations, devotion, worship and the rest. In the midst of this transformation, the theory of the Superman too necessarily changed from a doctrine of man's evolution to perfection, into one of Divine descent as man.

This process of bridge-building was a very ingenious work. Although the original impress of the primitive Buddhism could not be completely overcome, a number of highly mystical theories transformed the historical figure of the man Sakyamuni into Godhead. To trace a few steps in this process of transformation, it was believed even by primitive Buddhists that after his passing away the Buddha

lived in the Dhamma (Law). It was also believed that many Buddhas had appeared in this world from time to time to minister to the spiritual needs of man, and that the Dhamma they all preached was not different from one another but the same. If there is, therefore, unity in the Dhamma preached at various times, it is natural to suppose that there is also a unity in the personalities of their teachers, the various Buddhas. For if truth is immutable, those who reveal it are not many but one.

These conclusions, to which speculative thought was gradually leading men, were given a theological sanction by the doctrine of the Trikayas or 'three bodies.' According to this theory the earthly Buddhas lose their importance considerably and become subordinate to the conception of Dharmakaya or 'the body of law.' What is called Dhamma in Pali books is, in the light of this theory, not merely an abstract law but the sum and substratum of all existence, the Tathata or 'trueness' which is the inner essence and support of the whole universe. It is that which lies beneath all phenomena but continuously manifests itself through them. It is identical with supreme enlightenment or perfect knowledge. According to this doctrine, all the Buddhas that have appeared in the world are not different personalities but in essence identical, being the manifestations of the one eternal Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya is world-transcendent, but it expresses itself in this world from time to time for short periods as Nirmanakaya or "creation-body". The earthly Sakyamuni is only one of the many such visible manifestations of the transcendent Buddha, the Dharmakaya, by virtue

of his wondrous illusory power. There is yet another body of the Buddha in contrast to these temporary historical manifestations. This is the Sambhogakaya or the enjoyment body which is rather a vague conception standing for the redemptive activities of the Buddha in the various spheres of the universe. While he is preaching in one sphere, he is eternally active in all the various spheres of the universe as the perpetual organ of grace and revelation,—as the innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of glorified bodies who have gained perfection through a long course of self-denial, or who, though entitled to perfection, have spurned it with a view to help the suffering beings. This doctrine of the Sambhogakaya is rather elusive and difficult to understand. In it we see an attempt on the part of Buddhist theologians to reconcile the old idea of Buddhahood as something won as a result of age-long effort, by passing through the preparatory stage of the Bodhisattva, with the notion of it as an eternal and infinite energy working as a perpetual organ of revelation and redemptive love. For the idea of individuals taking the vow of the Bodhisattva, viz., that of world-redemption and of attaining superhuman powers of personality through repeated acts of self-sacrifice, is retained—nay, later Buddhism in fact shifts its main emphasis to the Bodhisattvas, and peoples the heavens and the earth with a large number of such helpful and benign beings at various stages of development. But at the same time it seems to maintain that these higher beings are not so much human agents working up their way, but the expressions of a perfect Supreme Being—the Adi-

buddha or Dharmakaya or whatever He may be called.

Thus in the Buddhist doctrine of the Superman we find a gradual passage of thought from the conception of him as purely human and a product of systematic training and discipline, to the notion of him as an epiphany—the manifestation of the Supreme Principle in a human form. Islam, as we have seen, is emphatic about the humanity of the Superman, while Buddhism tries to effect, in its own

unique way, a reconciliation of his humanity with his divinity. In the next number we shall see how Christianity and Hinduism—the two great world religions in which the conception of the Superman, or to use the theological expression, the idea of the Incarnation, has played a very important part—tackle the problem arising from the simultaneous presence of humanity and divinity in these exceptional beings.

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.]

IT was about nine in the morning. The Holy Mother had been preparing betel-leaf when I came to see her. Soon we were engaged in a conversation.

Disciple : Mother, I have seen and heard so much ; still I cannot recognize you as my 'own mother.'

Mother : But otherwise, my child, why should you come here so often? 'He who belongs to one comes with him in every age.' You will know your 'own mother in proper time'!

After a while, I said to her, referring to my own parents and brothers, "My parents have brought me up ; I do not know where they are now (after their death) or how they live. Please give your blessings that my brothers may have good tendencies."

Mother : Do most people ever want God ? There are so many people in this very family ; but do all want me ?

After a few minutes she said to me, "Don't worry. Don't lead a worldly life. What need you fear if you are a celibate ? Wherever you will live, you will be free."

Disciple : But, Mother, I have fear.

Mother : No, have no fear. All depends upon the will of the Master.

Disciple : Mind is the whole thing. If the mind be in a pure state, it does not matter where I live. Please see, Mother, that my mind always remains pure.

Mother : May it be so.

It was the birthday of the Holy Mother. Prabodh Babu, a few days before, had come to Jayrambati and had given five rupees to the brothers of the Holy Mother for a special worship on her birthday. The Mother said to them, "You are not going to do anything to-day. I shall wear a new cloth; the Master will be worshipped with a sweet-offering and I shall partake of it later on. That's all for this occasion."

After the worship in the Shrine, the Holy Mother sat on her couch with her feet hanging down. She had put on a new piece of cloth. Prabodh Babu offered some flowers at her feet. I stood on the porch, near the door. The Mother said to me, "What? Won't you offer some flowers? Here they are. Take them." Then I also offered flowers at her feet. We enjoyed a sumptuous feast at midday and afterwards. Prabodh Babu left for Calcutta; but I was indisposed on account of dysentery. So I remained at Jayrambati.

* * *

In the course of conversation the Mother said, "Can you tell me whether anyone could bind God? Mother Yasoda could bind Krishna because He himself allowed her to do so. The cowherd boys and the milkmaids of Brindavan also realized God."

"As long as a man has desires there is no end to his transmigration. It is the desires alone that make him take one body after another. There will be rebirth for a man if he has even the desire to eat a piece of candy. It is for this reason that a variety of food-stuffs are brought to Belur Math. Desire may be compared to a minute seed. It is like a big banyan tree growing out of a seed

which is no bigger than a dot. Rebirth is inevitable so long as one has desires. It is like taking the soul from one pillow-case and putting it into another; only one or two out of many men can be found who are free from all desires. Though one gets a new body on account of desires, yet he does not completely lose spiritual consciousness if he has good merits to his credit from previous births. A priest in the temple of Govinda in Brindavan used to feed his mistress with the food-offerings of the Deity. As a result of this sin, after death, he entered into the body of a ghoul. But he had served God in the Temple. As a result of his merit one day he appeared before all in his own physical body. It was possible for him to do so on account of his past good actions. He told people the cause of his inferior birth and said to them further, 'Please arrange a religious festival and music for the redemption of my soul. That will give me salvation.'

Disciple: Is it possible to obtain salvation through religious festivals and music?

Mother: Yes; that is enough for the Vaishnavas. They do not perform such obsequies as Shraddha, and so forth.

Once I visited the image of Jagannath at Puri at the time of the Car Festival. I wept in sheer joy to see so many people viewing the image of the Deity. 'Ah, I said to myself, it is good. They will all be saved.' But later on I realised that it was not so. Only one or two who were absolutely free from desires could attain their salvation. When I narrated the incident to Yogin Ma, she corroborated this by saying, 'Yes, Mother, only

people who are free from desires attain their Mukti (liberation).'¹

One morning, while eating my breakfast on the verandah of the Holy Mother's room, I asked her, "Mother, will I have to be initiated into Sannyasa if I am to live in Belur Math?"

Mother: Yes, my child.

Disciple: But Mother, the monastic life begets a terrible vanity.

Mother: Yes, that is true. A monk may become very vain. He may think, 'See, he does not respect me. He does not bow down before me, and so on.' (Pointing to her own white cloth²), one should rather live thus with inner renunciation). Gaur Siromani³ took to the monastic life in his old age when his sense organs had become dull. Is it possible, my child, to get rid of vanity—vanity of beauty, vanity of virtue, vanity of knowledge and vanity of a holy life?

The Holy Mother exhorted me to make ready for the life of renunciation. "Go home," she said, "and tell your brothers once and for all, 'I will not accept any job; I will not be a slave to anyone since my mother is

dead; I will not do anything of that sort. You be happy with your householders' duties'."

The conversation drifted to the austerities of the monastic life. The Mother said, "How hard the life of my children is at the Math⁴. They can neither eat well, nor be well clothed, nor enjoy any good thing in life. I do not like it. Jogin (Swami Yogananda) led a very austere life and as a result he gave up his body through extreme suffering."

The Mother and I were engaged in conversation in the evening.

Disciple: Mother, one gets spiritual realisation at any time if the grace of God descends upon him. Then he does not have to wait for the right time.

Mother: That is true; but can the mango which ripens out of season be as sweet as the one which ripens in the month of Jaishtha, that is, in proper season? Men are trying to get fruits out of season. You see nowadays one gets mangoes and jack-fruits even in the month of Asvin (autumn). This is also true of the efforts that lead to God-realisation. Perhaps you practise some Japa and austerities in this life; in the next life you may intensify the spiritual mood and in the following life you advance farther. It is like that.

Referring to one's getting spiritual realisation suddenly, the Mother said, "God has the nature of a child. One does not ask for it, yet He gives it to him, whereas another man asks for it and God will not give it to him. It is all His whim."

Another day while the Holy Mother was seated on her porch preparing

¹Yogin Ma narrated an incident of similar nature in the following way: "One day the Holy Mother and I were meditating side by side in the Shrine of Lakshmi in the temple compound of Jagannath. I said to myself, 'Ah, all these people who have been visiting Jagannath will obtain their Mukti.' Then I heard someone whisper to me, 'No, only those who are free from desires will not be born again.' When I narrated it to the Mother, she said, 'Yogin, the same thing arose in my mind, and I also heard a similar reply.'

²The white cloth is the symbol of the householder whereas the monks put on ochre cloths.

³He was an outstanding holy man of the Vaishnava sect. He visited the Holy Mother in Brindavan.

⁴Referring to Belur Math and other monasteries of the Ramakrishna Order.

betel-leaf I said to her, "How many in the future will practise spiritual disciplines to propitiate you!" Mother said with a smile, "What do you say! All will say, 'Ah, the Mother had such gout, she used to limp like this.'"

Disciple: You may say that.

Mother: That's good. That is why the Master used to say when he was lying ill at Cossipore Garden, "Those who come to me expecting some earthly gain have disappeared saying, 'Ah, he is an Incarnation of God! How can he be ill? This is all Maya.' But those who are my own have been suffering a great deal in seeing this misery." Once when I had fever I became delirious and Kushum said to Golap, 'Golap Didi, come and see. The Mother is talking in delirium?' Golap said, 'Oh, Mother talks like that!' 'No?' said Kushum, 'come

and see. It is true.' 'No,' insisted Golap, 'it is nothing.' At last Kushum called Ashu and they all came to my room and found me in a delirious state.

* * *

On the day previous to my initiation I said to the Holy Mother, "Mother, I want to be initiated." Mother said, "Have you not been initiated?" I answered in the negative. "I thought that you had been initiated," she said. After my initiation she blessed me by saying, "May your body and mind become pure by repeating the name of God."

Disciple: What is the need of repeating the Mantra with the fingers? One can do so mentally.

Mother: God has given the fingers that they may be blessed by the repetition of His name.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE DIVINE MOTHER

By K. Guru Dutt

[Mr. Guru Dutt is a distinguished officer of the Mysore Civil Service. The following brilliant article of his is the substance of a speech he delivered on the occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. This is an age when even sincere spiritual aspirants are likely to be carried away from their ideal by the world-wide propaganda in favour of secularistic humanism. Mr. Dutt's article, delineating the vital principle involved in Sri Ramakrishna's message, would come as a great corrective to this tendency.]

I

 QUAIN belief popular in India holds that when a man of outstanding virtue passes away he becomes a star in the sky. Thus it is said that Dhruva by steadfastness in devotion became the Pole Star. Round him revolve the Sapta Rishis, the Great Bear. If we put away the crude and literal meaning of this, we at once observe that it is over our mental horizon that these stars rise and set, and it is in our inner

firmament that they shine. The saints and sages of all times are there as the fixed stars. Many of them are mere specks of light to us. But that is no indication of their size or power; for astronomers tell us that some of the stars that appear dimmest to us are many thousands of times bigger than the sun. Yet the sun is the nearest fixed star to us and he counts to us far more than all the fixed stars in the heavens. Such appears to me the position of Bhagavan Sri Rama-

krishna in our mental astronomy. Assuredly he has risen before our eyes as the spiritual Sun when the light of the distant stars had become dim and had almost ceased to illumine us. I will complete the comparison by adding that this Sun brought in his wake the Moon, shining, no doubt, with light borrowed from his Master, but so agreeable and stimulating and above all so much nearer to us. I refer of course to Swami Vivekananda. Lest it be thought that I am not doing justice to the dynamic personality of the great Swami Vivekananda by comparing him to so pale and cold a luminary as the moon, I would remind you that the moon is no other than Soma of the Rig Veda which is referred to as *Yajnasriyam*, *nrimaadanam*—the grace of the sacrifice, the exhilarator of mankind—in fact that heady beverage which gave Indra his matchless strength. I would also remind you of the lines in the Bhagavadgita (Ch. XV:14), where Soma, imaged as the Rasa or essence of vitality, is said to be sustaining the food giving plants. Shall we say that the Swami Vivekananda resuscitated with life giving juice, the drooping plants of spirituality in the world?

My concern here is more with Sri Ramakrishna. The extent of the power which this man wields to-day over the minds of men is the most remarkable phenomenon of a century. India has not been lacking in saints. Yet it has not fallen to their lot to make that universal and potent appeal which is the distinction of Sri Ramakrishna. What is the secret of this. It appears to me to lie in the peculiar conception of Deity which he cherished and with which he attained identity. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped this dynamic and moving world,

Jagat, as the Divine Mother. Such was his absorption that he actually used to hold conversation with the Divine Mother. He has said, "I say to my Mother, 'Mother, I am the tool, Thou art the hand; I do what Thou makest me do; I say what thou biddest me say.'" He has said, "When I sit at the feet of the Divine Mother, I feel so intoxicated as if I have drunk five bottles of wine." Whenever the idea of the body or the finite ego would creep in, he would say, "Here (i.e., within him) there are two persons. One is the Divine Mother, the other is Her worshipper. It is the second person who once broke his arm. It is also the second person who is now ill. Do you understand this?" To lose sight of this would be to misunderstand Sri Ramakrishna in toto.

II

We shall now proceed to examine briefly the concept of the Divine Mother which was so dear to him, and also try to clear some misconceptions. The Divine Mother is conceived as Shakti or Chaitanya. Shakti means power, efficiency or efficacy in its broadest sense. That is the sense in which the whole world impresses us to start with. It is with us all the time. All fervour and all endeavour is Shakti and comes from the same source which is ultimately Divine. She is Sat (Existence) she is Asat (non-existence), she is everything. But two distinct tendencies are noticeable as working in the world—that which tends towards external appearances and leads to bondage on the one hand, and on the other that which turns towards the inner reality and leads to freedom. The former is called 'Aasuri' Shakti and the latter 'Daivi' Shakti. Their qualities have

been defined in the Gita (XVI:5), the one tending to liberation and the other to bondage. Although bondage and freedom both proceed from this single Shakti, still the Divine Mother is conceived as 'appearing' only when she starts the forces of release, the Daivic forces. Thus it has been said, "Though eternal, she is said to be 'originated' when she manifests herself for a 'divine purpose'." Differentiating the actions of those devoted to the Asuri or deluding aspect of Nature (Prakriti), Sri Krishna has said that they embark on a multiplicity of futile hopes, futile actions, and evolve therefrom a futile knowledge and thus drain their vitality dry under the force of delusion (Gita, IX:12). On the other hand the Mahatmas are described as devoted to the Daivi Prakriti (divine aspect of Nature) and to be worshipping Her with singleness of mind (*Ibid* IX:13). Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was such a Mahatma, in fact one of the greatest among them.

It would not be out of place for me to point out here that Asuras should not be conceived as irreligious men. We are told that Ravana was a great Yogi. He as well as Hiranyakasipu, and practically every one of the Asuras, attained their greatness through Tapas. Tapas and Yoga are thus the only means. The main question is what is the objective? To which God is the oblation offered? That was the question which India asked millenniums ago: *Kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema?* The alternative is mainly: is it offered to the Daivi Prakriti or the Asuri Prakriti? Alas! under the influence of the prevailing tendencies we are likely to lose sight of this vital issue. The weight of great names presses down on us.

Thus, true to the western outlook, Romain Rolland himself in his life of Sri Ramakrishna writes as follows: "There are many souls who believe they are free from all religious belief, but who live immersed in a state of super-rational consciousness, which they term Socialism, Communism, Humanitarianism, Vitalism or even Rationalism. *It is the quality of the thought and not its object*, which determines its source and allows us to decide whether or not it emanates from religion." I think that Sri Ramakrishna would have emphatically repudiated such a statement because, put in brief, it merely amounts to this: "So long as you worship, it matters little what you worship." On the other hand, Sri Ramakrishna would rather want us use our discrimination, differentiate the Divine (Daiva) from the diabolic (Asura), and follow the Daiva at all costs. Even under the name of Daiva he would ask us fearlessly to discard all shams masquerading under that name, and stick to the inner reality alone. That is his distinction.

The effect of the efflux of time (Kaala) is such that all energy runs down, and concepts, however vital at one time, cease to be such. The appearance remains but the efficacy departs. In fact the appearance itself becomes the greatest obstacle in the way of efficacy. It becomes a mass of dead tradition. To take only a single illustration, only the empty name of God remains, but in actual life we find as if He is powerless. We call on His name in vain, and think He is an empty shadow. We come to speak of Him decorously but for all practical purposes put Him on the shelf. He ceases to be a motive force in our life. Put in symbolical language, it

means that Shakti has, as it were, departed from Siva. Without Shakti, Siva is inert, as is said in the Soundarya Lahari. Then Dharma decays and Adharma prevails. At such times the Lord himself assumes a body and comes down into the world of men. What for? For tending righteousness and extinguishing vice. To suck and withdraw the energy or Shakti from misconceptions, and to re-deposit it in the Sadhu or right conceptions, and to revitalise them. Symbolically it is to collect the dissipated Shakti and re-deposit her, as it were, in Shiva. That was the task for which Sri Ramakrishna came down in this Kali Yuga. Nobly he started it and is still accomplishing it; for such men do not die. If his frail mortal frame is no longer visible to our physical eyes, the Shakti or Divine Mother, the very secret and essence of his power, is there radiant and compelling.

III

I would like to add that this concept of Shakti is no new one. It has been revered in India through the ages. The national festival of India, the Dassarah, is dedicated to Her. She was, I am sure, worshipped by the dark aboriginal tribes of India and was perhaps called Kali or dark on that account. She was worshipped by the white complexioned Aryans who perhaps preferred to call her Gouri or white complexioned like themselves. The white and the black are equally Her dear children. She is present in the Veda behind the numerous gods, like the power behind the throne, in the dim half-perceived figure of Aditi, the Mother of the Gods, of whom it is said, "Aditi is heaven; Aditi is the firmament; Aditi is mother, father and son; Aditi is all the gods; Aditi is the

five classes of men; Aditi is generation and birth" (Rig Veda). This Aditi is no minor deity. The very name stands for 'liberation', 'freedom', 'absolute' and 'infinite'. Her main characteristic has been described as the power of delivering from the bonds of physical suffering as well as moral guilt. She is frequently invoked in the Veda as the Beyond, as what is beyond the earth and the sky, the sun and the dawn. In fact she is the most metaphysical of the Vedic deities. On this point Max Muller was so impressed that he exclaims that this is 'a most surprising conception in that early period of religious thought'. We may, however, say that there is no cause for surprise if we hold the Indian view that the gross is evolved out of the subtle, instead of the Western view that the subtle has been evolved out of the gross. I do not propose to pursue further the other indications of the existence of Shakti concept in the Veda. In fact it appears to me to be the warp and woof of the Veda.

Coming to the Upanishads, which form the bedrock of our philosophy, we find the concept of Shakti very clearly brought out in the Kena Upanishad, which is one of the smallest of the Upanishads yet one of the oldest and most authoritative. There it is said that Brahma once won a great victory for the gods. By this victory the gods attained majesty and exulted among themselves. "Ours is this victory, ours the majesty," they said. Brahma became aware of this delusion of theirs and appeared before them as a Yaksha—a spirit. But they could not recognise Him. Then they said to Agni "Jaataveda, do ascertain if this being is worthy of adoration." He replied, "Be it so," and

ran up to Brahma. Brahma said, "Who art thou?" He answered, "I am verily Agni. I am verily Jaata-veda." Brahma asked him, "What is thy power?" Agni replied, "I can burn whatsoever there is on earth." Brahma placed a blade of grass before him and said, "Burn this." Approaching it with all his might, Agni could not burn it. He returned discomfited. Then Vayu approached Brahma and boasted of his own prowess. Again Brahma put before him the blade of straw and asked Vayu to move it; but Vayu was unable to stir it. He too returned in shame. Then Indra himself approached Brahma who disappeared. Indra remained there wrapt in contemplation. After a time the Divine Uma, daughter of Himavat, showed herself to him in the sky and told him that it was Brahma who had won the victory for the gods, and she disclosed the real nature of Brahma to Indra. The power that resided in Agni, Vayu and the other gods was no other than the power of Brahma. Divested of this power, the gods were gods only in name and could not even move a blade of straw. Brahma could not thus be grasped even by the gods, but His grace or Shakti, appearing as Uma, revealed Himself—that is to say, the Svabhava of Brahma revealed itself to Indra, after he had learnt proper humility.

IV

In the several Puranas the symbolism of this Shakti or Devi has been described in various ways, sometimes as the consort of Siva, sometimes as the Maya of Vishnu, or as Yoganidra under whose influence the Supreme Person lies in deep slumber as it were, or again as Kali the Terrible with her garland of skulls and bloody loll-

ing tongue, dancing on the very body of Siva. This last form has perhaps been the most misunderstood of all. Yet it was under that form that Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Her. To the sophisticated, I am sure, this will appear as a strange anomaly. They might perhaps like to argue it away as the remnants of superstitious obsession in a great mind resulting from an ignorant and crude upbringing. But I am sure that to do so would be wholly to lose sight of the very secret of the force of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. It would be like depriving a clock of its mainspring. The semblance of a clock would alone remain but alas! it would not work. To adequately expound this Kali is beyond my powers. Symbols like this have their root deep in the subconscious mind of man, and our tiny rational fringe of consciousness, despite the magisterial airs it puts on, cannot fully appraise Her. She will yield Her secret only to those who will worship Her. For the rest we say that She is the profoundest image yet conceived by the mind of man of 'freedom from bondage'. She is the spirit of Siva trampling over the mere body or form of Siva. The main idea is that even that which was intended for the good of man, by efflux of time (Kala), becomes a source of bondage when the spirit has departed and only the traditional form remains. The spirit has its revenge by trampling over the inert form and asserting her own supremacy. At first sight this cannot but appear a terrible act of desecration. Hence the apparently ghastly form. When however the purpose is accomplished, and freedom from the bondage of dead tradition is achieved, then a great load is lifted from man's heart and he becomes as a little

child. Such was the state of Sri Ramakrishna. The terrible austerities he had passed through left no mark of Ahankara (egotism) in him. The spirit of those men who hug their austerities to heart and make it a source of pride is still under the bondage of a Kali whom they have not the courage to conceive as trampling over these traditional forms, after having drunk their blood, that is to say, sucked their essence. I do not want to dilate on this, nor can I say that the symbolism may not have a thousand other equally valid meanings, if not better. Suffice it for me to say that when the Divine Mother has revealed Her innermost nature to Her devotee, she no longer appears terrible but becomes the very embodiment of compassion and tenderness and beauty. As described in the Saptashati, she becomes most benign and charming—(Soumyaa soumyatara aseshasoumye bhyas tvati sundari).

V

I hope a charge will not be levelled against me, that, starting with Sri Ramakrishna as my subject, I have strayed into the conception of his Divine Mother. My justification is that in the same sense that Jesus Christ said, "I and my Father in Heaven are one," Sri Ramakrishna and the Divine Mother are assuredly one. She is the perennial source from which his teaching and that of Vivekananda flow like the holy Ganges descending from heaven. Such however is the secularising tendency of the present age that already there is a disposition to ignore the cause and hug the effect. I would emphatically say, take care of the cause and the effect will take care of itself. I do not want to minimise the value of the ethical and social side of the teaching of Sri Rama-

krishna. But I am afraid, of late one is hearing too much about Daridra-Narayana and next to nothing about Sriman-Narayana. I feel in my innermost heart that the highest ethical values and ideals of social service can coexist with a thoroughgoing atheistic materialism like that of Marx and his followers. If you should persist in taking these alone as the essence of the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna, and relegate to oblivion that deep and ever-present reliance on, and surrender to, the will of the Supreme Person, otherwise known as the Divine Mother, you will be making a foolish choice. Have both if you can. If not, if you are faced with an alternative, let yours be the choice which Arjuna made when he and Duryodhana went to Sri Krishna seeking his assistance on the eve of the Great War of the Mahabharata. Sri Krishna offered them the choice between his armed paraphernalia on the one hand, and, on the other, himself unarmed and non-combatant. Arjuna chose the person of the Lord while Duryodhana thought he was making a wise and practical choice by accepting the army. The result is well known.

That this was the view of Sri Ramakrishna, and is not something which I am reading into him, I will now show to you by a few brief extracts from his sayings.

"First install God in the temple of the heart; first realise Him. Speeches, lectures and the rest—these may be taken up after you have seen God—not before."

"If instead of preaching to others one worships God all the time, that is preaching enough. He who strives to make himself free, is the real preacher. Hundreds come from all

sides to him who is free, and are taught. When a flower opens, the bees come to it uninvited."

"You talk of social reforms? Well, you may do so after realising God. Remember, the Rishis of old gave up the world in order to attain God. This is the one thing needful. All other things shall be added unto you, if indeed you care to have them. First see God, and then talk of lectures and reforms."

"One ray of light from my Divine Mother, who is the Goddess of Wisdom, has power to turn the most learned scholar into the veriest worm that crawls upon the earth."

To attain even a single ray of light from the Divine Mother, what did Sri Ramakrishna advise? The answer is: self-surrender, solitude and prayer and meditation. The words which Buddha applied to his own teaching may almost without change be applied to the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna: "Just as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, just so has my doctrine and discipline only one flavour—the flavour of emancipation." Let this be lost sight of even for a moment, and no matter what imposing paraphernalia of popular activities you are taking shelter under, you will make the world look

like a marriage pavilion where the pipers are playing and the guests have arrived and the feast is getting ready but only the bridegroom has disappeared.

Now to conclude, like a bee collecting honey, Sri Ramakrishna went to every flower of religion in the world. Nay, he collected honey from the very stones, also from everything that existed—*Bhuteshu Bhuteshu vichitya*. Unlike the bee he drank deeply of the honey and passed on the nectar to the whole world, for his supply was endless. Such is the state of the supreme Rishis. It has been described as follows in the Mundaka Upanishad: (III. 2, 5).

"The Rishis, having attained everything in the shape of their own self, have become soaked in Jnana, free from passion, and full of peace. These sages, having approached the omnipresent Supreme Being by every possible mode of approach, have entered into the inmost core of their own being, and have thus entered into the whole universe itself." Such is their nature, such the Shakti that dwells in these Paramahamsas. Where shall we find this Shakti? Take refuge in the feet of the Guru, and the Shakti will descend on you and you will be merged in bliss here and now, not elsewhere, not in a mere hereafter.

TRUTH IN MODERN EUROPE

By V. Subramanya Iyer

[Mr. V. Subramanya Aiyar, the retired Registrar of the Mysore University, is one of the noted philosophers of modern India. He was the only Indian representative to attend the International Congress of Philosophy held recently in Paris. After the Congress he travelled extensively in Europe, visiting centres of culture and interviewing distinguished thinkers, professors and scientists. The following suggestive article is the answer that Mr. Aiyer gave in reply to the question, 'What is the matter with Europe to-day?' on the basis of his recent experiences in modern Europe.]

DURING my recent visit to Europe in 1937, I have had the inestimable privilege of meeting, not only at the Inter-national Congress of Philosophy in Paris but also at other places, eminent professors as well as highly cultured men and women. Besides philosophers, I came into contact with scientists, such as physicists, chemists, biologists, mathematicians, astronomers, physicians, psychologists, psycho-analysts and sociologists, as also with authorities on ancient civilizations and cultures, on history, politics, economics, law, military science, commerce and industry, religion and theology, ethics, aesthetics and especially metaphysics, over seventy in number. Their talks left on me the impression that they all possessed an intense love of Truth and that all were supremely eager to pursue it. But this love and this pursuit were and are confined chiefly to the spheres of their respective fields of activity or thought. Excepting to a few, the question of Truth in regard to the *whole* of experience or life seemed to make little appeal. Some of them relegated such an enquiry to the world of the mentally defective, if not of the insane. No doubt there exist in Europe colleges and professors of philosophy whose object is to interpret the *whole* of life or experience. But even they are still unable to free

themselves from the influence of their environment which emphasises some particular aspect of experience, such as the social, political or economic. Even scientists often preferred to keep away from philosophy as much as possible. The majority appeared to hold an 'ultimate' or 'all-comprehending' Truth to be a chimera, if not meaningless. When it was pointed out that 'compartmental' Truths change and are modified from time to time, and that they as such are conflicting or contradictory even in their own spheres, the reply came that an unchanging Truth was an impossibility, at the present stage of human knowledge, and that the Hegelian Absolute or the Marxian Unity was only a *theoretical* concept but not a *practical* or *stable* goal that could be attained in life. Not a few still believed that Truth was best understood by those who possessed power and prosperity.

When it was next urged by me that such compartmental conceptions of Truth led to 'good' only of a partial and temporary character, and that a view of it based on experience covering longer periods or wider area could yield better results, more beneficial to man, they admitted the reasonableness of the argument but stuck to their conviction of the *practical* impossibility of attaining an All-com-

prehending Truth. They acknowledged that such Truth as has a bearing on the whole of life or existence does press on the mind of every one, sometime or other. But this is disposed of in either of two ways. The great majority find the easiest solution in some religious faith, which gives hopes of its realisation *after death*. The rest ignore the problem altogether, as unattainable in life, if not meaningless.

CRITERION OF TRUTH

Setting aside the question of an all-comprehending or ultimate Truth, whenever I put the question, "How do you know that in any field your enquiry leads you to Truth?", the invariable reply was that the results in actual or practical life were the strongest proof. And where no practical results could be attained at all or immediately, one's own 'belief' or 'faith' even in matters of Science was, they said, the sole criterion. Here, when I pointed out that belief and faith led to differences so serious as to invite conflict, nay, even wars, and that religious beliefs led to more bloodshed than political or other beliefs, they said that as a criterion of Truth, nothing higher than belief or faith was yet known to man, and that for the rest we must submit to Nature's laws, whether we like them or not.

MEANING OF TRUTH

Almost every thoughtful person I met, I asked what was meant in Europe by Truth. A number of interpretations of Truth were given, each of which differed from others, though each was found satisfactory from the standpoint of the particular sphere to which one's thought was confined for the time being. Further, thinkers re-

fer to 'absolute', 'relative', 'subjective', 'objective', 'impersonal', 'theoretical', 'practical' and various other kinds of Truth, in which the qualifying words can have no meaning unless that of Truth by itself were known. So when the question was raised by me as to the meaning of Truth independently of any compartmental limitations, in other words, as to the *common feature* of all the compartmental Truths, I was told that it was useless to pursue such an enquiry and that the question was as old as the world. There has thus been no advance on the exclamation of Pontius Pilate made nearly twenty centuries ago which is thus recorded: "And Pilate said, what is truth? but would not wait for an answer." The inconclusiveness of the several attempts made by philosophers in this matter was also referred to by many.

BEST INDEX OF PRESENT EUROPEAN ATTITUDE

The highest prize awarded by the most thoughtful men in Europe is known as the Nobel Prize. It encourages best the pursuit of compartmental Truth in several important fields of knowledge. The impetus given by it to science in particular has been twofold. While modern science has done immense 'good' to the world so far as the *individual* is concerned, it has done incalculable harm so far as communities or nationalities are affected. It has encouraged war and slaughter more than anything else. It has further increased the struggle for existence within Europe as well as outside, in several ways. Had the Nobel Prize only kept in view the pursuit of not merely Truth compartmental, but also Truth universal, regarding the whole of experi-

ence as the highest Truth, it would have contributed to the well-being of mankind in general also. For Truth that covers the *whole* of life belongs to the province of philosophy, which alone can help us to *evaluate* human action, individual or collective, from the standpoint of the common well-being of humanity.

Excepting in those universities where philosophy is studied as a part of a course, the number pursuing this subject alone is fast dwindling. The Truth of science, not of philosophy, is what attracts the great majority, though it is evident that science is productive of as much evil as good. Even religious Truth which is thought to be an antidote to the evils of science, is found to be powerless in checking national or communal animosities, though it is so valuable as affording individual satisfaction.

Some thinkers, realising the difficulty of solving the problem of Truth, have thought it necessary to assign a subordinate place to Truth, and to set up other standards or values. But this point was nowhere brought up for discussion.

INDIA'S ATTEMPT

At last I placed before them for their consideration and examination the effort made by India to attain to a clearer and more consistent meaning of Truth and to test it in life. But inasmuch as Ultimate Truth was for most of them a chimera, they thought that India was labouring under a delusion. They further held that a nation that has been proverbially passive so long, whose greatness has always been in the past, and which is ever enamoured of mysticism, cannot be expected to have the capacity to think vigorously on matters

rational. In India, they added, even the most cultured—let alone the masses—were still in the stage of 'reveling in poetry', 'quoting scriptures' for everything, and finding delight in blindly 'copying' others. These preconceptions, I could overcome in some cases. But the difficulty that was more formidable was the natural inability of the majority in Europe to concentrate their mind. Restlessness and impatience have been among the most noticeable features in their daily life. So the attitude of some reminded me of the well-known saying, "He that speaketh the Truth to the unprepared (may I add, to concentrate) is a liar in his own despite." For I could not get some of them to understand the meaning of what is known as 'sleep'. And I had to divert the talk to less serious topics such as would not tax the mind so much.

I should, however, be not only failing in my duty but even be highly ungrateful if I did not state here that a number of the most distinguished and thoughtful men whom I had the good fortune to meet did readily see my point of view and express their wholehearted appreciation of the Indian conception that ultimate Truth must be what is beyond contradiction and beyond all possibility of contradiction—beyond doubt and beyond all possibility of doubt. Further, they acknowledged its value in practical life also.

Among those that evinced such interest were persons who not merely possessed the highest order of intelligence but also combined with it the longest experience of life. To mention some of the names, in France, Prof. Henri Bergson and Prof. Lalande; in Germany Prof. Max Planck

and Prof. Thurnwald ; in Italy Prof. Gentile ; in Switzerland Prof. Jung ; in Austria Prof. Giegar ; and especially in England Sir James Jean, Sir Arthur Eddington, Prof. Julian Huxley, Prof. MacMurray and Prof. Muirhead are persons who evinced such interest. Among the political personages deeply interested in philosophic Truth, I cannot refrain from referring to the Marquis of Zetland and Viscount Samuel in England, and H. H. the Archduke Eugen in Austria. Many of them were so good as to observe that in seeking and pursuing philosophic Truth, India could certainly lay greater claim to the benefit of longer experience combined with deep and concentrated thought than modern Europe.

I have left the European continent with the feeling that if leaders of thought in Europe—Europe with its superior knowledge of science, its admirable skill in matters of organisation, its great ability in diverting energy of every kind into the more practical and useful channels, and above all with its power to influence other nations in

a smaller or a greater degree—could only make up their minds seriously to grapple with the problem of the Truth of the whole of experience, in addition to pursuing compartmental Truth, and what is more, could ascertain its basis in, and bearing on, actual or practical life, beginning with a complete analysis of the meaning of the term 'I' and of the word 'whole' when applied to experience—Europe would be doing the greatest good of a permanent character, not merely to herself but to all mankind. For the Ultimate or Highest Truth eliminates all contradictions, and thus makes for harmony and peace, internal as well as external, by the elimination of harmful conflict of every kind, *not after death* as in religion, but *in this life*, this mundane life of ours, as in science.

May Europe as well as the rest of the world have the determination to seek truth unqualified, will always be the prayer of one who, however feebly, seeks to represent those that have made the pursuit of Truth, Truth in its totality, their aim and end of existence.

THE WAY TO THE DIVINE

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, the author of 'The Universal Prayers' and 'The Divine Life', is the representative of the Ramakrishna Order teaching the gospel of Vedanta in the Continent of Europe. In the following article, which forms a class-talk of his, some practical hints helpful for the religious aspirants are given.]

"Like the sharp edge of a razor is the Path of Self-Realisation, so the wise say, difficult to cross and hard to tread."—*Katha Upanishad*.

MORAL LIFE A STEPPING STONE TO SELF-REALISATION

THE Vedantin says, "It is not enough if you do selfless acts and lead a moral life. It is not

enough if you scrupulously perform your duties. Something more is needed. You must attain to the highest Divine Knowledge and thereby realise the highest goal yourself."

Selfless acts and moral practices are only a means to the higher life of the spirit. They are a stepping stone for bringing about the necessary purification of the mind and understanding, without which the highest Knowledge is not attainable by anybody. A strictly moral life, selfless activity in the interest of others, holy studies and spiritual practices, are needed to remove all the impurities lying hidden in our mind. This is the only way of attaining the highest illumination in the end.

THE WAYS OF THE MAN OF KNOWLEDGE

At present we identify ourselves with the body, whereas the man of Knowledge knows that the body is only a temporary dwelling place, not his true self. It is true that he too acts and performs what we call duties, but he is ever the witness of his acts. He is at all times fully conscious of his non-identity with the body. He never believes himself to be a man or a woman, a youth or an old man. He knows himself to be different from and eternally beyond the body and mind even. He is conscious that he is the Self. He may have the feeling that he acts, but this feeling is not like our feeling. The feeling persists only in a highly attenuated form, without any trace of real identification of the true self with its physical adjuncts. The ego of such a man of Knowledge is like a shadow, and cannot bind him at all.

Unless we have achieved perfect control of ourselves, it is not possible for us to understand what it means to be a man of realisation. First we should become perfectly non-attached to everybody and to everything through perfect control over our body

and mind. Until we have attained outer and inner purity, and until the highest Knowledge has been attained, we cannot understand the ways of the man of Knowledge.

TEST OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

He alone can realise the 'actionless Self,' the True Being, as the only Reality, who has purified his body and mind through perfect ethical culture. Otherwise any self-deluded man can pretend to be 'actionless', and thereby simply muddle up his impure chaotic brain. Merely claiming to have attained samesightedness will not do. A man must be put to the test and must be able to pass the test also. For the Bhagavad Gita declares of such a man that 'he, with the mind concentrated by Yoga and viewing all things with the eye of evenness, beholds the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.' When anybody claims to be a man of Knowledge, and at the same time passionately seeks sense enjoyments, feels distracted by the changing conditions of life, and rejoices or grieves through attachment, then one may conclude that there is something seriously wrong with his so-called Knowledge. The perfected soul does not care to run after the transient human relationships and momentary, enjoyments. His undimmed vision of the Truth prevents him always from turning to what is false and illusory.

That is why the aspirant who is on the path should prevent his mind from running after all human attachments and all the other vanities of the world, although it may entail a terrible struggle with his lower propensities. For Christ says, "Everyone that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or child-

ren or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting" (St. Matthew, XIX:29).

We should never light-heartedly and thoughtlessly pass over the teachings of the Great Divine Personalities, but should rather ponder over them deeply and then put their instruction into practice.

FACE THE TRUTH

Let us not cover unpleasant realities with fragrant flowers. We must learn to face facts as they are, and see them dispassionately. The body is a very dirty thing after all. So let us get disgusted with it and all its enjoyments. We should not feel pained to think like this. An unpleasant truth is better than a pleasant falsehood. The body is full of filthy secretions and is subject to decay. So let us give up all attachment and clinging to our own body as well as to that of others. Once we realise the true nature of the body, all desire to come in touch with other bodies, however beautiful their outward form, will go in no time. The body, however, is to be taken care of by all means and used as an instrument for promoting our true well-being as well as that of others.

Everything becomes simple the moment we become simple, and everything seems difficult so long as we remain complex. Realisation is an easy thing for him who is properly trained and qualified. Such a competent aspirant can come face to face with Truth and directly perceive it as it is. It is not an ideal which cannot be realised or which always eludes our grasp. Only one should make the spiritual ideal real and living, then it ceases to be mere ideal.

SEEK GOD FIRST

During the period of our spiritual practices we should think only of God and ourselves, and forget everything else. We should try to rid ourselves of all attachments, even what we feel for our nearest and dearest. So Christ says, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (St. Luke, XIV:26-27).

We ought not to worry too much about anything other than God. We should live with the Divine idea alone. This, of course, is not the ultimate stage to be reached, but it is a very necessary preliminary to its attainment. Ultimately we must realise the same Divine Being in all, and learn to love all exclusively for the sake of the Divine dwelling in them all.

First we must learn to see the Cosmic Being at the back of the Personal, and then we may come to see the Absolute at the back of the Cosmic. The Holy Personality, the Incarnation or the Personal God, takes us, as it were, by the hand and reveals to us step by step the higher Knowledge. The realisation of the Absolute—the Transcendental—lies always through the realisation of the Immanent Divine Principle. No one can take a long jump and reach the Absolute without the necessary preparation, however great may be its appeal to the intellect.

The more we succeed in creating within ourselves a cosmic outlook, the more we feel that there is neither man nor woman, neither subject nor ob-

ject, but that all is the One manifesting itself through different names and forms.

We must learn to see Him alone even in all awful and terrible things, without ever allowing the awful or the terrible aspects to overpower our mind. He is even in the gross, impure, awful, vulgar things, but all gross, impure, awful, vulgar things must never be permitted to affect our mind or to take possession of it. Darkness becomes visible by the light it reflects.

To the extent to which we succeed in seeing the One alone, we forget all limitations and pairs of opposites—the whole play of the phenomenal world. And we can do this only if we see that everything else but God is insignificant and of secondary importance, a mere shadowy, unsubstantial passing show. God is the only Reality at the back of everything.

BE ALWAYS WATCHFUL

If we be really watchful and earnest in trying to lead the life of a sincere aspirant, we would notice all the movements of our mind, all the thoughts and impulses that rise in it. Ordinarily we are so dull and so careless about all this that we only become aware of the perilous state we are in after the horse of our mind has thrown us into a ditch. But before reaching it, it has gone all the way to the ditch quite unperceived because of our carelessness and lack of right striving.

Hold the reins tight. All accidents in the path are due to carelessness. Be on your guard. Be always careful, always watchful. Never leave your mind unwatched, not even a single minute. This is the general

rule for all aspirants, whatever be the path they follow.

PRAY FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

There is a fine prayer that says: "O Lord, do Thou take charge of the helm. My six boatmen (the passions) are very turbulent. Take my boat to the other shore. Do Thou become my ferryman."

Sri Krishna has nothing to say to the thoughtless idler and to the lukewarm half-hearted aspirant who are not willing to pay the full price for that which they want. Real spirituality is dynamic, not passive. So Sri Krishna's message is full of true manliness, virility and strength. And without these, coupled with strict ethical culture and steady spiritual practice, there cannot be anything that can be called religion.

There is nothing so precious as discrimination and dispassion and an intense yearning for God. So Sri Ramakrishna says, "You must ever discriminate the Real from the unreal, ever reason that He alone is Real and that everything else is transient. Always pray to Him with a yearning heart."

In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord does not take part in the fight, but He is the friend and counsellor of Arjuna—the fighter. Let not the Lord Himself fight, but let Him give us the incentive and strength to fight, always. And let Him be our friend and charioteer as He was to Arjuna.

TRUE FREEDOM

Only the perfectly non-attached and pure can be real workers, for they alone do not work like slaves driven by their personal affections and aversions, and they alone do not bring bondage and delusion and attachment to others.

Real freedom consists in freedom from love and hate, affection and aversion, and in perfect sense-control. As soon as our body and mind are really controlled, we feel even physically that life is worth living, because it is then that we cease to be slaves and puppets of personal love and desire, and become capable of rising to the true stature of a human being.

If the aspirant steadily tries to feel the Divine Presence within and to forget every other thing, no great dangers will arise from people or objects, and temptations will slowly dwindle off until they leave him completely.

THE DIVINE MORE REAL THAN THE WORLD

We should closely examine ourselves and find out whether we really want God. If we desire the love and affection of other persons, or the things of the world, we can do without Him. And if we feel quite happy and satisfied when these are granted to us, it is a sure sign that we do not want God. In such a case we have nothing to complain if we do not get Him. So every aspirant should ask himself now and then whether it is really God that he wants or something else. And if it is really God he can be sure that he will come to Him, for God always comes to the devotee who really seeks Him and Him alone. Says Sri Ramakrishna, "If the devotee moves towards God one step, He comes towards him ten steps."

The whole point is that we cannot take all this dream of the phenomenal to be absolutely real and, at the same time, think of God. This cinema-

show we see here, is not the Reality. Christ says, "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for me shall find it" (St. Matthew, X:38-39).

The way to Divine realisation lies through self effort and striving. Immortality can be attained only by one who becomes dead to all worldly attachments even while living in the body.

Our whole trouble is that we believe this phenomenal world and all the people we see in it to be intensely real, and two realities cannot find room in us. So, first of all, a void is to be created in the heart of every aspirant, and once this is done, he can fill this void with the Divine.

The true sages and men of Knowledge do not trouble themselves about the multiplicity of the world. They see the One alone in the many, and they think of, and care for, the One alone. They find their greatest pleasure in Him, a pleasure never to be had through personal affection or sense-enjoyment. And the cessation of all desires means the realisation of Divine Consciousness. When all attachments and loves fall away and die, the soul realises its own eternal Divine glory.

"He who sees Me in all things, and sees all things in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I, the Divine, become separated from him. He who worships Me, dwelling in all beings, being established in unity, whatever his mode of life, that Yogi abides in Me" (Bhagavad Gita).

MAN AND THE WORLD

By Prof. Akshoy Kumar Banerjee, M.A.

[Mr. Banerjee deals with the fundamental philosophical problem of the inter-relation between the knowing principle and the external universe, and shows how the doctrine of levels or stand-points of reality can alone help in getting over the opposition involved in these two conceptions.]

I

THE relation between man and the world is a great puzzle to human understanding. Man stands face to face with a world, boundless in space and time and infinite in diversities and relations. All his interests are inseparably bound up with the circumstances presented by the world. Many of these circumstances are of such a nature that, though his vital interests are affected by them, he can exercise no control over them, and they occur independently of him and his requirements. There are, however, some which he can effectively control by the efforts of his powers of thought, will and action, and can exploit for the fulfilment of his desires and the realisation of his ideals.

But on the whole he feels that the world is something foreign and external to himself. He is a self-conscious and self-determining personality, having freedom of thought, feeling, will and action; while the world is an unconscious entity, having no power of thought and feeling, no self-determined will and action, and all its phenomena are what they must inevitably be in accordance with the inexorable laws of natural causation. He has a moral character, which makes him distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, ought and ought not; but the world has no moral character and there is no room for such distinctions among its pheno-

mena. Man has an ideal of life, which he has the right and power to realise by dint of his own free efforts in this world; but the world itself is unconscious and without any ideal, and it is going on blindly and aimlessly in its course in accordance with its laws.

This consciousness of the opposition between the nature of man and the nature of the objective world has given rise to serious logical difficulties in the way of accounting for the close relation between man and the world. How can two such entities of opposite characters come in such intimate contact with each other? How can man acquire true knowledge of the world and the world reflect itself in its true character upon the human mind? How can the human consciousness and the unconscious matter of the world be associated with and interact upon each other? How can man realise the ideal of his moral nature in a world, all the phenomena of which are necessarily determined by unchangeable and inviolable laws of physical nature? How can the freedom of man, upon which his moral and spiritual life depends, be reconciled to the necessity of the material world, which is the field of the exercise of his freedom? The problem of knowledge, the problem of morality and religion, the problem of the ascertainment of the real nature of the human self and the objective world, —all these appear insoluble on the

assumption of the independent existence and opposite characters of man and the world.

Philosophers have imagined various hypotheses for the solution of these problems. Some have sought to explain away the distinctive characteristics of man, to regard his consciousness of the freedom of thought and action and his consciousness of moral and religious rights and duties as unreal and illusory, and to resolve the human nature into one of the complex products of the physical world. Others have denied the external and independent existence of the objective world and have attempted to explain it as a system of subjective ideas. Some have invoked the aid of God to bring about the relation between the two, and others have been contented with speaking of Parallelism or Pre-established Harmony. In this way various devices have been resorted to and various theories propounded for the solution of the riddle of the relation between the self-conscious and self-determining moral and spiritual and rational nature of man, and the externally determined, unconscious, non-moral and non-rational material nature of the objective world. Each theory has been sought to be established by the refutation of all the others and has been in its turn refuted by all the rest. In truth no device has been able to establish itself on unassailable logical grounds. Many sincere pursuers of truth have confessed the inability of logic to solve the problem.

It is as futile to try to derive the self-controlled cognitive, ideal-seeking, moral, spiritual and rational consciousness, essential to human nature, from the objective physical world in accordance with the physical

laws, as it is to reduce the external world, which supplies the data to human experience and the materials for the development and self-manifestation of man's subjective and moral and spiritual consciousness, into mere ideas or self-projections of this consciousness. To assert that the human consciousness and the unconscious world are associated with each other by an unaccountable Pre-established Harmony or by some contrivance of God is no explanation at all.

All these insuperable difficulties owe their origin to the fundamental assumption that spirit and matter, the knower and the knowable, the subject and the object, the moral agent and the field of its activity, are essentially distinct entities, having in their ultimate nature no points of community between them, and that freedom and necessity, the voluntary pursuit of an ideal and the government by law, the transcendence of time and space and the existence in time and pace, cannot be compatible with each other. This assumption itself is dogmatic and unwarrantable. It has no basis in experience. It really amounts to substantialisation of abstraction.

II

Let us investigate this problem in some detail. In order to prove that the human spirit and the objective world are essentially distinct entities having originally independent existence and fundamentally opposite characters, it is necessary to show that the one can exist or can be definitely conceived as existing absolutely without any relation to the other. But such a definite conception of the one without any reference to the other appears to be impossible. The knower

and the known, the doer and the deed, the experiencer and the experienced, the illuminator and the illumined, are essentially bound up with each other, and neither has any meaning apart from relation to the other. If the human spirit is to be characterised as the knower, the doer, the enjoyer, the experiencer, the illuminator, etc., it at once involves the notion of the object of knowledge, action, enjoyment, experience, illumination, etc. The character of the subject is determined by the character of the object. Self-consciousness, self-luminosity, self-enjoyment, self-determination, etc., also can have no meaning, unless a division of subject and object is recognised in its own nature.

The objective world also cannot be conceived as having any character of its own apart from relation to the knowing, feeling, acting subject. Extension and duration, co-existence and succession, motion and rest, unity and plurality, heat and light, sound and touch, weight and density, attraction and repulsion,—in short, all the so-called primary and secondary qualities, all the qualitative and quantitative relations, which constitute the nature of the objective realities—are mental concepts and represent the diverse ways in which the human spirit receives, conceives and is affected by them. Apart from these, the objective world cannot be conceived as having any character, or even any existence. To give it any such name as matter or thing-in-itself or pure being or indeterminate substance to indicate what it is apart from, and independently of, the relation to the knowing, feeling and acting subject, does not in the least improve the situation, because either such a name should convey some definite meaning to the

human understanding, in which case it must be the expression of a mental concept, and hence the relativity remains unavoidable, or it should be a meaningless word, which cannot represent the character of any reality.

Thus, the objective world must necessarily mean to the human understanding the world as it is mirrored on the subjective nature of man and characterised by the attributes which the human mind discovers in it. Man also becomes conscious of himself and of his own nature as reflected on the objective world. Each is what it is in relation to the other. The character of each is determined by the other, and neither can be asserted to have any character or existence apart from the other.

We experience the world of material objects as possessed of colours, sounds, tastes, odours, and tactual properties; but these cannot be conceived as having any existence except by reference to the senses of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. Had these been absent in our subjective nature, there would be no light or colour, no sound or taste or smell, no heat or cold or hardness or softness, no distinction of solid or liquid or gaseous states, in the universe of our experience. Even the imagination or conception of them as existing outside the scope of our experience would be impossible. If our senses had been differently constituted, the world would have been possessed of altogether different characteristics to us, and those characteristics would have been accepted by us as pertaining to the real nature of the objective universe. On the other hand, the presence of these senses in us also could not have been recognised in the absence of those properties in the objects,

producing impressions upon and being received by them. Thus the senses and the sensible objects are essentially inter-related, and neither can be conceived as having any character or existence apart from the other.

Similarly, there could be no conception of space and time, and the world could not be experienced as consisting of phenomena with spatial and temporal properties, if the experiencing subject had not been finite and limited and had not been under the necessity to receive its objects in order of succession and simultaneity. If the subject could experience the entire objective existence by a single act of intuition and this intuition had no beginning or end or change, there would be no notion of time and space in connection with the nature of the world. The experience of unity and plurality, internality and externality, succession and co-existence, rest and motion, inertia and impenetrability, different shapes and sizes and magnitudes, etc., is dependent upon the finite, limited and relative character of the subjective mind and senses. On the other hand, the finitude, limitedness and relativity of the mind and senses also could not be recognised and would have no meaning except by reference to time and space and the limitations imposed by them.

Again, we perceive the existence of various forces operating in the world and transforming themselves into sensuous phenomena, and many scientific observers and thinkers recognise these forces as the real objects appearing in the forms of phenomena to our senses. But if we had not the consciousness of the exercise of will and effort in our subjective nature, we would have no experience of power or force in the objective world. On the other hand,

in the absence of the experience of resistance from outside, we would not be conscious of any power or effort within ourselves. The active aspect of human consciousness and the conception of the world as a system of forces necessarily involve reference to each other.

Moreover, if the laws of Identity, Contradiction and Excluded Middle, the laws of causality and sufficient ground, and the principle of the unity of experiences, had not been inherent in the nature of human reason, there would be no conception of the objective world as a unitary system, no recognition of the plurality of objects as parts of a connected whole and the differences and relations among them, no notion of causal connections within this universe, no idea of the reign of laws in it. These laws and principles also have no meaning apart from objective reference, and their *a priori* presence in the subjective reason could not be discovered in the absence of the relation between the subject and the objective world.

Further, on account of the presence of moral and æsthetic elements in our subjective consciousness, we experience some objects as good and others as evil, some as beautiful and others as ugly, some as what ought to be and others as what ought not to be. The moral sense and the æsthetic sense pertaining to our nature discover moral and æsthetic qualities in the nature of objects almost in the same way as our senses of sight, smell, etc., detect colours, odours, etc., in the objects.

The growth of moral consciousness is dependent upon the nature of the world-order, which presents itself to consciousness and awakens and develops it. This experience of the ideal

involved in the actual and this conception of the world as a moral order are neither imaginary nor illusory, but the natural product of the contact between the moral nature of the subject and the moral quality of the objective world.

Moreover, it is because man is a spiritual being and the objective world is reflected upon his spiritual consciousness, that the diverse finite transitory objects of sensuous experience are necessarily conceived and interpreted by him as bound together by some band of spiritual unity, which transcends the temporal and spatial limitations which pertain to those objects and which without losing its essential unitary character exists as immanent in them. It is the unity, infinity and eternity of the spiritual nature of the subject, which seeks for and discovers unity behind all diversities, infinity behind all finite objects, eternity behind all temporal phenomena, spiritual self behind all material embodiments. In the absence of this spiritual aspect of human consciousness, the conception of the boundless diversified world as the organically related self-manifestation of one infinite eternal spiritual principle would not have been attained by man, and in the absence of such a constitution of the world system, this aspect of consciousness could not have been asserted and developed and fulfilled itself.

Thus the objective universe, with which man is and can possibly be acquainted, is what it is in relation to the nature of man as the subject, and the subjective human nature also is what it is in relation to this universe. The human nature becomes conscious of itself as reflected on the world and of the nature of world as reflected on

itself. Man as the subject and the world as the object are organically united with each other. Each acts as the mirror of the other. Neither can be said to have any separate existence and character independently of the other. If we try to form any conception of either of them as unrelated to the other, each becomes a differenceless attributeless characterless void.

III

Now it is the nature of human reason to reflect upon all the diverse kinds of experiences which are obtained as the result of the relation between the different aspects of the subjective character of man and the corresponding aspects of the objective character of the world, and to unify them by means of general comprehensive conceptions. In forming such conceptions reason is influenced by the particular points of view or planes of outlook, from which it looks upon those experiences and unifies them. This leads it to attach the central position to some particular department of experiences and to interpret the other departments in relation to it. The influence of this plane of outlook upon the conception of the universe is generally ignored by philosophers.

When reason moves habitually in the sensuous plane, it regards the sensuous experiences as representing the true or essential character of man and the world, and seeks to unify the moral, æsthetic and spiritual experiences with them as the centre. The law of phenomenal causation, in which there is an external relationship between the cause and the effect, is then regarded as the supreme law determining the course of the objective world. The values of things are

chiefly determined by reference to the sensuous pleasures and pains experienced in our sensuous nature through contact with them. Economics becomes the chief concern of man's active life.

When reason looks upon the same world of experience from the viewpoint of the vital plane, it discovers the presence of a life-power, either in the potential or in the kinetic state, everywhere in the universe. Those who attain this plane of outlook are strongly convinced that here they form a far deeper and truer acquaintance with the real nature of the world of experience than in the sensuous plane. This plane represents a higher stage of the development of the subjective nature of man, and it is consequently attained by a comparatively smaller number of men.

When this world is viewed from the moral plane, it appears as essentially a moral order, governed by the moral law. The law of phenomenal causation appears in this plane as subordinate to, and governed by, the principle of morality. The law of Karma is a formulation of this law of moral causation. Everything that is and appears to sense experience, is a particular form of the manifestation of what it ought to be. The 'ought' is the regulator of 'is'. This moral outlook generally leads to the conception of one moral Governor of the world, who is regarded as regulating all its phenomena in accordance with the moral ideal inherent in His character.

Similarly, when reason dwells and moves habitually in the æsthetic plane, the ideal of Beauty is conceived as the central dominating principle of the objective universe, and all other aspects are regarded as partial expressions and embodiments of this

ideal. It is from the standpoint of the æsthetic ideal that all phenomena of the diverse orders of experience are judged. With the progress of this outlook, the world appears more and more beautiful,—the subjective consciousness enjoys beauty within and without.

The men who attain a predominantly spiritual outlook, the spiritual aspect of whose nature reigns over the sensuous, vital, moral and æsthetic aspects, get a spiritual insight into the nature of the objective world, and view all its phenomena from the spiritual standpoint, experience the world as a spiritual order, as a harmonious and beautiful system of the varied self-manifestations of the one eternal infinite absolute spirit. In their experience the Unity is more real than the diversities, the Infinite and Eternal is more real than the finite transitory objects, the Absolute Spirit is more real than the related mental and material things. To them the One Infinite Eternal Absolute Spirit is the source and the substance, the sustainer and the regulator, the ideal and the end of the world of sensuous, vital, moral and æsthetic experiences. In the nature of that Spirit the knower and the knowable, the enjoyer and the enjoyable, the doer and the doable, the actual and the ideal, the seeker and sought are eternally identified. When the human consciousness rises to the highest spiritual plane and is blessed with the deepest spiritual experience, man realises himself to be identical with the Spirit and finds the objective world also identical with the Spirit and hence with himself. Man and the world are experienced as one. He finds nothing outside of himself and does not become conscious of himself as dis-

tinguished from anything. It is one blissful spiritual experience, in which the experienter and the experienced are not distinguishable,—one spiritual enjoyment, in which the enjoyer and the enjoyable, the lover and the beloved, are not distinguishable. In this experience, Truth, Beauty and Goodness are one; Knowledge, Emotion and Will are one; the Object and the Subject are one; the process and its fulfilment are one. This experience is the negation of nothing, but the fulfilment of everything.

When the human reason, after having got the taste of losing itself, so to say, in this Absolute Experience, comes down to the consciousness of its distinguished individuality with the indelible impression of that experience characterising its entire outlook, its mode of reflecting upon and interpreting the nature of the objects of sensuous, vital, moral and æsthetic experiences is radically changed. It finds all these objects as emerging from, sustained by, existing for and merging in the One Infinite and Eternal (spaceless and timeless), Absolute and Perfect Subject-objectless Spirit, and recognises the presence of that Spirit in all the finite transitory relative imperfect objects, appearing as such to the diverse aspects of the subjective consciousness. These objects seem to be the appearances or partial self-manifestations of the Spirit. The same Absolute Spirit is recognised as revealing, experiencing, and enjoying itself as a plurality of subjective consciousness and a plurality of objective realities, distinguishable from, but inseparably related to, each other, and with diverse orders of specific characteristics determined by their relations to each other. This apparent self-

diversification and self-manifestation of the Absolute Spirit in the names and forms of innumerable finite spirits and objects, and the process of determining and regulating their natures and courses are not, from this point of view, governed by any Law of Causation, physical, mental or moral; they are the modes of the self-expression and self-enjoyment of Its perfectly free spiritual nature,—they are Its *Leela*. The Law of Causation and the Law of Karma, the physical, psychological, biological and moral laws, are all conceived as the modes of Its *Leela*,—the methods, as we observe them, of its self-expression and self-enjoyment.

Though there is no rational ground for condemning and rejecting any of the aforesaid planes of outlook and modes of interpreting the nature of the subject and the object,—man and his world,—as absolutely misrepresenting their true character, and for regarding any of the data and products of the different orders of well-regulated normal human experience as absolutely unreal; still the spiritual plane of experience and the mode of interpreting all orders of experience from this point of view is conceived as the highest and the best and as representing most truly the ultimate nature of man and his world, because it gives the utmost satisfaction to and confers the most permanent blessedness upon the thought, feeling and will of man. It delivers man from the painful consciousness of imperfection, limitation, finitude and bondage, and it bestows upon him the blissful consciousness of the realisation of perfect truth and goodness and beauty, perfect freedom, eternity and infinity in himself.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SŪTRAS (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' forms one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

SŪTRA 7.

The description of Bhakti as the state of supreme spiritual realisation ends with the sixth aphorism. Narada now proceeds to clear some misunderstandings which may arise from his characterisation of Bhakti in aphorism 2 as supreme Love. Ordinarily *Prema* or love is understood to mean the tender feeling that persons of opposite sexes feel for one another. In the next aphorism he shows reason why Bhakti should not be identified with sex love, or for the matter of that, with any kind of worldly desire.

सा न कामयमाना निरोधरूपत्वात् ॥

सा That Bhakti (which is described in aphorism 2 as *Prema* or supreme Love) न कामयमाना is not of the nature of desire (especially sex love): निरोधरूपत्वात् being a form of renunciation.

Bhakti (described before as *Prema* or Love) is not of the nature of desire (sex love), because it is a form of renunciation.

Notes: The reason for this distinction drawn between Bhakti or love of God, and Kama or love of worldly objects, especially sex attraction, is that in the former, the mind is withheld from flowing towards objects of senses. Thus in Bhakti the mind is

educated to renounce sense-objects, while in Kama it is allowed to get engrossed in them. Being therefore of a contradictory nature, Bhakti cannot be equated with desire.

From the point of view of ancient psychology, this reason for drawing a distinction between Bhakti and Kama may be sufficient. But some modern psychologists would not be satisfied that this apparent difference in the object of interest in the two forms of love is sufficient ground for giving spiritual intuition a higher basis than man's instinctive energies which manifest as desires. There has therefore been a consistent attempt made in modern times to find a sexual origin for the so-called higher experiences of saints and mystics. According to modern psychology, an expression of desire need not always imply the flow of the mind towards an external object. When a person fails to obtain satisfaction for his instinctive cravings in the real world outside, owing to social taboos, keenness of competitive life, etc., his desires take a subterranean course. Unknown to the person, they remain submerged in the unconscious levels of the mind, and with added force derived from their suppression by mental censorship, they seek satisfaction in the world of phantasy, accompanied by various abnormal and unhealthy mental symptoms. Many a psychologist

is inclined to classify the subjective experiences or spiritual intuitions of the saints and mystics along with these abnormal mental manifestations, and attribute them to the same cause, namely, the suppression of fundamental instincts, especially the sexual.

This theory of the sexual genesis of spiritual intuition is based upon the following facts:—

1. Very often there is seen a correspondence between the setting in of puberty in man, and the experience of conversion, which is generally taken as the dawn of the spiritual sense.

2. In all religions and schools of thought emphasising on mystic experience, there are very strong sex taboos, and abstinence from sexual indulgences is held to be an unavoidable condition for the efflorescence of this mystical faculty.

3. The so-called higher experiences of saints, it is held, can be interpreted in terms of suppressed sex, as in the case of many forms of mental abnormalities.

4. In the writings of almost all the important mystics, sex symbolisms have been used to give expression to their aspirations and realisations.

On the basis of these and other facts, spiritual love and experience are explained by psychologists as a suppressed expression of sexuality, which is by common consent Kama *par excellence*.

The following remarks may be made by way of criticism of this theory:—

1. The doctrine of correspondence between puberty and the experience of conversion is too simple a generalisation, as it ignores all data that is inconvenient to it. Thus there are many cases of famous figures in

religious history like Prahlada, Dhruva, Nachiketas, Kannappar, Jesus, Ramakrishna, Dayananda, etc., who showed signs of spiritual enlightenment even from boyhood. Such instances become perplexing in spite of the Freudian theory of infantile sexuality. In the generality of men it may be otherwise; but all that can be argued from this is that the spiritual faculty in man, like other faculties, generally gains its full expression only with the maturity of the body.

2. No doubt various forms of sex taboos are enforced in societies by the influence of religious sanction. But this can be accounted for by the fact that religion and morality have always gone hand in hand. The connection between spiritual awakening and perfect continence is, however, more significant. It must be noted that the continence of the true aspirant and the repression of which psychologists are so well aware, are poles asunder in their method and results. As far as result is concerned, what happens in repression is a degeneration of mind, and in spiritual intuition a higher development of it. As for method, repression is accomplished through fear, unnatural application of force, dissimulation and ignorant evasion of the problem. The result of it is that sex tendencies and impressions remain submerged, and manifest as phantasies accompanied with mental disorders. In the case of a genuine spiritual aspirant practising continence, sex is fearlessly and intelligently faced and analysed, and thus, instead of being allowed to remain submerged as crude animal propensity, its energies are transformed into a higher power for the enrichment of man's psychic being. But even this is not to be identified or equated

ated with spiritual illumination ; for what perfect continence does is only to provide the right subjective environment, a pure mind and body, in which alone spiritual intuition can gain full expression.

And as for what this spiritual faculty is, it will be nearer truth to recognise its distinctiveness instead of equating it with any of the other tendencies that psychologists generally classify as instincts. In fact there are writers on the psychology of religion who speak of a special religious instinct. Thus Rutgers Marshall writes in his 'Instinct and Reason': "Religious activities, like the expression of all true instincts, seem often to be spontaneously developed in man. The masses of mankind do not have to be argued into the expression of religious feeling. Rather it is true that rationalistic and other barriers must be raised to prevent the expression of religious force that is found in various degrees." As to what the primary nature of that spiritual instinct is, Prof. Rudolph Otto, more than any one in modern times, has attempted to describe in his 'Idea of the Holy.' He defends its *a priori* character, and gives it the new name of the 'Numinous'. Starbuck, too, in his paper on the 'Instinctive Basis of Religion' maintains what he calls the cosmo-aesthetic and teleo-aesthetic senses to constitute the ultimate religious instinct in human nature.

Even those who do not agree to a special religious instinct must admit that human lives begin not only with biological instincts common to all members of the race but with certain other tendencies to action and feeling which are not shared by all, but are found only in particular individuals, just as in the case of genius for music,

etc. In his 'Psychology of Primitive Cultures,' Bartlett admits such tendencies and calls them 'individual difference tendencies.' The saints must have possessed such a tendency which differentiates them from others. This tendency may be described as the 'tendency to fix their attention beyond and above the reality of the senses, accompanied by a striving for profounder realities leading to a spirit of renunciation of immediate material enjoyment in order to obtain a felicity of a more lasting and universal character.' (De Sanctis' Religious Conversion'). Mac Doughall, too, admits as follows in the Symposium on 'Instinct and Reason' in the British Journal of Psychology: "There are many facts which compel us to go further in the recognition of innate mental structure, such facts as the special facilities shown by individuals in music, in mathematics, in language and other æsthetic and moral endowments. The question of the extent and nature of the innate endowments or innate mental structure remains one of the largest fields of work for psychology." The Hindus would attribute such special tendencies and aptitudes to tendencies acquired in previous births (Vide Gita VII:19 and VI:44). Even Leuba admits in his article in 'Religion in Transition' that there is one fact of enormous significance, a fact uncontestable and verifiable by every one: an urge works in every man, it is present already in the animal world, to create the perfect in every aspect of life.

Thus, whether it is due to a special instinct common to all men, or to a tendency peculiar to special individuals, or to a general urge for perfection which is in evidence in all life but which becomes conscious in man, the

religious experience is something unique in itself and not attributable to any of the other instincts like the sex. It would be far safer to admit with Hegel that religion, philosophy and art are the final values towards which the world is striving.

3. As for the third point, namely, the possibility of interpreting spiritual experiences by the same laws applicable to the phantasies of mental defectives, it has to be remarked that from a psychologist who is committed to a naturalistic interpretation of all spiritual phenomena, nothing more can be expected. But to one who does not share his prejudice, the vast difference brought on the personality of a saint and of a mental defective by their respective experiences, is a positive proof for tracing it to different origins.

▲ Lastly with regard to the use of erotic symbolisms by mystics in their writings and utterances, it will be very hasty and superficial to attribute their experiences to sex instinct from this fact alone. There is nothing to prove that they were prompted to use such language by any sexual craving. The true explanation of this can be had if we take the following facts into consideration: (a) Sex being the most powerful emotion known to the natural man, the language employed for its expression offers the most suitable medium to the mystics for conveying a glimpse at least of a transcendental experience that enraptures their soul. (b) As the highest Bhakti involves the union of the individual soul with the universal soul, the mystics find for it a handy illustration in the union of two persons in love. (c) Again many philosophical systems conceive God as the only Purusha or male, and look

upon all individual souls as females related as His wives. Thus if we find sex symbolisms in the writings of mystics; they are to be attributed to various influences, poetical, philological and philosophical, and not to any thing sexual in their spiritual experiences.

In addition to these facts, it must also be remembered that mystics employ symbolisms drawn from many aspects of life other than sex. Thus in the forms of Bhakti known as Dasya (servant's attitude), Sakhya (attitude of a friend), Vatsalya (parental attitude, and Santa (philosophical attitude), various imageries and expressions of love other than sexual are used. If the spiritual experiences attained in these cases are to be explained in terms of non-sexual instincts corresponding to these images, what we arrive at is not an explanation of facts but a mere confused understanding of them.

Far simpler would it be to accept the presence of a specific aspect in the human mind responding to stimuli that are distinctively spiritual. But it may be admitted that like all instincts, it too does not express itself in isolation in our life. Ordinarily, when it takes the form of a sentiment, it gets intertwined with other instincts, and thus in the life of the common man, the spiritual sense may be found mixed with many worldly tendencies. But for the highest spiritual realisation, the mind has to be thoroughly purged of its fleshy affections. For, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, a mind that is attached to 'women and gold,' i.e., sex and possessions, can help us only to understand worldly objects. It is only when the instincts have been purged of their natural taints by what Narada calls Nirodha, restraint

or renunciation, that the mind becomes capable of grasping the higher truths. In the case of a mind that has thus been refined and filled with the urge for the attainment of the Highest, it is absurd to talk of 'compartmental' instincts. All its energies have been unified into one form, and there is only one instinct in it, namely, the passion for God. It is this withdrawal of the mind from its instinctive

expressions, both in the objective and subjective fields—whether as flight towards its natural objects or as indulgence in wish-fulfilment through repressions and phantasies—that Narada indicates by the term 'Nirodha'.

Because this Nirodha is involved in Bhakti or spiritual Love and the illumination it gives, Bhakti cannot be described as of the nature of desire.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Jatadhara and Other Stories: By K. S. Venkataramani. Published from Svetaranya Ashrama, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 168. Price 1-8-0.

Mr. Venkataramani has an established reputation as an author of many interesting books in good and elegant English. The book under review is a collection of sketches rather than short stories, written at different intervals of time, revised and rewritten without changing appreciably their original structure or movement.

The book contains nine stories, though the first two can be treated as parts of the story relating to Jatadhara. The life sketched in these stories is the life of the middle class in South India. The descriptions of situations, the treatment of characters and the general construction and development of plots are interesting in their own way. The comments at appropriate places voice forth the author's own opinions on subjects of engaging interest. They are artfully insinuated rather than frankly expressed. The outstanding merit of the author consists in that he lifts up the commonplace to the realm of the artistic. The sketches in the book embrace a wide range of topics delineating the endless vicissitudes of social life. The characters in the stories appear like dramatic personae; at the mere touch of the author's pen they are made immortal. The author's inimitable gift at miniature painting is very much in evidence in this book.

The book abounds in sly humour of a light and instructive type with a vein of pathos running through them all. The author's style is suggestive and charming while in some places it is ornate and poetic. Its elegant grace, purity, simplicity and soothing cadence reminds one of Goldsmith and Tagore. The idyllic tenderness of sketches and the deep sincerity and generosity of sentiments are marked features which are bound to touch the heart of the readers and leave in them lasting impressions. What Johnson said of Goldsmith may well be said of Venkataramani that 'he did not touch anything that he did not adorn.'

Ramayana-Balakanda: By N. Ramaswamiah, Retired Subordinate Judge, Thanikachellam Chetty Road, Theagaroyanagar, Madras. To be had of the author. Pp. 184. Price Re. 1-8-0 or Sh. 2-6, free of postage.

This book contains translations of select verses from the first Canto of Valmiki's famous epic, the Ramayana, together with commentaries on them and a general Introduction. The purpose of the author in writing this book is not so much to convey the literary beauty and epic grandeur of the Ramayana to the English reader, but to interpret what he considers the esoteric and spiritual significance of individual verses as well as of the events of the great epic. His commentary connects most of

the verses translated with the practices inculcated by Laya Yoga, especially, with exercises in Pranayama. Although one may at times feel that the allegorical and esoteric meanings are somewhat far-fetched, no one can help admiring the author's keen insight and his very close acquaintance with the Yoga Sastra. His general Introduction gives a very readable account of the practice of Yoga. He has made some substantial contribution towards clarifying concepts like Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Bhuta Suddhi and so on.

Sri Sukta, Lakshmi Sahasranama and Other Stotras: (Sanskrit). Edited by A. Srinivasa Raghavan, M.A., The Maharaja's College, Pudukottah. Price Re. 1-8-0. Pp. xlix+198+75.

The Sri Sukta needs no introduction to the devotees of the Divine Mother, especially of the Vaishnavite persuasion. Though it does not find a place in the Vedas proper, it is included as a Khila and is one of the most popular hymns in the mouth of almost every orthodox Hindu devotee. Though there have been many commentaries on the hymn by well-known authors like Sayana and Prithvidharacharya, the commentary that has been most popular with the Vishistadvaitic School is the one from the pen of one of the most honoured among their Acharyas, viz., Sri Ranga Narayana Muni, variously known as Ranganatha and Nanjiyar, as the author points out in his Introduction. He was one of the foremost disciples of Parasara Bhatta, who is also the author of many other commentaries such as the one on the Tiruvaimoshi of Nammalwar known as

'9,000 padi.' The book under review contains not only the Sukta with English translation as well as the text of the Commentary of Ranganatha, but also the Bhumika by Sri Sri Saumya Narayanacharya dealing with the various aspects of Lakshmi worship. It also gives the texts of several well-known Lakshmi Stotras, such as the Chatuhshloki of Sri Yamunacharya, the Saranagati Gadya of Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Stava of Sri Vatsa Misra, the Gunaratnakosa of Parasara Bhatta, Sri Stuti of Vedanta Desika, with their translations, as well as the Lakshmi Sahasranama and Ashottarasatam with Namavalis useful for Puja and Japam, as well as an alphabetical index of names. The book is well planned and neatly executed and is a veritable *vade mecum* on all questions relating to the worship of the Mother, especially according to the Visishtadvaitic School. The Commentary of Ranganatha is a veritable mine of information on the doctrines and practices of Lakshmi worship and has laid under contribution all the available literature on the subject, and has been the basis of many later commentaries on the Sukta. It is very interesting to note how the commentator identifies the male and female aspects of Divinity, and points out the identity of Lakshmi Herself with the many female Deities to whom Vedic prayers are addressed, such as Sraddha, Medha, etc. This lends colour to the view that Sri or Lakshmi of devotional literature represents the inner urge of spirituality leading everyone on to final perfection, and forms only a dynamic aspect of the One True Immanent God in the heart of everybody.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna's Temple at Belur

Enormous crowds of men and women congregated at Belur Math on Friday the 14th of January, and participated in the all-day celebrations in connection with the dedication of the new temple to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a marble statue of whom was installed in it.

The magnificent edifice, said to be unique of its kind in Bengal, represents the fulfilment of one of the cherished dreams of the life of the greatest and noblest among Ramakrishna's disciples, Swami Vivekananda. 233 ft. in length, 109 ft. in breadth and 112 ft. in height, the total cost of its construction, which is likely to be

completed by March next, is estimated at over eight lakhs of rupees, including the marble statue, 'Vedi' etc.

Miss Helen Rubel and Mrs. Anna Worcester, the two American devotees, who contributed nearly seven lakhs of rupees for the construction of the temple, were also present at Belur Math on Friday. Barefooted, they joined in the celebrations, receiving spontaneous greetings from the crowds.

More than 150 monks have arrived at the Math from different centres of the Mission in different parts of India. It is estimated that more than 50,000 people took part in the celebrations, and about 10,000 received 'prasad' on Friday.

The opening ceremony of this new temple marked an important chapter in the history of Belur Math and Ramakrishna Mission and was regarded by the monks as one of the happiest occasions in their lives.

It was yet dark when the earliest batch of people, numbering about two hundred, flocked to Belur Math to take part in the morning function which commenced at half past six with the opening ceremony performed by Swami Vijnanananda, the present President of the Ramakrishna Mission. By the time the sun appeared in the horizon, tearing off the veils of mist, and the waters of the Ganges glittered and danced in sunshine large crowds congregated in the vast area of the Math, resounding with the chanting of 'Mantram' and shouts of 'Guru Maharajki Jai'.

The sacred remains of Sri Ramakrishna and his relics were carried in an impressive procession from the old buildings to the new temple where they were installed by the President. He also consecrated the marble statue of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna).

The 'Puja' with all Vedic rituals started at 8 in the morning and continued up to 5 in the evening. There were 'Kirtan' songs throughout the day. Eight Mahratta Brahmin Pandits with four Bengali Pandits from Benares performed 'Vedic Hom'.

There were fire-works and illumination at night. The St. John Ambulance volunteers and the Calcutta Fire Brigade attended to about thirty-five cases of minor accident.

The design of the temple follows scrupulously the conception of Swami Vivekananda who was anxious to find a suitable and permanent "Home" for the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna. And for this, true to the precepts of his great Master, Swami Vivekananda conceived the idea of a temple which would embody the distinctive features of the various religious faiths of the world as he cherished the hope that worshippers belonging to different faiths would congregate here without their convictions being disturbed in any way.

As desired by Swami Vivekananda, with whom the idea of this temple originated, the architecture of the temple represents a synthesis of different forms and styles.

The altar on which the main statue of Sri Ramakrishna has been installed, as also the canopy above it, have been designed by S. Nanda Lal Bose and his students.

Holy Mother's Birthday

The Eighty-fifth birthday of the Holy Mother was celebrated in the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on the 24th of December. The functions of the day included special worship, Homa and distribution of consecrated food. The public celebration came off on the 24th Saturday, when a meeting, attended by a very large number of ladies was held. Lady Raman was voted to the chair. Impressive addresses were delivered in Tamil and English by Sister Subbulakshmi Ammal, Sm. Visalakshi Ammal, Sm. Ambujammal and Sm. Ratnamayi Devi, bringing out the unique life and inspiring teachings of the Holy Mother and their special significance to the women of Modern India. Two other well attended meetings were also organised by the ladies in Mambalam and George Town.

Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Temple, Colombo

The religious ceremony in connection with the opening of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Temple and Prayer Hall of Colombo was performed on the 24th December 1937 by Swami Saswatananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras. The function consisted of special Pooja, Homa and the chanting of scriptures. It was attended by a large

gathering consisting of followers of different faiths.

The public function in connection with the opening ceremony took place on the 4th of January. After declaring the Temple open, Swami Saswatananda addressed a large gathering of the various communities and religionists of the Island, which had assembled there on the occasion.

In the course of his speech the Swami said that religions could be studied from three standpoints—the individual, the eclectic and the synthetic. According to the first standpoint, a person believed that his was the only true religion on earth. His outlook on other religions was necessarily narrow and crude. The person who was inclined to the eclectic view believed that all the religions had elements of truth. He tried to piece all these fragments of truths together to make a total whole. In trying to do so, he attempted to evolve a scripture of his own which had no authority behind it. He found it difficult to choose a path of Sadhana for his individual practice. The eclectic view was supplanted by the synthetic view. In this latter view, a person believed in the truth of his own religion and acknowledged the truth of other religions. He recognised that diversity is a law of nature, and that various religions, as also sects within a religion, were bound to exist. He found unity in variety. The synthetic combined the vigour and intensity of the faith of the individualist with the breadth and generosity of the eclectic.

All religions, the Swami continued, insisted that a man's life should be founded on morals. They aimed at truth, charity, purity and simplicity of life. Truth is one, though people called it by various names. All religions were established for the benefit of mankind and not for their mutual destruction. All religions consider the realisation of God or Perfection as the culmination of man's endeavours. All religions preach that, God being impartial, all men are equal in His eyes. Many more points of similarity could be found out.

He next traced the early history of the Ramakrishna Mission, and said that what the world needed at the present hour was a happy and peaceful fellowship of all the great religions.

Continuing, he said: "Sri Ramakrishna boldly proclaimed, 'As many faiths, so many paths.' He taught that it is the duty of every man to stick to his own faith and also have positive love for every other faith. At a time when we find that the League of Nations could not bring about peace in the political world, there is only one hope still left for us to achieve that goal. That is by a League of Faiths. We can never attain world peace by deprecating the religions of our neighbours. Each faith has its own place in the world. Each is equally great in its own place. The spirit of the times demand such catholicity of views. God is for all and is nobody's monopoly. When we study these various religions sympathetically, our outlook broadens. Narrowness of vision and understanding is vicious. A fellowship of faiths will ultimately lead to world brotherhood."

He then proceeded to state that the temple had been erected not for the glorification of one particular religion, but for preaching the Eternal Religion which lies embedded in the hearts of people wherever they might be.

In conclusion he appealed to those present to visit the shrine regularly and imbibe the spirit of universal prayer. With a vote of thanks by Swami Asangananda, the function came to a close.

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—Swami Vivekananda

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HINDU ETHICS

निन्दस्तु च समा नित्यं प्रशंसस्तु च देवल । निद्वन्ति च ये तेषां समयं सुकृतं च यत् ॥
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पक्वविद्या महाप्राज्ञाः जितक्रोधाः जितेन्द्रियाः । मनसा कर्मणा वाचा नापराध्यन्ति कस्यचित् ॥
अनीर्षवो न चान्योन्यं विहिंसन्ति कदाचन । न जातूपतप्यन्ते धीराः परसमुद्भिभिः ॥
निन्दाप्रशंसे चात्यर्थं न वदन्ति परस्य च । न च निन्दाप्रशंसाभ्यां विक्रियन्ते कदाचन ॥
सर्वतश्च प्रशान्ताये सर्वभूतहिते गताः । य एवं कुर्वते मर्यां सुखं जीवन्ति सर्वदा ॥

They always live in happiness, O Devala, who ever cultivate the attitude of sameness in praise and blame ; who conceal their noble resolutions and good acts ; who do not waste words when they are unnecessarily interrogated ; who speak wholesome words to even their opponents ; who do not strike back even when they are struck ; who do not repent of, and ponder over, the un-attained ; who are solely taken up with the duties that lie at hand ; who are ready to extend cordial hospitality to all worthy persons as occasions arise ; who are endowed with courage and firmness to carry out their intentions ; who possess mature knowledge and vast intelligence ; whose thoughts, words and deeds bear no evil fruit to any ; who are free from anger and are possessed of subdued senses ; who are strangers to envy and never do harm to others ; who feel no uneasiness about the rise of others ; who never indulge in adulation or deprecation of others ; who are never affected by praise and derision ; who are perfectly calm in every respect ; and who find their delight in doing good to others.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 236 :9—15 & 18.

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE INCARNATION

[The Divine is present in every being; yet many religions have conceived of His manifestation in the outside world in a special sense, as a Divine personality. Such special manifestations are called Divine Incarnations. In the following paragraphs we give a short exposition of this theory as developed in Christianity and Hinduism.]

I

IN our last number we dealt with the theory of the Superman in Islam and Buddhism. We shall now consider the views on this question maintained by the two other great world-religions—Christianity and Hinduism.

Among the great religions of the world, the doctrine of the Superman or, rather, of Incarnation is most important for Christianity. For the whole structure of Christianity, nay, its very claim to be accepted by mankind, rests on its theory of Incarnation. Christianity may have many beautiful moral teachings, many devotional and philosophical ideas in common with other religions; but we forget the core of its teaching if we overlook the fact that to proclaim unto mankind the glory of the only Incarnation, the Word manifested in flesh, is the central part of its message.

The special point of philosophical interest in Christianity lies in the combination of the effects of the Greek idea of Logos with the Jewish notion of Messiah, through the personality of Jesus Christ who is claimed as a historical personage inaugurating a new era in the life of mankind. The idea of the Logos makes its first appearance in the system of Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher. Heraclitus did not accept a transcendent God, but he admitted a divine soul of the world, whose life is manifested in the end-

less cycle of birth and death, of becoming, change, decay and renewal. This is the Logos, the Immanent Reason of the world, the one homogeneous principle throughout it. From this conception, Anaxagoras raised the Logos to the position of an intermediate principle between God and the universe. He spoke of it as the Divine Intelligence. A further development of it we find in the philosophy of the Stoics. Besides speaking of it as divine wisdom, they conceived it also as the divine activity, 'the seminal reason' of the universe. In Philo, who was a Jew nurtured in Greek thought, the conception becomes more clear and definite. The Logos is definitely a cosmic principle occupying an intermediate position between God and the world. It is the principle of divine revelation. The Logos, according to him, has two relations—in relation to God it is the first born Son of God; in relation to man it is the archetypal Man in whose image all other men are created. Again it is the Idea of ideas, the whole mind of God going out of itself in creation.

For all these pre-Christian thinkers, the Logos was only a cosmic principle. It was only in relation to the world of creation that they conceived it. They did not think of it as non-temporal, and it was beyond their remotest idea to associate it with the Messianic hopes of any people and find its historical embodiment in flesh and

blood in any human personality. It was reserved for Christianity preached by the writer of the fourth Gospel and by St. Paul to extend the significance of the Logos doctrine in these respects. The Pauline and Johannine Logos is more clearly defined as a second Person in Godhead, distinct, though eternally inseparable, from Him. The interest in the Logos as a creative principle disappears for the Gospels. To the Christian the Logos is not so much the revelation of God's nature as of his character—the Divine as self-sacrificing love. And what is more the Gospel adapts the revolutionary step of identifying the Logos with the Incarnation.

According to the Fourth Gospel the Logos was before the world, and before time began, in closest union with God, with a sort of transcendental subordination. He is thus supra-temporal and not simply the spirit of the world. He is the agent and the quickening spirit in creation, and the life of all that lives and the light of all that shines. The light had brooded over all history, enlightening every man, but unrecognised by many. At last came the time when 'the Logos became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only-born Son of the Father, full of grace and truth'.

This only revelation of the Logos in flesh and blood is Jesus Christ. He is both human and divine, and it is through him we understand the character of God and have access to Him. Man gains salvation only through faith in the Incarnation, the only begotten Son of God. Humanity has inherited the Original Sin of its first ancestors. That sin, being an act against God Himself, can be wiped off only by a sacrifice of in-

finite potency and it was to effect the redemption of humanity by such a sacrifice that God sent his only begotten son or Logos or Word—which are all synonymous terms—to live among men and suffer on the Cross. That was why Jesus Christ, though the Son of God and the most perfect being that ever tread the earth, died on the Cross even though he was himself sinless. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ would, by virtue of his atoning sacrifice, be redeemed from sin, and gain Heaven. Thus the truth of the Incarnation and the salvation of man are vitally inter-related.

Christianity is very emphatic in maintaining that the Incarnation or the manifestation of the Logos in flesh and blood took place only once in the whole of history, and that this is a unique incident which will never be repeated. Why Christianity is so adamant in maintaining the impossibility of more incarnations than one will appear mysterious until we realise the close relation of Christianity to the Mystery Religions of the Greco-Roman world, against which it had to struggle for supremacy in its early days. Each of these Mystery Religions had its own story of an incarnate God who sacrificed himself for the sake of the believers. The people of the Greco-Roman world, among whom Christianity had to find its first haven after it left its cradle in Judea, were so steeped in the doctrines and rituals of the Mystery Religions that in order to gain general acceptance Christianity was forced to fall in line with them in these respects. Hence in contending against these rival cults it was necessary for Christianity to insist uncompromisingly that its saviour God was the only true Incarnation and that all others advocated by the differ-

ent cults were spurious. This idea of the uniqueness of Christ and of his being the only Incarnation of the Divinity became very natural to Christianity in course of time, and as a result even reputed Christian thinkers feel a sentimental shock when they find a liberal-hearted Hindu comparing Jesus Christ with any of their Incarnations. Christians generally defend this revulsion of theirs against such comparisons, to the fact of Christ having inaugurated a new chapter in human history and so forth, but its real explanation lies in the connection of Christianity with the Mystery Religions in its early days. But the Christian saviour received a higher significance by his early identification with the Logos of the Greek thinkers, and as a result, when handled by real thinkers and genuine mystics, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation becomes a high spiritual ideal with an insistence on Divine immanence, instead of being an unphilosophical belief in an extra-cosmic God making his appearance among men once in the history of mankind. Hence in higher Christian thought we hear of Christ as a cosmic principle, of the generation of the Son by the Father as a continuous process and not a single act in a remote past, and also of Christ being 'born in us' or 'begotten in us'. In fact the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation becomes understandable only when we view it in the light of the three influences that have gone into its make-up—the Messianic hope of the Jews, the dying incarnate God of the Mystery Religions, and the Logos philosophy of the Greeks.

II

We now pass to the doctrine of Divine Incarnation as understood in

Hinduism. Although the idea of Incarnation has played a very important part in Hinduism, it is not a basic doctrine in it as it is in Christianity. Hence to understand the significance of this doctrine in Hinduism, it has to be considered in relation to the general theory of human perfection inculcated by it.

It is generally agreed by all scholars that in the Vedic literature we do not come across the idea of Divine Incarnation in the sense of God living in flesh and blood among human beings. We have therein the conception of Rishis or men of exceptional spiritual powers and insight. The Upanishads recognise the Divinity of every being, and according to those scriptures it is possible for one, by a life of righteousness and contemplation, to manifest that Divinity even in the embodied state. In the ordinary man the Divine is obscured by ignorance, but Knowledge removes this obscuration and helps the divine essence of the soul to shine in its glory. In the terminology of later Vedanta such a person is a Jivanmukta, one who is free even in the embodied state. He is a true Superman, because though he is human in form he is free from all the limitations of men who are in bondage. He has realised his distinctness from the body and mind, and recognised the oneness of his essence with Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, which forms the substratum of the universe. He is yet in the embodied state because the Karma that has brought his present body into existence is not yet exhausted. With the death of the present body, he has no further embodiment, because there is no more 'he' to be reborn. For his essence has recognised its identity

with the Universal Spirit which is free from all corruption.

Besides the Jivanmuktas, the Vedanta speaks of another type of Supermen known as Adhikarikapurusas or persons endowed with special commission. In the conception of the Jivanmukta it has been pointed out how it is the residue of Karma that is responsible for the continuance of his body for some length of time even after enlightenment. There are some enlightened souls in whom a strong desire to do good to the world remains even after enlightenment. In the case of such souls the strength of this desire also forms a part of the residual Karma, and hence by virtue of this desire they gain one or more embodiments until that desire is worked out. Persons who receive embodiment in this way are born perfect, and all their activities, including the spiritual practices they may undergo, are performed in the interest of mankind at large. Such souls who are born perfect are also known as Nitya-siddhas and Isvarakotis.

III

Next we pass on from these ideas of Supermen to the doctrine of Divine Incarnation proper. For a thoroughgoing Vedantist, who thinks only in terms of the Impersonal Absolute, the doctrine of special Incarnation of the Divinity is of little significance. He would accept the Divinity of all, the embodied soul being nothing but a misreading of the Absolute. With his mind always turned towards the Absolute, he has nothing to do with special manifestations and similar doctrines that emphasise distinctions and differences. So it is only in the theistic aspect of Vedanta, as distinguished from its Absolutist aspect, that the

doctrine of special Divine Incarnation comes to be of significance. That is why we find no mention of such special manifestation in the Upanishads which deal mainly with the Absolutist aspect of Vedanta. The doctrine of Divine Incarnation is a special development in Puranic literature wherein the theistic implications of Vedanta are emphasised.

As the Puranas are mythological literature chiefly intended for popular consumption, the doctrine is not systematically treated in them. According to these mythical representations, when great corruption prevails in the world, the gods and Brahma, the demiurge, go to the Heaven of the Supreme Deity, and implore Him to be born in the world in order to destroy the wicked and to restore order and righteousness. In response to such requests the Deity takes embodiment periodically sometimes in human and sometimes in sub-human forms. These Puranas sometimes specify their number as ten, sometimes as twenty-four and sometimes as innumerable. But popular imagination in later times has over-stepped even the widest concession of the Puranas. It has become the general habit among many people now-a-days to call their Guru a Divine Incarnation. This would not in itself be objectionable, if the disciple means that he finds the highest representation of Divinity, as far as he is concerned, in his spiritual teacher. But unfortunately disciples are not satisfied without declaring the Incarnationhood of their Gurus from house tops, and many Gurus too are not loath to prompt their disciples to do so either directly or indirectly. As a result we find such a plethora of Divine Incarnations in modern India

that the very term has practically lost all significance.

It is no doubt true that unlike the Christian scripture, the sacred books of Hindus speak of a multiplicity of Divine Incarnations. But that dignified title should not be applied to every spiritual teacher but reserved only for spiritual leaders of the exceptional type. Roughly speaking the characteristics of Divine Incarnations are as follows :

(1) An ordinary embodied being, however eminent he might be spiritually, is born as a result of his past Karma, or is in other words, he is Mayadhina (subject to Maya). A Divine Incarnation on the other hand is not thus born with the encumbrance of the past, as a slave of Karma, to reap the fruits of his actions. He is born free, and the limitations under which he appears are assumed of his own free will. In other words he is not a slave of Maya, but its master (Mayadhisa). For this reason he is free from the bondages of the world from the very start of his life. Concupiscence and thirst for selfish gain, the two cords with which Maya binds creatures to the world, have no power over them. The glimmerings of their divinity manifest now and then through their humanity even from their very childhood, and as their life becomes more and more mature, this characteristic of a spiritual teacher becomes the dominant mood in them. Their minds have always access to two regions of existence, as it were. As a person sitting on the threshold of a room can at will know of things within the room as well as without, their minds are, as it were, poised on the dividing line between the relative and the Absolute spheres of existence, and they can therefore at will put

themselves in these two states of consciousness. In the case of the ordinary liberated souls, once their consciousness becomes unconditioned, they do not come to the relative plane. Because of the simultaneous knowledge of the Absolute and the relative, the Divine Incarnation is able to enter into the moods of people at all levels of spiritual development and couch his teachings according to their varying needs. All these unique features of personality spring from the fact that even in the embodied state the Divine Incarnation is the master of Maya, never its slave.

(2) The purpose of the life of an ordinary embodied being is to work out his own salvation. But a Divine Incarnation is born in this world not for any individual purpose. He comes exclusively on a mission of social, nay, of cosmic importance. According to the Bhagavad Gita, whenever there is great decline of righteousness and the triumph of unrighteousness, the Incarnation comes in order to establish righteousness and destroy unrighteousness.

(3) This establishment of righteousness has got its physical and spiritual counterparts. Without a certain amount of physical violence and struggle the forces of evil cannot be suppressed. So the times when the Incarnation appears will be characterised by great national struggles in which the Incarnation may or may not take a direct part. But in this struggle the emissaries of evil perish, and from the sufferings resulting from it men at large learn the folly of a purely materialistic ideal of life. As the world thus gets prepared for it, the spiritual ideal set up by the Incarnation becomes more and more patent to mankind, and it slowly dissi-

pates the clouds of scepticism from the minds of people. Righteousness is truly established only when men's faith in the spiritual ideal is restored ; for the absence of true faith in it is at the root of all corruption. The Incarnation is the centre from which this true faith radiates and sanctifies the world.

(4) Again the spiritual energy of the Incarnation is incomparably greater than that of the ordinary liberated man, both in intensity and extensiveness. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, if an ordinary Jivamukta is like a log of wood capable of taking himself and two or three persons safely across the mighty river of life, the Incarnations are like steamers carrying hundreds of people to their destination. By an effort of their will they are capable of removing the beginningless ignorance in which beings are enshrouded, and of rousing their latent spiritual possibilities. As Swami Vivekananda put it, they are Kapala-mochanas,—beings who can free men from 'what is written on their head'. But the spiritual power they generate is not confined to their own lifetime. Every Incarnation leaves behind him a new revelation of Divine attributes in the shape of his own life and personality, promulgates a new law by means of his teachings, and propagates a new ideal of character through the line of his disciples. In other words, to borrow an expression of the Buddhists, 'The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha' form the heritage which every Incarnation leaves behind. Thus the Incarnation, unlike the ordinary spiritual man, is alive not only for his contemporaries, but for all posterity ; for to contemplate on his divine life and activities itself becomes a means of spiritual

awakening. In the words of the Gita: "He who knows aright My divine birth and works will never be born again when he leaves his body, but will come to me, O Arjuna."

IV

In conclusion we may say a word as to how the doctrine of Divine Incarnation can be related to Vedanta philosophy. The Christian idea of the Incarnation as the manifestation in flesh and blood of the Logos, the one cosmic principle that is distinct from the Supreme Divinity without being different from Him, is quite acceptable to Vedanta, with the qualification that such manifestation is not one only but many. In fact the Logos idea is not much different from the Hindu idea of Divine Sakti. The only difference is that in the conception of Sakti both the redemptive and creative aspects of Divinity are equally emphasised, while in the idea of the Logos the former has come to overshadow the latter in the hands of Christian thinkers. The doctrine that the same Divine Principle appears as different Incarnations is beautifully put by Sri Ramakrishna thus : "The Avatara is always one and the same. Having plunged into the ocean of life, the one God rises up at one point and is known as Krishna, and when after another plunge He rises at another point, He is known as Christ."

Again according to the Vedanta the whole universe is a limitation or expression of the Deity. If such a manifestation of the Divinity can be conceived, what special objection can there be to the idea of His limiting Himself as a personality and expressing in himself the highest values of life in their maximum degree. It is also to be remembered that as the indwell-

ing spirit the Divinity is incarnate within all beings. The Divine Incarnation is nothing but an objective and cosmic counterpart of this inner Incarnation; for, in the words of the great Sanskrit poet Magha: "Who can know the glory of Thine, the primeval Being than whom there is none greater? For even though born as man, Thou dost surpass all varie-

ties of superhuman beings in Thy power to cut asunder the worldly bondage of creatures Unless Thou hadst come down to this earth for the destruction of evil by Thy prowess, how could persons like me have a sight of Thee, who art not comprehended even by the sages of deep meditative power."

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 of the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of Sannyasin and householder devotees of his, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

IT WAS the month of October, 1923. The Non-Co-operation Movement was in full swing all through the country. Batches after batches of people were going to jail. There was a great awakening throughout India at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Thousands of men and women had chosen the political emancipation of the motherland as the best of all vows, and were ready to dedicate their lives at the altar of Mother India.

It was Monday evening. Just then the evening service was over in the Shrine. There was perfect calmness all around, and from a distance it appeared as if the Math was quite uninhabited. The Sadhus and Brahmancharins were all engaged in their devotional practices.

Mahapurush Maharaj was seated on his bed in his room, absorbed in meditation. In the faint light, his

calm face looked more tranquil and luminous. For long he was in that mood, and then he broke the silence by singing Shivamahimna Stotram in a low tune. His mind, it seemed, was still immersed in an ocean of bliss. At this time, a devotee from Calcutta, slowly coming down from the Shrine, prostrated before Mahapurushji with great devotion and took his seat on the floor. The devotee was well-known to the Math, being closely associated with its work. After a while, Mahapurushji himself enquired affectionately, "Who is there? Is it K—? When did you come?" The devotee, taking the dust of his feet with great reverence, said: "Yes, Maharaj, I came just at the time of the evening service."

Mahapurushji: Had you been in the shrine so long?

Devotee: Yes, Maharaj.

Mahapurushji: Well, tell me why you look so sad and dejected? I suppose all are well at home?

Devotee: By your blessings, all are doing well. But, Maharaj, for the last few days, one thing is agitating my mind very much. Hence this great restlessness. I have come to the Math to-day only to tell you of that. If you permit me, I shall unburden my mind to you.

Mahapurushji: That's all right. Why don't you do so?

Devotee (with great emotion): Maharaj, the whole country now has become inspired by the Non-Co-operation Movement of Mahatmaji. Hundreds of men and women are suffering in jail. So many men are giving up their very lives. Mahatmaji too has thrown himself into the fray. How is it that the Ramakrishna Mission is keeping quiet, without participating in this All-India movement. Have you nothing to do on this occasion? The whole country is wondering as to what the Ramakrishna Mission is going to do. Have they no duty in this struggle for the freedom of the country?

And at the end he complainingly added, "Does not your heart weep a little for the country? Have you no power to do even something?"

The calm face of Mahapurushji became more grave. After a little silence he said slowly: "Well, K—, the activities of the Incarnation of the age are beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. How will our countrymen in general or yourself understand the purpose behind God's activities. When God assumes human form, He does not come for a particular country or for a particular nation. He comes for the good of the whole world. This time He has

manifested in His great Sattvic aspect. In Sri Ramakrishna you find this fullest embodiment of Sattva Guna. Though he had all the six divine attributes within himself, he lived in the human body depending on purest Sattvic ideas. Don't you see how he spent his whole life in a temple on the banks of the Ganges? How will you understand the inner meaning of all these events? He brought along with himself such a receptacle of great power as Swamiji, to be his associate in preaching those Sattvic spiritual ideas. If Swamiji desired, could he not have created a political revolution in the country? Who is a greater patriot than he? How many men's hearts bled like his for the poor and the miserable? But he did not do that. If that would do ultimate good to India, he would have certainly done that. Leave aside the case of Swamiji. By the grace of the Lord, such power is lodged even in us that, if we so desire, we too can create a violent agitation in the country. But the Master won't allow us to do that. He has brought us as the associates of his work and is directing us with his own hand; he is making us do real good to the country and the world. And we too are doing that. We have no other desire except the good of the world. I cannot make you understand the intensity of pain that we feel at the miseries of the world. That is known only to the Lord who abides in our hearts. After the passing away of the Master, his whole power and the responsibility of his mission devolved upon Swamiji. Touring round the world from end to end and minutely seeing things for himself, Swamiji established this Math and Mission at the direction of the Master for carrying on activities cal-

culated to do good to the world, more especially to India, and one by one engaged us all in these activities. Could we not have spent our lives in austerities, in mountains and forests? We had been practically doing that. All of us had gone out in different directions according to our choice, for spiritual practices. But slowly Swamiji called us all back and engaged us in these activities—in the work of serving Jivas as the veritable manifestations of the Lord. And even in this old age we are doing that.”

Devotee : Then, Maharaj, is it your opinion that Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders of the country are not doing the right thing for the service of the country? Their unique sacrifice, forbearance and service to the country cannot be ignored. What an amount of torture and oppression they are undergoing for the sake of the country!

Mahapurushji : I do not deny it. Their sacrifice, forbearance and service to the country are really very praiseworthy. Their lives also are indeed great and ideal. Moreover, they are doing a lot of work for the country. But then the method of our work is of a different nature. What they understand well, what they consider good for the country, they are sincerely doing that. Do you know our impression? They are undertaking all these activities, being actuated by one or other of the ideals of the Master and Swamiji. And there is not the least doubt that Mahatma Gandhi is really a very powerful man. It is also true that a special manifestation of the Divine Mother—the Primeval Energy—has taken shape through him. In the Gita, addressing Arjuna, Sri Bhagavan says, “Whatever being there is great, prosperous

or powerful, know that to be born of a part of My splendour.” One has to recognise a special expression of Divinity wherever one notices great manifestation of power or capacity to win the esteem and regard of vast numbers of people. That power of the Mother of the Universe, which the Master invoked for the good of the world, is expressing itself differently through different channels. In many places, Swamiji has indicated how the real good of India will be achieved. All that he said for the good of the country some twenty-five or thirty years back, such as the giving up of the custom of untouchability, the uplift of the depressed classes, education of the masses, etc.,—those very ideas are being preached now by Mahatma Gandhi. It is certain that real good will be done to the country in this way. We do not, however, make much propaganda through papers. We do things practically, but not through political activities. Mahatmaji, on the other hand, is doing those very things through politics. As far as we are concerned, while we desire the good of India, we want the good of other countries also. As we are doing work for the good of India in this country, we are doing work in other countries as well for the good of those countries. But our method of work is different according to the varying needs of diverse countries, times and people concerned. Every self-sacrificing son of this Math and Mission, which Swamiji has founded, is doing work for his own salvation as also for the good of the world, according to the ideal and direction of Swamiji and the Master.

Devotee : But, Maharaj, if the Ramakrishna Math and Mission were to co-operate with this political move-

ment, the awakening brought about by Mahatmaji, and the progress of the country through it, would have been much more accelerated. This is not only my opinion but of many great and thoughtful men too. Why don't you work together with Mahatmaji?

Mahapurushji : Well, I have already told you that we are working according to our own ideal. And this ideal has been left to us by that far-seeing Rishi, Swamiji himself. The future picture, not only of India but of the whole world for a thousand years, manifested itself before his divine vision, and visualising all that clearly and with a full understanding of facts, he had chalked out for us a particular line of action. In his case it was not like throwing stones in the dark. He could see clearly the visions of the distant future. The Divine Power that manifested itself as Sri Ramakrishna in this age, the like had never appeared for the last hundreds of years. This spiritual current will

flow on unobstructed for a pretty long time in the whole world. This is just the beginning only. This spiritual sun, which has arisen in the firmament of India, will illumine the entire world by its pure rays. It is because of this that Swamiji said, “This time the centre is India.” That spiritual power will radiate all round, making India its centre. Who can check the progress of this spiritual power? The awakening of India is as sure as anything. The whole world will wonder at the progress of India in education, in consecrated service, power, fitness, learning and intellectual attainments. The future of India will be so glorious that her past glories will look pale before it. Then you will understand why the Master and Swamiji came and what they have done for India. How will people, with their poor intellect, understand their activities? Don't you see how they have roused the national Kundalini of India?

SYMBOLISM : THE COMMON ORIGIN OF RELIGIONS

By Adolphe Ferriere

[Dr. Ferriere is the founder, and at present the soul, of the New Education Fellowship. Besides being the editor of *L'Ere Nouvelle*, the organ of the New Education Fellowship on the Continent, he is the author of a number of volumes on New Education, which have been translated into several European languages. From the domain of Sociology and education, in which he gained fame in his early years, he is now being recognised more and more as a writer on philosophical and spiritual subjects, especially after his work *Le Progres Spirituel*. In the following article Dr. Ferrier maintains that symbols are accidental to religions, their essence being the same for all times and climes. We are indebted to Mr. P. Seshadri Aiyar, B.A., M.L., for translating it from French.]

IN each epoch man makes a rediscovery of truths announced to the world long, long ago by the sages of antiquity. So much is it true that the petty reason of man does not

suffice to discover the hidden meaning of the realities which his eyes witness every day, unless a long evolution—individual or hereditary—and profound reflections help him to see the

invisible and discover the hidden forces which govern the world and living beings.

And that is why sages have appeared at all epochs. And they have spoken. But people listened not to them. They came too soon. Humanity, lost in 'involution', in the petty cares of the world and in the defence of material benefits and egoistic interests, was not ripe for understanding the prophets of spiritual evolution. Attachment and detachment are opposed to each other just as obscure ancestral impulses and aspirations to spiritual beauty, or as the monarchic, military or ecclesiastic order to the order understood and wished for by men of discernment.

The history of humanity like the history of each man from his cradle to the grave presents these contrasts : a lost paradise and aspiration to a return to the paradise of the future ; heaven first, then earth, and finally return to the eternal. A paradoxical symbol, for eternity is not a future state but a present which knows no end !

These same contrasts, these same understandings and these same non-understandings repeat themselves in all races and peoples, classes and individuals. Religions, sects, beliefs and rites have served, and even now serve, in diverse degrees as garments for their conceptions of the universe. Some of the religions are primitive and loaded with superstitions, which, on examination, would be found to be symbols, the original significance of which has been forgotten and of which only a literal interpretation, aiming at some sort of salvation through magic, survives at present. Others lean on tradition and authority and seek to unite men without

paying sufficient attention to individual differences. Some are now split up into sects like those stars whose fragments stud the heavens between Mars and Jupiter. Yet others have risen in response to particular needs, their expansion is recent, they have covered a small area of the world attracting to their fold evolved souls engaged in researches into things other than tradition. Creeds of seductive beauty, yet they are not always without danger ; their adepts have brought themselves to believe in their superiority over others and to declare, "There is none like us !" They preach about their own gifts and often live in pride.

Still the question may be put whether this pride is peculiar to them. Do not men of all faiths, at all epochs, show a tendency to believe and declare with sincerity "We possess the Truth," with a capital T, and "The others are in error" ? Even where different sects are found to tolerate one another, each believes itself to possess the exclusive Truth.

What does this mean ? Is it right to think that one alone of all religions of the world is true and all the others are wrong ? ; or that all are equally wrong, as the atheists and the materialists hold ? ; or is a third solution possible ?

Yes, there is a third solution. And it is this : all religions contain a part of Truth, none possesses it in its entirety.

Let us admit that it is so. Let us admit that the universe appears to us in the form of currents of energy and palpable matter ; but also that, lodged in the brain and nervous organisation of human beings, under the form of individual personalities, manifesting themselves by reflexes,

instincts, tendencies, intuitions, impulses, and sentiments, is an intelligence, a Will. Between all these material and spiritual forces reigns a mysterious interaction, an intercourse the complex nature of which mystifies our understanding and for ever transcends the categories of our reason. Nevertheless, our reason cannot but posit behind all these a Reason, a Sovereign Order. Our reason cannot but admit that what it calls chance is only a term to denote its ignorance, provisional or ultimate, of the bond which connects sentient beings and things. For, as the sages of old have declared, "You must be God before you can understand His designs." Man does not have the wisdom to understand the complexity of the infinite world of matter and spirit, in the midst of which he is placed.

Then what can man, this worm, accomplish ? He grasps but the fragments of this order which passes his understanding, thanks to recurring events a knowledge of which is essential for him to live in this world. He grasps a little or much according to the degree of evolution which his intellect and intuition have reached. Sometimes he errs and pays dearly for it. Sometimes it may happen that his wisdom is grand in theory but in practice his egoism proves gross, and hence he has to pay heavily.

Here it is that religion puts in its appearance. To these naive views of man regarding the unknown Beyond, to these experiences fruitful or cruel, exalting or depressing, aiding the blossoming of spiritual life or suffocating the soul by the weight of its errors and its sins, religion gives certain names. To each concept is given a symbol, to each symbol a name. Is this an evil ? It may be stated at the

very outset that it is an inevitable fact. It is true of all epochs and places—proof positive that this process responds to a natural desire of the human soul, possibly good, and that it is impossible to act otherwise. But what is it except a symbol ? It is a sign, an attempt to lay hold of that which cannot be caught, an effort for digging, if one may say so, a trench for the universal and eternal flux with a view to appropriate a 'truth' or a 'law' limited in space and time.

In the light of these things one has to recognise that no symbol is eternal. In men who are far advanced in the ways of science, symbols of an elementary character must give place to those more varied which can better explain the complexity of facts as they appear to their eyes and understandings. To be satisfied with ancient symbols is to arrest evolution. To forget their vital significance is to lapse into superstition. Even if they are to be preserved, their meaning must be made more profound, if man is to advance along the way of spiritual perfection.

All these things can be clearly seen in the ritual aspect of religions which is built upon symbols, lights, colours, sounds, perfumes, words, suggestions, emotions and rites. If a ceremony is to be of any efficacy, it must elevate the soul from the cares of the work-a-day world towards loftier aspirations. If, on the contrary, it serves but to croon the soul into a false sense of security, to substitute a sense of illusory or magic security in the place of personal efforts to induce the quietism of dead dogmas instead of awakened intelligence, and to replace a fruitful emotional activity by inconsistent sentimentality—then it is bad. It becomes worse if the priestly classes use

it as a weapon to crush living souls and truth-seekers. It becomes altogether dangerous if this authority extends over a whole land and achieves the annihilation of all independent and challenging thinkers. Woe unto such lands ! They nip in the bud the elements of progress, they condemn wisdom to exile, beauty to misery, and Truth to beggary.

Thus the symbol, whether it be of a religious nature or not, is efficacious if only it takes into account all essential aspects of the subjacent Reality, the laws of the world both visible and invisible ; it is good if it can elevate man and enable him to conceive of a higher truth and a nobler life ; but it is altogether condemnable if it crushes aspiring minds and perpetuates among the masses a dead ritualism and a dead dogmatism, thus destroying the living kernel which, at first, was its *raison d'être*.

Few men seem prepared to accept these views to-day. Some fiercely cling on to their beliefs. Others forge a religion for themselves. Yet others flee from all religions. But such is the might of collective ideologies of an emotional and active nature that they erect 'Science' or 'Nation' into religion, little knowing that the new deities before whom they bow are as much exacting and cruel as the ancient superstitions, that like them they are but symbols, that tomorrow they will be supplanted by other symbols of a less exclusive and more universal complexion. For materialism does not cover the whole of science, nor the concept of nation the whole of humanity. They are composed of detached fragments only.

The day men come to understand that there is one Reality beneath all these diverse religious conceptions,

one Order and Energy which transcends our feeble reason but is felt as existing by our intuition, they will cease to fight on provocations, scientific or nationalistic. They will keep to their faiths but will respect that of their neighbour, and he in turn will respect theirs. "There are many rooms in my father's mansion," so Christ has said employing a luminous symbol.

What heavy responsibility do we shoulder, when we think of it, in thrusting belief or symbol, whatever it be, on a neighbour? Are all men on the same rung of the ladder of spiritual evolution? To the infant the symbols of the nursery will prove the most helpful. Chaos will reign in the world if each man were to rebuild the world according to his own pet notions, according to the dictates of his petty reason.

Collective symbols, in so far as they serve as carriers of Truths inexpressible without their help, are legitimate and good provided the hidden spirit in them, and not the literal cover, is emphasised. But what would result if petty men seek to impose their views on great souls—a daily event among the dictators of the Right or the Left in the Occident—and again what will be the effect if men, who believe themselves to be advanced but who are ignorant of the laws of the gradual evolution of individuals, desire to raise prematurely to their level unripe or simple beings who are by themselves incapable of it? In the first case the result will be revolt or duplicity, and in the second, failure and destruction, or success that is purely apparent and superficial. The cover of the symbol alone is adopted, the thing within is lost sight of. Europe and America are full of these demi-savants who have

been educated in institutions but who have no knowledge of real life.

The end of life is Life. Biological life leads to spiritual life. But each being grows towards the light according to its own rhythm. Nourishment should never be artificial. The school must bring about the bloom of body and soul and not their death. Religion too should elevate man and not crush him. If all religions did this, then would it soon be known that all symbols conceal the same fundamental truths. Is 'conceal' the word or 'reveal'? ; or let us put this way : to-day they hide, but to-morrow they will reveal, the profound unity which is at the bottom of all.

Children, inventors, and artists understand me. Everywhere in the world, they know what is meant by a noble life, a life of growth : forgetting oneself to give the better of oneself ;

forgetting oneself in one's devotion to a work, a work dictated by intuition, will, thought, considerations of art, of organised society, enlarged vision ; the feeling we are approaching a beauty, a truth, a justice which are ordinarily beyond us ; the growing conviction that the order of our creation is approaching the divine Order and our reason nearing the divine Reason.

All symbols which lead us to the realisation of this truth are good. This is the idea of the Way, (Jesus) of Tao (Laotse) of ascension.

All symbols which block this growth, this ascent, are to be condemned. "Become what thou art," so spoke Pindare more than twenty centuries ago. The day man understands this—whether he works for himself or another—will be for him the commencement of wisdom.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

By C. R. Srinivasan

[The following is an address delivered by Mr. C. R. Srinivasan, editor of *Swadesamitran*, at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras on the occasion of the 76th Birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. He points out how the great Swami saved the soul of India.]

I would like you to project your thoughts to the conditions that prevailed when Swami Vivekananda took birth. Through ignorance and prejudice we had lost faith in the greatness of our past ; the glamour of an alien civilisation held us in fee. From the mechanical to the metaphysical plane, from sartorial to spiritual needs, our entire outlook was being dominated and directed by the West. Society was being re-modelled, and in the process, was fast shedding all that it should have cherished.

The new generation was being bred to a false measure of values, and the result was an ever widening chasm between the educated and the uneducated in the country. Disowning the East yet dishonoured by the West, this new born society was really moving rudderless. It was powerless for good, for it had lost contact with the country. It was powerless, even for mischief, for it had lost the ear of the masses, as it affected an alien tongue even for the privacy of its thoughts. Few had the vision or the wisdom to

see whither conditions were tending and fewer still possessed the courage and determination to carry through the cleansing campaign that these conditions invited. It was at this hour of destiny that Swami Vivekananda was born. His firm grasp of fundamentals saved him from the pitfalls that surrounded him. By divine grace, he came under the influence of a great soul while yet in his teens. Precocious and persevering in his studies, he soon reached the limits of the school of rationalistic thought. His Master taught him to realise what he could not rationalise, and released his vision to boundless proportions. Supplementing thus Anumana by Anubhava, he realised for the first time the magnificent heritage we are heir to. He was not content to realise it for himself; he wanted others to share with him the joys of that realisation. How to bring this about? A wandering fakir without power or prestige could not revolutionalise thought in this country, and until the upper ten were reclaimed to a truer perception of values, no dynamic form could be given to the urge that was seething within him. He wandered all over the country seeking for light and at last he found it in Cape Comorin. What was the problem that evaded solution? Men of his generation had bartered away the Aladin's Lamp in their possession for imported lamps. We all know the story of Aladin's lamp. Dirty and ill-kept as it was, it possessed virtues which no new lamp could possess. You had only to burish up the old lamp to call up servants of the Lord ready to do your behests, however extravagant or impossible they may be. Of that character and so potent in effect, was the light that we inherited from our

forefathers; we had not merely neglected but discarded it for new lights. How to make our people realise what they had lost in sheer ignorance and folly? The glamour of the West, reinforced by an alien administration, had first to be countered and conquered before the process of regeneration and revolution could be taken on hand. With the vision denied to ordinary mortals, Swami Vivekananda saw that the resurrection of the East must come from the West. The West must appreciate the heritage of the East before those born to it would concede its value. After weeks of suspense, amidst doubts and misgivings, yet guided by an unseen Power, Swami Vivekananda resolved to travel West to redeem the East.

At the Parliament of Religions, the banner of the East was unfurled to an awed and admiring crowd of savants and sceptics. The cheers that followed Swamiji's exposition of the Vedantic school of thought, found an answering echo in the East. But its proximate result took a different shape in India. If I am asked to date the birth of nationalism in this country, I would put it at 1893. Vivekananda created a stir in the West. It was nothing compared to the storm that he raised in the East. Three years he stayed out there in the West to consolidate the position and prestige he had won for himself and for his country and then the conquering hero returned home. On his return he had his work cut out to direct and divert the energy and enthusiasm he had created, along fruitful channels. It was then that he proceeded to create the organisation for sustained work. When his end was approaching none was more conscious of it than he himself; his master had already predict-

ed that he would not live long, once he learnt who and what he was. But he lived long enough to create a live organisation and to-day it is propagating the gospel of service to the millions in need of succour and sustenance. The humanitarian bias that he gave to the Ramakrishna Mission has helped it to survive the loss it sustained in him presently. For myself, I wish I had been born ten years earlier, or he had died ten years later. To have lived while yet he lived, and to have not come into contact with him is a tragedy too deep for tears. His loving disciples have collated their recollections and compiled a biography which I would request everyone to read, mark and inwardly digest. There lies a moving tale whose appeal words cannot describe. If I am asked to say what is the greatest service Swami Vivekananda did for this country, I will say that he saved the soul of this country. The body was already in bondage, and the soul was fast passing into bondage; he arrested the process; not merely arrested it, but gave the soul sufficient strength and sustenance to cast off the coils choking the body. Vivekananda gave us first, self-knowledge, next, self-respect, and last but not least, self-control. These three in time should lead to sovereign power. Vivekananda was more than a Vedantic scholar. He conceived religion as a dynamic force in the normal day-to-day life of the people; he was clearly conscious that any movement of mass uplift in this country must carry moral sanctions behind it if it is to succeed and survive. Service was his religion, and in the succour and sustenance of the weak and afflicted, the poor and the disabled, the unfortunate and the improvident, he discovered for hu-

manity the surest path of salvation. He recognised the realities and potentialities of Indian culture, but as his Gurudeva said, an empty stomach was no fit vehicle for religion. The first thing to be done was to rouse and raise the masses. That is why on every occasion he has laid stress on the principles of service and sacrifice as leverage for the redemption of India. This prophetic vision has since found ample confirmation in the history of India during the past fifteen years. I do not know if many have realised it, but to me there appears to be a very strong and sustained similarity in outlook and vision between Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. The seeds sown by Vivekananda have been watered and weeded by Gandhiji. You find the latter lays the same emphasis on truth and non-violence, on service and sacrifice that distinguished Swami Vivekananda's exposition of thought. The rousing of the masses to a consciousness of the higher life that awaits them, if they would only stretch forth their hands, has been carried through to a remarkable degree, with marvellous results. Talking of the Congress, I remember a passage in the biography of Vivekananda, when Aswani Kumar Datta questioned Swami Vivekananda on the work Congress was then doing. Vivekananda said he had no faith in Congress work so far, and so long as the Congress was out of touch with the masses; the mere passing of resolutions could not bring freedom. Gandhiji took up the work where Vivekananda left it. Thanks to the precepts and example of Mahatma Gandhi, a new generation has been aligned to the field of service imbued with the ideals of self-respect, self-re-

may be aptly termed the epitome of an entire spiritual career.

The ups and downs on the way are veritable representations of human life. The path to heaven is not always easy and smooth. Required tests and tribulations have to be passed through. Sky-scraping walls have to be crossed over, one after another. Huge ascents and descents will be alternately presenting themselves before the pilgrim. The Himalayan rain and thunder is an ordeal by itself. The flow of water on and across the rough paths, the blowing of ice-cold wind, land slips, stone falls, walking over crudely constructed insecure bridges across dashing rivers, fording the foaming streams where even an apology for a bridge is totally missing, accommodating on damp floors with dense smoke all round, taking shelter in dingy huts with leaky roof above, packing and unpacking one's belongings day after day—these are not altogether inviting to the frail mortals.

But there is as a compensation the other side of the picture. The Himalayas are the place to see Nature in all her magnificence. Mountains almost vertical in structure peep one above the other into the secrets of heaven. Rain-bearing clouds caught up among these closely-piled lofty walls, roll up and down in mighty waves, offering an awe-inspiring sight, until they empty themselves in torrents among dales and deep ravines. It is yet to be known whether Nature has been so lavish elsewhere in vegetation. Melodious songs of birds in dense extensive forests transport one with joy. There is no end to varieties and magnitudes in waterfalls. Here it thunders and roars frightening man out of his wits; there it

gushes out in milky volumes. Innumerable rain-bows dance attendance upon them as they fall in troubled cascades. At one place water takes a bold leap from dizzy heights, but before it reaches the chasm below, its volume vanishes into tiny floating particles of pearls. Yonder it seems as a long hanging silver rope. At another place the fall commences apparently from a rocky support, but actually seems to descend from the heavens. No human contrivance can compare with the luxury of the spray bath that Nature offers here and there. Thus if there is danger and discomfort on one side, there is also on the other side charm and happiness to compensate. The double aspect of Nature—terror and sweetness—can be seen nowhere so vividly as on the Himalayas.

Crossing the Lipu Lake Pass is an experience by itself. This has to be ventured just when it dawns and only if weather promises to be fine. Snow fall and the thawing of snow when the sun is high up are both equally dangerous. The elevation of this pass is about 16,800 feet above sea-level. The atmosphere gets visibly rarefied at this altitude, and breathing becomes rather difficult. One is forced to climb up rather slowly and make frequent halts while panting for breath. The heart begins to palpitate and the head to reel. A sense of nausea very often overtakes one. Care should be taken that the stomach is not kept empty; for that aggravates the giddiness all the more. The ascent is over three miles, but the troubles are more than rewarded on reaching the top. Doubt comes automatically whether it is a physical world or a dreamland in which one is placed. Turn wherever one may, a

grand panorama is presented. The glaring snow all round makes one feel as if transported into a region of lustre. It is verily the gateway to heaven. On the India side stretch for miles together mighty mountains that link heaven and earth together. And Nature has lavished on them colours and forms worthy of none other than gods. On the Tibetan side the spectacle is different. There the stainless space merges into infinity. The experience may well nigh be compared with transcendental knowledge in which God with and without attributes is realised. This is after all a display of Nature which is said to be the mere shadow of the ultimate reality. But if the shadow itself is so grand and inspiring, how much more so ought to be the Substance! Both to the eye and the mind there is a sumptuous feast when one gets over this pass.

A few days' travel in Tibet brings the pilgrim all on a sudden in the presence of another panorama. Its perspective is more intensive than extensive. What the pilgrim had been dreaming of for a long time, what he had longed to see face to face, for what he had even risked his life—is now actually before him. He sees Mount Kailas. At the sight of this long desired for object man loses himself in wild joy; he is transported into ecstasy. Mind is drawn to that mysterious Mount as iron to a magnet. While in that region it constantly floats in a wide intense state of consciousness. All the toils and troubles are more than amply rewarded. Divine bliss marks the pilgrim for its own.

Towering majestically high up above the rest of the snow-clad peaks stands Mount Kailas, the perpetual source of inspiration. It is of the shape of a gigantic Shivalingam.

Snow-covered as it is, day and night it is set in contrast with the deep blue vault above. With the change of time and weather it seems to undergo magical transformation. When bathed with the beams of the rising sun Mount Kailas is a mass of burnished gold. Neither word nor mind can fully enter into the glory of it. On clear days it is as if several suns have concentrated themselves there without their burning effect. At dusk it is a heap of red lotuses. Myriad-coloured clouds gathering on Kailas resemble wreaths showered by celestials.

The panorama is complete with Lake Manasarowar and Mount Mandhata. A doubt arises whether the lake is not, as its name suggests, more a projection of the mind than external reality. With all the minor details of its sublime formation, it seems as if some divine architect had planned this celestial spectacle. A vast square of crystal-pure water, picturesque banks on all its sides, Mandhata to the south and Kailas to the north like two diamonds on either side of an emerald, large tracts of sand with multifarious hues—all these put together make one feel whether one is not placed in some fairyland.

The southern mount is named after Mandhata, the sage who had performed penance there. In structure it is almost akin to Kailas. Between the two is the beautiful lake representing the mind. What actually stands between man and God is the mind. Through the vicissitudes of life man is consciously or unconsciously making a pilgrimage towards Godhead. As he attains perfection he becomes akin to God. That is possible by purifying the mind. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Lake

Manasarowar stands for the mind and all that it ought to be. From Mandhata a clear reflection of Kailas can be seen in that lake. In the joy of it Mandhata is clean forgotten. Man's pilgrimage towards perfection culminates in his effecting the complete purification of mind. There the as-

sumed difference between man and God vanishes. Man merges in God or Cosmic Consciousness. This purview of Mount Kailas and its surroundings not merely symbolises this great truth but also acts as an eternal source of inspiration to all those who wend their way Godward.

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 the Sri Vaishnava faith—one of the two most influential forms of religion in South India.]

A VAISHNAVA is literally a person who is bound by ties of eternal relationship to Vishnu, the Supreme Omnipresent Being. But since this relationship is shared indiscriminately by all beings in this universe, irrespective of its being recognised, felt or realised by them, the appellation truly belongs to that individual who, possessing at least an intellectual comprehension of that supreme relationship, struggles his best to realise it in his daily life. The term 'Vaishnava', strictly speaking, does not connote a person who wears a particular mark on his forehead or particular emblems on his arms, who worships God in a particular way or at specified times, or who faithfully carries out the rituals enjoined in the standard texts, although all these external marks and acts may stand associated with him by virtue of the force of the sacred traditions and commendable conventions he has inherited from his great ancestors. The ideal Sri Vaishnava should be judged more by his inner spiritual attainments than

by outer accessories and appearances. He is a person who has completely given up all attachments and looks upon God as his sole proprietor, protector and refuge. Being impressed with a sense of the utter impotence of the individual ego and its complete dependence on the Supreme Being, he has unbounded faith in God as his only Saviour, and is an embodiment of wisdom, renunciation, devotion, humility and loving selfless service to God—a service which extends to, and embraces, all His creatures.

HIS IDEALS AND ASPIRATIONS

The illustrious saint Nammalwar, the great progenitor of the Sri Vaishnava race, is the cherished ideal of all Sri Vaishnavas. Alwars are those that have dived into the ocean of Prema or God-love and attained union with God. They are ever perfect and come down at the command of God to restore spiritual equilibrium on earth. They possess not only intuitive knowledge and vision of God like the Vedic Rishis but are also blessed with in-

tense devotion for its own sake, which such knowledge and vision inspire in them. Intuitive vision of God blossoms into inspiration or maddening devotion for Him, which in time ripens into divine ecstasy and unceasing rapturous service to Him. To this all the Alwars bear eloquent testimony; and especially Nammalwar. His passionate love and intense yearning for God, culminating now and then in rapturous union with Him, and his keen longings for eternal joyous service on His behalf are the beacon lights on the hill of Divinity that beckon all sincere Vaishnavas to follow his footsteps, and attain the summit of his spiritual experiences. His exalted and varied spiritual experiences and moods as depicted in his immortal hymns, a thousand in number (which contain the quintessence of the Vedas), form the main source of daily and hourly inspiration to Vaishnavas. The beloved Sri Krishna was to Nammalwar 'the food he took, the water he drank, and the betel he chewed', which means that God was the sustainer, the nourisher and the source of all enjoyments. None could answer so well as he to the description of the Mahatma in the Gita, "At the end of a thousand births the man of wisdom takes refuge in Me, realising that Vasudeva is all (both the means and the end of spiritual realisation). Very rare is that great soul." He is therefore looked upon as part and parcel of God, and pious Vaishnavas call to this day the lotus feet of God by the endearing term 'Sathakopa', another name for Nammalwar. Devotion to Him, as the lotus feet of God or as the perfect Guru or illumined Teacher, is a more effective means of saving oneself than even devotion to God.

Yet the easiest and the most potent means of saving oneself according to Vaishnavas is an intense and abiding faith in Sri Ramanuja, the greatest apostle of Vaishnavism; and it is a privilege of every Sri Vaishnava to refer to himself as 'Ramanuja Dasa' (the devoted servant of Ramanuja). If Nammalwar was the mother of the Tamil Vedas, Sri Ramanuja was the foster-mother; if the Alwar was the first great teacher of Vaishnavism, the Acharya was the best exponent and promulgator of it; and if the former was the progenitor of the Vaishnava race, the latter was the Divine Messiah of the race. Sri Ramanuja occupies a unique position among the Vaishnava Gurus by virtue of his torrential spiritual personality and his profound redeeming grace. He is the connecting link between his predecessors and his successors in the chain of teachers, both of whom were equally proud of their relationship with him and considered themselves blessed thereby. He is regarded as the best mediator between man and God and is the refuge of all Vaishnavas, who willingly surrender themselves at his sacred feet with love and faith. Such was the astoundingly phenomenal success of his spiritual mission on earth that even God, according to tradition, paid His tribute of praise and condescend to assume a human form and seek his benign protection like an ordinary mortal. No wonder then that every Vaishnava has the settled conviction that, worthy or unworthy, whoever invokes the grace of Sri Ramanuja earnestly is sure to attain liberation from the thralldom of mortal existence.

Devotion to Ramanuja accompanied by self-surrender to his irresistible

power of protection is therefore incumbent on every Vaishnava. He should saturate his mind through and through with the teachings and experiences of the great Alvars and Acharyas, and by constant meditation on their lives and immortal thoughts and feelings he should develop an utter disgust towards things of the earth and an insatiable three-fold hunger for God, for His love, and for service to Him and His devotees at all times, in all places and under all conditions, unmindful of even the least consideration of personal reward or selfish satisfaction. Knowing that there are three kinds of seekers in this world—seekers after wealth and sense enjoyment, seekers after Atman or the immortal soul and the state of mere isolation of the Atman from all its vehicles and imperfections that adhere to it, and seekers after God, who alone can satisfy the keenest longings of the Atman—he should strive in his daily life to shun the ignoble quest of the first group and to avoid the pitfall of God-less soul-isolation and soul-consciousness as distinguished from God-consciousness, and conduct himself in such a way that a hankering after God may necessarily develop in his mind and ripen into an intense yearning that knows neither cessation nor relaxation until the end is achieved. His constant and unremitting endeavour should be to consecrate the bodily powers and all the faculties of his mind and soul to the service of God and His devotees in some form or other, and to make his intellect, heart and hand work in harmonious combination towards the ideal of one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Being. Devotees there are in the world who no doubt look upon God as the end of all their endeav-

ours, but employ the finite means at the disposal of their limited resources to gain the Infinite Being; and devotees there are again, who, with their well-established knowledge of the All-Merciful and Almighty God as the only means, do not flinch to employ Him as the means for satisfying their worldly and selfish ends—such is the exploitation of even God by man in his blindness. But the Vaishnava looks upon God as the sole means and the sole end. He realises that the deliberate acceptance of such a high ideal in contravention of all existing conventions and established practice in the realms of ordinary religious life, involves tremendous renunciation of one's own will and perpetual vigilance; yet not a whit daunted by the immensity of the ideal, and relying firmly on the super-abundant redeeming grace of the Proprietor of all souls, he looks upon God as the eternal means and rejects self-will, self-effort and self-seeking as the products of ignorance and egotism. While looking upon God as the end of all his strivings, he should utterly disregard all considerations of individual weal or woe and cultivate an intense longing to serve God according to His sweet will and pleasure, and to keep his body, mind and soul in readiness for being sacrificed on His behalf on any occasion. His yearning for the beatific vision of God should be so deep and overwhelming that at times his breath might stop automatically and he may become drowned in God-consciousness. While looking upon God as the means, he desists from the performance of any activity with the idea that it might be a means for the attainment of God-realisation; and while looking upon God as the end, the intense love he bears towards God,

and his unquenchable thirst for service inspire him to do deeds of loving service to Him; but even here the appropriation of the joy of service to his own self is entirely forbidden. Keeping such high ideals in view, he constantly and fervently prays to God for conferring on him an intense devotion to Him, as all other qualities essential for an aspirant after God-realisation have their origin in such devotion. The soul-attracting, infatuating, bewitching beauty of God, when meditated upon by him, wipes out even the least trace of the expectation of enjoyment from sense-objects. God's grace breeds disgust towards, and aversion for, sense pleasures. The aspirant's desire to adopt the observances of the great devotees rouses in him a fear to indulge in sense enjoyments; and yet the governing factor in this fear and avoidance is not so much a knowledge of the attendant miseries, as the knowledge of the inconsistency of egoistic activity and sense enjoyment with the true and inherent nature of the soul, namely, its complete dependence on God. It is the realisation of this true nature of the soul that is at the basis of both renunciation and service—renunciation while looking upon God as the sole means, and service while looking upon God as the end. The growing knowledge of the soul's dependence upon God crushes the impure and false sense of ego in the aspirant and awakens the pure and real ego-consciousness which while serving God, manifests itself as the consciousness of his being the Lord's eternal servant, and while renouncing all self-exertion, manifests as the conviction that God is the sole means.

Man, as he is psychologically constituted, is a compound of three eter-

nal entities—matter, soul and God. When the inertness of matter asserts itself in the Vaishnava, he becomes a victim to the feelings of ignorance and impotence and he looks upon God as the sole means. Then the attitude of extreme dependence on the Lord, in the capacity of a tool in His hand, becomes most natural to him. At times when the knowing soul asserts its own nature, the feeling of responsibility or agentship rises spontaneously in his mind; and then the Vaishnava, contemplating on the all-loving nature of God and His countless spiritual attributes, plunges himself forthwith and whole-heartedly into all kinds of service to God with an indefatigable zeal, and looks upon God as the sole end of all his strivings. The ordinary man's mind is a pendulum swinging between the extremes of complete dependence on God and complete individual responsibility. But the Vaishnava, in whichever direction his mind may be swinging, should sublimate its activity by the deliberate choice of either of the ideals of complete, tool-like dependence on God, or, of the eternal, devoted servant of God. For the majority of mankind at the normal level of consciousness, only inertness and knowledge assert themselves. But when the God-aspect in man predominates at rare intervals, man's mind is overwhelmed with devotion for Him; his personality is, for the time being, lost in God-consciousness; and in that exalted state of mind he may either assume an attitude of complete dependence and surrender or put forth mighty efforts for the amelioration of society or for his own spiritual uplift, with a view to serve God to his utmost capacity; but in either case the state is the outcome of Prema or intense love

for God, and is worth its weight in gold, since the self is completely annihilated therein. Ordinary sense-bound souls devoid of higher longings and even struggling aspirants of the lowest type, as they are overpowered by the inertness of matter-consciousness which is their normal level, resort to self-surrender out of the deep-seated feelings of impotence and ignorance. The Acharyas or mighty teachers gifted with divine wisdom and an intuitive insight into the true nature of the soul, as they are overpowered by such knowledge at their normal level of consciousness, take to the path of self-surrender finding the irrenconcilability of other attitudes with the true knowledge of the soul. But the Alwars or the Supreme devotees of God with settled preponderance of pure devotion to Him or Prema for those to whom God-consciousness is the normal level of consciousness, are pushed along the path of self-surrender by the sheer force of the inebriation produced by Prema. To rise from matter-consciousness through soul-consciousness to God-consciousness is the cherished aspiration of all earnest Vaishnavas. It is the devout wish of every Vaishnava that the Himalayan grace of his Acharya or God would produce in him, at least on the eve of his departure from this world, such a hunger for God-vision as their great Acharya Nammalwar had felt, and as could not but bestow upon his soul the deliverance from the woes of mortal existence and transport it to the transcendental Abode of the Supreme Being where alone is everlasting life, full of joy and service.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF HIS LIFE

Behind the regulated life of every thoughtful man with a settled purpose in life is a philosophy that furnishes its basis, supplies the governing principle of his life and holds out the glorious ideal that is perpetually drawing him nearer and nearer to itself. The sway of this philosophy over life is in proportion to its being established on the adamant foundations of unimpeachable authority in the form of Divine revelation or competent testimony of great seers of truth; for such authority alone naturally dispels the cloud of intellectual disbelief and furnishes the necessary motive power for earnest endeavour. The philosophical doctrines on which the life of a Vaishnava rests are age-long and as old as the Upanishads. For the Upanishads declare, "This Atman cannot be attained by fine speech, intelligence or even by profound learning. Whomsoever the Atman chooses, by him It is attained." Again the Sastras declare in unequivocal terms, "The soul is the property and Brahman is the Proprietor absolute of all souls," and again, "All individual souls, by their very inherent nature are slaves (devoted servants) to the Supreme Being; none other is the relationship between the two, whether in the bound or liberated state of the individual soul." Such being the true nature of the soul, the deep-rooted and widely prevalent belief that an individual can save himself by his own effort is but the offspring of ignorance, error and delusion as to the true nature of the soul and its eternal relationship to the Supreme Being. Salvation lies therefore in the right knowledge of the in-

dividual's dependence upon God and his existence solely for the eternal service of God and His devotees, inspired by no motives of reward or enjoyment, this-worldly or other-worldly, and also in the translation of such knowledge into practice in actual life. The Vaishnava lays less stress on what he considers to be the external attributes of the soul such as knowledge and bliss than on its internal and indispensable attribute or nature of dependence on God, without which the soul is, as it were non-existent. The knowledge aspect of the soul leads irresistibly to the feeling of responsible actorship which tries by egoistic effort to shun vice and seek virtue; but such a feeling is revolting to

the knower of the true nature of the soul. The Divine Author of the Gita says: "The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings causing all beings, by His Maya, to revolve as if mounted on a machine." Above all, even the self-willed effort to free oneself of all sins stultifies itself; for the Sastras ask in unmistakable terms: "What graver sin can a man commit than that of stealing the Atman that belongs to God and making it his own?" It is under such circumstances and because of such considerations that the enlightened Vaishnava is compelled to regard God as the sole means and as the sole end, and to make the end the means and the means the end.

(To be continued)

MODERN THOUGHT AND VEDANTA

By Swami Pranaveshananda

[Swami Pranaveshananda, the head of the Ramakrishna Mission in Ceylon, 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.]

I

WHAT IS MODERN THOUGHT

MODERN thought may be defined as the views and opinions expressed recently by the scientists and philosophers of the West regarding the visible and the invisible universe as well as life based not only on theory but also on facts revealed by observation and investigation. In arriving at conclusions these scientists have started with an analysis of the external world; but at the ultimate stages of their enquiry they have had to depend upon certain mathematical symbols of a rather conceptual type,

which nevertheless have helped them to state with certitude facts genuine and unknown before. It is now generally evident that the whole texture of scientific and philosophic thought has undergone a sort of metamorphosis within the last 30 or 40 years. The scientists of to-day are no more satisfied with a purely materialistic explanation of the universe which the 19th century science offered as the final word. The leaders of scientific thought to-day such as Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Eddington, Prof. Albert Einstein and others are at one in holding that modern scientific knowledge is heading towards a non-

material reality. These eminent scientists do not confine themselves to scientific research only, but are also making excursions in the realm of philosophy. For it is now evident that researches in the field of Physics and Astronomy have raised philosophical speculations. Regarding the relation of science to philosophy Dr. A. N. Whitehead says, "There can be no living science unless there is a wide-spread conviction of an order of things, and in particular of the order of nature." Einstein concurs with Whitehead in this opinion. The motive of science, as understood generally, is the discovery of facts about the universe, the 'why' and 'wherefore' of those discovered facts being left to philosophy to explain. But modern thought has combined both these functions. Modern thought, it is true, has not reached the limit of knowledge. This is because the meaning of certain phenomena and the background of this physical world itself are yet a sealed book to the present-day scientific investigators.

INDIAN THOUGHT

It must be said to the credit of the Indian sages that they arrived at similar views some 2,000 years ago by analysing their own mind—the internal world. Their views are not rendered obsolete by subsequent discoveries. These ancient Aryan thinkers found out by experience that the study of the external world, however accurate it might be, would not be perfect without a search in the innermost recesses of the human heart. Man might analyse the external world for ages but that would give no definite solution to his problems. The sages found that a sensuous attachment to the external world spread a

veil, as it were, between the seeker of Truth and the Truth, and that this veil could not be removed by external means. So turning back from the external, the sages found in their own purified and detached mind the best means of knowing Reality. This is the distinguishing feature of Indian thought. By analysing their own minds the thinkers of India gradually realised that the external universe is only a faint reflection of the internal, and that the solution of the problems of life lies in that emporium of all knowledge, viz., the human soul. The ancient thought of India has lighted up regions where the light of modern thought of the West has never penetrated. It too is scientific, definite and all-embracing, and is within the reach of every sincere enquirer who undergoes the requisite mental and moral discipline. Side by side with the findings of the sages we shall now proceed to study the novel views given by modern scientists regarding Matter, Creation and Dissolution of the Universe, Life, Evolution, Mind, Consciousness, Law of Casuality and the Ultimate Reality.

II

MATTER

Scientists of the West once regarded matter as an enduring substance built up out of rigid lumps of reality known as atoms, which are fixed, indivisible and eternally indestructible. They conceived it as existing in space and persisting in time. This is no longer believed by the modern scientists. The atoms which make up matter, when reduced to their ultimate entities, are now broken up into little particles of electricity called electrons and protons. Thus it has been prov-

ed that matter practically transforms itself into electric energy. These electrons and protons are invisible entities, but in certain cases it is said that electrons can be driven out of atoms and the actual path of electrons, darting at tremendous speed, can be photographed as they are seen through faint mists in closed tubes. Although they are called particles of electricity, yet it is not known what they are precisely. This much can be said that it is an activity of a mysterious nature. So matter in its final analysis loses its substantiality and presents itself as varying combinations, re-combinations and complex arrangements of electrons and protons. These are no more subjects of speculative philosophy but are demonstrable scientific truths. Says Jeans: "That because matter affects our senses as substantial, that is not to be taken as a revelation of matter. In modern science the substantiality of matter has gone. It has passed from the region of theory and become accepted science, and solid matter is an association of atoms which in turn are associations of electrons and protons, purely non-material entities." Eddington says that the notion of substance has dropped out of modern science and has been dissolved away into a set of mathematical relations between entities of whose nature we know nothing. But there is one species of matter, he suggests, of which we have a more intimate knowledge than is obtainable by the measuring instruments of science. When a man is thinking and feeling, our scientific instruments would reveal nothing but motions of the particles of brain, and in this fact, according to Eddington, lies the clue to the understanding of the nature of matter. That is to say,

the nature of matter is of the same nature as thoughts, feelings and emotions—in one word it is mental. According to Einstein's Theory of Relativity, matter is only a string of events as fleeting as thoughts, and science tells us nothing of their actual nature. The old materialists regarded matter as something different from fleeting thoughts due to its apparent solidarity and permanence. Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the Law of Gravitation, regarded matter, space and time as three separate and independent entities. They were independent in the sense that matter merely occupied time and space, and space remained the same whether it was occupied by matter or not, and the same was true of time. So space and time were regarded as quite independent of matter. They are no longer so. In Relativity Theory, the notion of time and of objective space as separate independent entities has given place to the notion of space-time as inseparable and one actual reality. Einstein calls time as the four-dimensional continuum, of which three dimensional matter itself is a part, and not something existing separately. Time according to this theory is not terrestrial or parochial but static; and in virtue of this, particular events perpetually come into and pass out of existence. And the forms which these events take are determined by space which is a permanent and universal matrix of all that changes and becomes. So the objective conception of space has been discarded by the present-day science. This Theory of Relativity shows that there is something in this universe which evades our intelligence, but a certain aspect of this unity has been picked out by the mind and is called matter. Thus

the mind partitions out the space and time in which material entities exist. This amounts to saying that this universe of time, space and matter, as understood by us, is only a creation of mind itself.

According to Advaita Vedanta matter is also mental, it is externalised thought. In fact matter and spirit are two different forms of one substance, although they appear to be two distinct things. Says Chandogya Upanishad (vi, 2): "Existence alone, my dear, was there in the beginning, one without a second. It willed, 'May I become many.'" 'It' and its antecedent Existence stand here for the Supreme Being. This act of seeing or willing endows the Being with intelligence, and it is this Intelligent Being that becomes all this universe of matter with all its modifications. In the Taittiriya Upanishad (II,1) we have the following description of creation: "From this Supreme Self ether came, from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth, etc." From the Atman has evolved first ether, the source of matter and space. Akasa or ether has been described by Sankara as one infinite, imponderable, inert and all-pervasive product. It stands for both space and exceedingly fine matter which fills all space. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasa. It is the Akasa that becomes the air, the fire, the water and the earth—in fact all that we see and perceive. But Akasa, like the electrons of the modern scientists, is not visible. It is so subtle that it is beyond all perception. It can be seen only when it takes a gross form. In the beginning of creation there was only the Atman. At the end of a cycle of

existence dissolution follows by a reversal of the order of creation; earth goes back to its source, water, water to fire, fire to air, air to Akasa and Akasa again resolves itself into its source, the Atman. Sankara says that the unchangeable Atman does not really change into Akasa and the rest, but the whole universe is only an apparent manifestation of that Atman. To make this clear, he gives the illustration of the rope-snake. Due to want of proper light or some defect in the vision, a rope may appear as a snake, in which case the rope evidently does not change into a real snake. The Atman likewise does not really change into Akasa and the rest. It remains unchanged and unchangeable, but through the veil of Maya or time, space and causation, we see the difference. This, Sankara calls Vivarta or apparent manifestation. Maya plays its part only through the externalised mind and senses which mediate our experience of the world of matter. Thought itself, through externalised mind and senses, becomes materialised, as it were. That is why matter is called externalised thought. In this respect there is no difference between the Indian and the Western view stated above. The Western scientist as well as the Indian seer says that matter is mental.

With Einstien, the Indian thinkers have also found out that time, space and matter are not independent existences. If that were so, the Advaitic conception of non-dualistic God will not hold good, for there would be two independent absolute entities, viz., 1. God and 2. time, space and matter, which is absurd. Matter, it has already been proved, has no existence separate from God. So also time and space. Time changes with every

change of our mind. In one moment of our dream experience, there passes sometimes before our mind, the incidents of a life-time, or when our mind is concentrated on some interesting study, we become quite oblivious of time, thereby showing that time entirely depends upon the state of our mind. We cannot have any idea of absolute or abstract time. Time is cognised only when we take two events, one preceding and the other succeeding, into consideration. So time can never be independent. Again take the case of space; we cannot have any idea of space without taking two limits, or conceiving it as between three objects. So space too is not absolute. And all these three—time, space and matter—are interdependent. We cannot conceive of any one of them by itself. They have no existence independent of God. Here also there is a wide measure of agreement between the Western and the Indian view, but the Western thinker posits a "neutral stuff" instead of God, from which time, space and matter have no independent existence. Gaudapada, the preceptor of Sankara's teacher, establishes in his Mandukya Karika by means of unaided reason that the world of time, space and matter has no existence by itself. It is all imagination of the Mind, pure and simple, and is caused by Maya inherent in the luminous Atman (*vide* Mandukya Karika Chapter II on 'Illusion').

III

CREATION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

This material universe, it is assumed by modern Western thinkers, must have been at one time in a highly organised state, but has subsequently been tending towards disorganisation.

And because a less organised universe could not have evolved into a more organised, it is believed that this universe was suddenly ushered into existence or created at some definite moment, and since then it is steadily running down. The American Physicist Robert Andrews Millikan says: "The material universe has contained in itself, and perhaps still contains, some mysterious impulse for its energy to run upwards. This impulse is veiled from our observation, so far as concerns its general operation. But there must have been an epoch in which the dominant trend was the formation of electrons and protons, molecules and stars. To-day, so far as our observation goes, they are decaying. . . . However vast may be the scale of the physical order, it appears to be finite, and it is wasting at a finite rate. However long the periods of time may have been, there must have been a beginning of the mere waste, and there must have an end to it." According to the First Law of Thermodynamics the amount of energy in the universe remains the same at all times. It can change its form without any loss in the process. Energy cannot either be created or destroyed. This law is also known as the Conservation of Mass or Energy. Life on earth being dependent on energy, it was thought to be eternal and going on for ever because of the indestructibility of energy. But the Second Law of Thermodynamics, also called Entropy, changed the whole situation. Energy is no longer indestructible, but it passes into a state of equilibrium when it is no more available as a going concern. Such energy is merely uniformly distributed in space. Scientists are said to have discovered that this is happen-

ing in the universe constantly, and a time may come when all the existing energy will go to a state of equilibrium and there will be no interchange of energy. Life on earth exists because of this interchange of energy, and when this is absent life must stop with it. So the scientists say that the universe is running down, that is to say, it is heading towards destruction or Pralaya as it is called in Sanskrit. Mathematical calculation shows that the constituent matter of the present universe cannot exist longer than 200 million million years. Then there would be no more atoms left capable of dissolving into radiation. There would be neither sunlight nor starlight, but only a cool glow of radiation uniformly diffused through space.

As against this modern view that this universe was suddenly ushered into existence at some definite moment, and since then is running down, the Indian philosophers have a parallel thought, viz., that of the creation, projection and dissolution of the universe—Srishti and Pralaya. In the beginning everything in the universe is in a state of equilibrium or perfect balance. This is the Pralaya State. All creation is stopped as it were for a period. After some time, again, the ball sets rolling. The very

nature of Akasa is vibration. When it vibrates, its evolution begins. This is what is called Srishti or projection. All motion in this universe is likened to waves undergoing successive rise and fall. Rise means creation and fall is Pralaya. This rising and falling is going on eternally. Some philosophers hold that the whole universe goes to this state of Pralaya or dissolution for a time, only to project itself again; others say that this process of quieting down applies only to systems. There are millions of such systems in this universe; when one of the systems quiets down and goes back to its undifferentiated state, other systems project outwards. What the modern scientists speak of as the running down of the universe may be applicable to one such system; but in any case, it cannot remain in that state of cool glow of radiation or equilibrium for ever. A time will come, according to the Indian thinkers, when the equilibrium will be disturbed and the same energy, which was lying in a quiescent state, will be available again for another creation. The mysterious power of Maya is at the root of all creation and the Akasa cannot for ever remain in a quiescent state due to that power.

(To be continued)

MEDITATIONS: CONQUEST OF EGOISM

By Anilbaran Ray

[Sj. Anilbaran Ray of Sri Aurobindo Asram, Pondicherry gives herein an idea of what true self-surrender consists in and what it can achieve.]

IT is curious how egoism mixes up with our surrender even when it is apparently honest and sincere. At one time we bow with our heart and soul to the Divine, at other times we follow our own way. Even at the same time some part in us surrenders while other parts hold back. The test is the lack of peace and equanimity, for where there is real surrender, there these things cannot exist.

We depend on the Divine but also count upon our own powers; as the saying goes, we trust in God, but keep our powder dry. As if our surrender is to get as much as possible from the Divine and use it for our own purpose in our own way. It is this want of sincerity and completeness in our surrender which is a great obstacle to the working of the Divine power in us.

Let this falsehood and duplicity completely disappear from me, Mother. Let me be free from all egoism, all initiative, all desire; let me turn always towards Thee and let this earnest prayer ceaselessly rise up from my soul:

Descend into me, Mother, in all Thy divine glory; seize my mind and fill it with Thy light; seize my will and make it an instrument of Thy divine will; seize my whole being and make it a perfect vehicle of the great joy of divine love.

* * *

We really lose nothing by losing our egoistic personality in the one immutable Self of all existence.

Through the ego we ignorantly confine ourselves to a limited portion of the world; by transcending the ego we go beyond this limitation and realise the whole world to be our own.

Then we have not to feel the pang of separation from our near and dear ones, because we find them within our own self, and all beings in the world become equally near and dear to us. We cease to be troubled by ideas of obligation and duty as we realise that we are not the real doers, but it is Nature really which carries out all our works. The joys and sorrows of the world do no longer affect us, as we perceive them to be passing movements in the universal play. Realising our true self to be infinite and perfect, we rise above all limited desires and attachments. By losing our ego we lose only our bondage and limitation.

Yet we do not cease to have individual personality. Through our individual nature we enter into a relation of love and devotion to the Divine Mother and find our nature to be a part of Herself, a vehicle of the manifestation of Her divine play which She is unfolding for the pleasure of Her Lord. By merging our lower self in the higher and identifying our individual nature with the Divine Mother, we grow into our real divine personality.

* * *

There is no other way of getting out of the miseries of the egoistic

life, Mother, than by completely identifying myself with Thee.

As long as the ego is the centre of our life, we ceaselessly move round and round it, bound by our ignorant attachments, impelled by our blind desires. No real progress, no transformation is at all possible under these conditions of darkness and falsehood. But all the limitations and imperfections of the lower life are at once ended when we are able to merge ourselves completely in Thee, Mother.

Then Thou becomest the centre of our life, instead of the ego; Thy will takes the place of our desires; Thy truth replaces the limited light of our reason; and all our sensuous hankerings and egoistic cravings are merg-

ed in the great delight of an intimate touch and integral union with Thee. And this is the real truth of our life. We are made out of Thy stuff, we are a spark out of Thy fire; all separation from Thee is falsehood and is the real source of misery.

So let me grow more and more identified with Thee, Mother, let all independent movements, all separate existence altogether cease in me. As the river falling into the sea at once transcends its limitations and becomes great and infinite with the sea itself, so let my human life fall into Thee, Mother, and become great and glorious in Thy divine life and divine consciousness.

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 8 to 12.

In the last Sutra, Narada has shown how Para Bhakti is intimately associated with renunciation. It is likely that people may misunderstand that renunciation means a complete abandonment of all activities. So in the next seven Sutras, Narada seeks to show that there is no ground for such misunderstanding. He points out that there is no inherent opposition between renunciation and service.

निरोधस्तु लोकवेदव्यापारस्य न्यासः ॥ ८ ॥

निरोधः Renunciation (referred to in the previous Sutra as an invariable characteristic of Para

Bhakti) तु but लोकवेदव्यापारस्य of activities sacred as well as secular न्यासः consecration (भवति) is.

8. But¹ this renunciation (which is referred to in the last Sutra as an invariable characteristic of Para Bhakti) is only a consecration² of all activities, sacred and secular³.

Notes. 1. But—This is meant to point out that the Sutra is an answer to a doubt or objection that might probably be raised.

2. Consecration—To the realised man, the whole world is nothing but

his Beloved, viz., God. All his activities, therefore, are sublimated into worship. The difference between his activities and those of an unenlightened man is that while the former is absolutely selfless and unattached, the latter is selfish and attached to the results of his actions and consequently suffers. What is renounced by the Bhakta is not external activities but the ego. Cf. Gita V:13 and XVIII:56, 57, where Bhagavan says specifically that renunciation is mental. Cf. also Sankara's prayer in his Manasa Puja "Whatever work I do, they are all worship of Thyself."

3. *Sacred and Secular*—To the realised man, there is no distinction between sacred and secular. Every work is sacred to him inasmuch as it is an expression of his love for God. On the other hand, however much an unenlightened man may try to distinguish between the two, his actions cannot be really sacred inasmuch as the basis of such actions is his own ego.

तस्मिन् अनन्यता तद्विरोधिषुदासीनता च ॥ ९ ॥

तस्मिन् in that अनन्यता complete unification or identification तद्विरोधिषु towards those which are opposed to it उदासीनता indifference च and.

9. In such renunciation by consecration, there is complete unification¹, and indifference² towards everything opposed to it.

Notes. 1. *Unification*—In the realised man the primary instincts common to all members of the human race are all organised into the sentiment of love of God. They are not destroyed completely but they give up their distinctive natural characteris-

tics and modes of reaction, and merge themselves in Divine love and are completely unified into one. They are merely sublimated, and remain as suppliers of energy necessary for service and worship in which the love of God expresses itself.

There is unification in another sense also. The realised man does not have any interest of his own. He completely identifies himself with the woes and miseries of the world, and in his sympathy for its sufferings, completely forgets himself in its service. There is also unification in a still higher sense, in so far as the ego of such a person becomes identified with God, and his will, with God's will.

2. *Indifference*.—Though the instincts thus remain, they do not react even in the presence of their natural stimuli, as such reaction cannot co-exist with the predominant sentiment of Love to which they are opposed. But they do react when such reaction is helpful for the expression of Divine love.

अन्याश्रयाणां त्यागः अनन्यता ॥ १० ॥

अन्याश्रयाणां of all other supports त्यागः abandonment अनन्यता unification.

10. Unification means the abandonment of all other support.

Notes. This emphasises how in a realised man sublimation is effected by the withdrawal of the instincts from their natural field of action and the redirection of their energies towards the Self of all selves, which is the support of all. Formerly the ego used to be the support of all instinctive reactions, and such reactions required also the presence of particular stimuli. But in the state of realisa-

tion, both these supports are absent. Hence the very conditions necessary for their natural expression do not exist. But even though these do not exist, they have got a better support in the Self of all selves, namely, God.

लोकवेदेषु तदनुकूलाचरणं तद्विरोधिषु

उदासीनता ॥ ११ ॥

लोकवेदेषु among the activities sacred and secular तदनुकूलाचरणं doing only such as are favourable to it तद्विरोधिषु towards those which are opposed to it उदासीनता indifference.

11. Indifference to factors hostile to devotion means performance of such secular and sacred activities as are favourable to devotion.

Notes.—Narada maintains here that love of God never ends in inactivity and idleness. A true devotee will dislike only such works as are hostile to the cultivation of Love, but with the energy thus saved by the abandonment of undesirable works, he would perform others that are favourable to devotion with redoubled vigour. This latter kind of works may range from pious duties like worship and prayer to actions of world-wide significance performed with the spirit of dedication inculcated by the Gita.

भवतु निश्चयदाढ्यादूर्ध्वं शास्त्ररक्षणम् ॥ १२ ॥

निश्चयदाढ्यादूर्ध्वं (अपि) even after realisation becomes well established शास्त्ररक्षणं protection of the Scriptures भवतु let there be.

12. Let a man protect¹ the Scriptures even after his spiritual realisation becomes well established.

Notes. 1. *Protect*—Scriptures of mankind are nothing but the records of the spiritual realisations of Rishis, sages and saints; we see many of the Scriptures woefully neglected not only by the masses but even by the educated and so-called religious people. They have practically become dead. The reason for this is that the experiences recorded therein have become meaningless to the later generations. The truths preached by the ancient sages must be felt to be useful to us at the present time also. This can be achieved only if persons living even at present, whom we venerate as realised persons, follow the scriptures in their actual life. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita III:21, the masses are always led to follow in the footsteps of those whom they look up to as leaders. The truths of the Scriptures must be re-lived before our people's eyes, and their usefulness demonstrated publicly, before the ordinary man adopts them as a guidance for his own life. If, therefore, realised men do not follow the Scriptures, then woe unto the Scriptures! Thus Scriptures need the protection of the realised persons, as otherwise they are liable to be neglected or misinterpreted.

Again every old text is not a Sastra. What may have been useful in the past may cease to be so in course of time under other circumstances and surroundings. Progress in culture and civilisation also necessitates many readjustments in the Scriptures. Every age must, therefore, have its own realised men who can test the Scriptures in the light of their own spiritual experiences. Only such rules and texts deserve to live as can stand such repeated tests. Only the realised men can find out what is of real value in

the Scriptures and bring out the grain from the chaff. Hence realised men are to protect the Sastras, also in the sense of making them understandable to people capable of being applied in their lives.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A Hermit in the Himalayas: By Paul Brunton. Published by B. G. Paul & Co., 12, Francis Joseph St., Madras. Pp. 322.

The 'hermit' referred to in the title of the book is none other than the author. Mr. Brunton, himself. Although his self-chosen title of 'hermit' may puzzle many a reader at first, his doubts will be clarified as he goes through the book, and reads Mr. Brunton assuring that a hermit does not necessarily mean one who starves himself, tortures his body, puts on insufficient clothing, lives only in caves, shuns society, and also observes celibacy, but one who possesses a particular attitude of mind. As to what that attitude is, the reader will have ample opportunity to know as he turns over the pages of the book.

The subject-matter of the book is the experiences of Mr. Brunton during his stay in the Himalayas in the Tehri-Garhwal State. The book is therefore purely autobiographical, and will be of interest mainly to those who are interested in Mr. Brunton. Besides the narration of purely personal matters, the reader will, however, come across reflections on a variety of topics of general interest. To mention some of these, there are reflections on British rule in India and political strife, spiritualising politics, concentration, remembrance of former births, Nature's purpose with mankind, Himalayan pilgrimages, the future of Tibet, Sir Francis Younghusband's experiences, Jesus and his critics, why Mr. Charles Chaplin should become a hermit and retire to the Himalayas with Mr. Brunton, some truths about sex and its relation to Yoga, the problem of Nature's cruelty, astrology, delights of tea-drinking and many more topics of like nature. The literary merits of these reflections are of a high order, and they provide delightful reading for lighter moments; but the quality of thought contained in them is not correspondingly high

superficiality being their striking feature in this respect.

Of all these reflections, we wish to draw the reader's attention to two. One is the way Mr. Brunton disposes of the question of sex in spiritual life. There are two types of men, Mr. Brunton says, and of these, one may adhere to strict celibacy if they have preference for it. Mr. Brunton has no objection to it, nay, he is even full of reverence for people of this kind if they are genuine. But he would not have them insist on the other type accepting their discipline; for, according to him, there is no necessary connection between uncompromising celibacy and spiritual attainments. And why? Because, "It is not the fiat of the Deity that all shall torture themselves by unsuccessful efforts to drive off the besetting attentions of what is, after all, a purely natural function.... The truth is that it is not the disuse or use of the sexual organ which points the way to salvation any more than it is the disuse or use of the digestive organ, or the vocal organ..... (Italics ours). It does not concern the body so much as it concerns the inhabitant of the body—the soul. We shall find it not through fussing about our physical organs but through conquering that which ultimately rules them—the mind." We shall not enter here into any discussion or criticism of this view, but only leave the reader to ponder over two questions: 'Is the relation of sex to spiritual life, especially in its higher developments, only like that of digestion and speech?' and 'Is it possible to discipline the mind without taking the body also into consideration?'

The question of celibacy, however, affects only the life of a few, but the other reflection of Mr. Brunton is of more pressing importance in the life of a large section of humanity. And that is his views on Tibet. Mr. Brunton wanted to visit the

Mt. Kailas, but the Tibetan Government would not raise the general ban against the entry of Europeans into that country, even in the case of a hermit like Mr. Brunton. Mr. Brunton therefore warns the Tibetans, especially the Lamas, that this prejudice against the Europeans, born of a narrow religious outlook and the desire to hold down the people in their grip, would not save them in the long run. For Tibet has gold, and Tibetans do not know how to extract it. The dog-in-the-manger policy on the part of the Lamas cannot help them hold the European at an arm's length for all time from that rich reserve of precious metal. In the past it was difficult for the European to penetrate into Tibet by force, on account of the natural difficulties of communication; but to-day the development of aerial warfare and traffic has altered the whole situation. Look at Abyssinia. The Italian was not a welcome guest there, but her like or dislike did not ultimately debar Italy from conquering her. Mr. Brunton, therefore, advises Tibetans that, if they want to avert this calamity, they should open their country, if not to all Europeans, at least to such of them as are well-intentioned and would help Tibetans in exploiting their natural resources in a way that would be profitable to themselves as well as the world at large. A sound piece of advice, indeed! But unfortunately there is no chance of Mr. Brunton's book being read in Tibet, and of the Lamas taking advantage of this suggestion before it is too late. There are, however, men in Mr. Brunton's part of the world, and as for the matter of that, in the East, too, especially in Japan, who may not desist from the expenditure of the required tons of bombs and poison gas, if they seriously take the information conveyed by Mr. Brunton regarding the existence of gold in Tibet. But this will take time; if, in the meantime, the Lamas become suddenly intelligent and profit by Mr. Brunton's wise counsel, it would benefit not only well-intentioned gold-diggers, but also pious hermits of the West like Mr. Brunton himself, who intend to visit Mount Kailas.

In conclusion we must say a word in praise of the very readable, effective and lively journalistic style in which Mr. Brunton writes, and above all, of the vivid

and charming descriptions of Himalayan sceneries scattered all through the book. This last point is perhaps the most attractive feature of the book, and those who have not witnessed the sublime grandeur of the Himalayan regions, can get a peep into it through the pen-pictures of Mr. Brunton.

(1) *In Secret Tibet*, (2) *Darkness over Tibet*: By Theodore Illions. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pp. 190 & 192. Price sh. 5 and sh. 6 respectively.

In the foregoing review we have seen how Mr. Paul Brunton was disappointed because the peculiar prejudice of Tibetans against Westerners made it impossible for him to go to Mount Kailas situated in Tibetan territory. Here are recorded in these two books the wonderful experiences of another Englishman, Mr. Theodore Illions, who could do what Mr. Brunton could not in spite of being a 'hermit', namely, to travel extensively through Tibet and mix with all ranks of society there. One may be tempted to question whether it is all true or only a clever concoction for producing a good seller; but Mr. Illions and his publishers assure us that everything said therein is 'absolutely true.' We have to leave it there.

It cannot, however, be disputed that Mr. Illions' book is very interesting to read. For one thing, Mr. Illions makes no attempt to scandalise the oriental and to spice his literary dish with the sexual orgies and abnormalities of the holy men of the East in order to cater to the tastes of the matter-of-fact men of the West. For this at least we must be thankful to him. On reading it, one gains the impression that Tibetans are lovely people, though they are a bit too dirty and have a special like for putrified meat. But with all their physical dirt and squalor, their heart is much more beautiful than that of civilised men. Tibetan peasants and nomads are endowed with all primitive virtues—they are kind, hospitable, and simple-minded. A terrible fear of ghosts and abject submission to the Lamas form their crying vice. The Tibetan brigands, who are separated from non-brigands only by a very thin line, are also excellent people. They never kill people, nor deprive a traveller of all his

food; they are curious like children and meddle with all the belongings of their victims, but take away only what is useful to them. The rich men of Tibet, like rich men everywhere, put on airs; but they are perhaps more free from superstition than the masses and have the penetration to see through the deceptions of Lamaism. They would not, however, expose it, as it is to their interest also that the masses are kept superstitious and ignorant.

The real villain of the books is the Lama. Not that Lamas are horribly lecherous or diabolical. In fact, Mr. Illions, from his experience in many monasteries, discredits as mythical the stories of Western girls living infatuated with the Lamas in their monasteries. The Lamas are very strict in avoiding association with women, though, Mr. Illions tells us, he found among them some traces of unnatural perversions. The real trouble with the Lamas is that they have made a business of religion, and use all their civil and ecclesiastical powers to keep the common man of Tibet in abject superstition and ignorance, exploiting his simple and credulous nature for their own aggrandisement.

If the Lama is the devil, the Tibetan hermit constitutes the god of Mr. Illions' books. These men, we are told, do not generally live in monasteries and are not to be found among the Lamas, though occasionally some such may be found among them too, as for example, when Mr. Illions happened to be saved from the hands of some suspicious Lamas by the providential appearance of one of these angels. The hermits generally live in solitude, have a child-like and benign appearance, can understand other people's thought without any effort, are full of wisdom and universal disinterested love for all beings, are absolutely free from all vanity, including the vanity of saintliness, have no prejudice against Westerners, are possessed of super-human powers which they never use for selfish purposes, and are credited to be living much beyond the ordinary man's span of life. And one of them told Mr. Illions the secret of their long life and youthfulness: "The moment you make an effort to remain young, you get old. *The very moment you make an effort to keep something, you are afraid to*

lose it. And fear poisons man.... It is fear that destroys people's youth.... And what is youth? It is freedom from prejudice, freedom from habitual ways of thinking and habitual ways of living. So long as we are spontaneous, loving and enthusiastic we are young." Not only are these angels wise in matters of the spirit, but are even posted with up-to-date information on world conditions, though they have no newspapers and no communication with other countries. One of them discussed with Mr. Illions the present-day condition of Western civilisation, the unemployment problem, and other questions of the same type. He was also for introducing some of the Western mechanical devices into Tibet.

Apart from these accounts of different types of people in Tibet, one comes across also descriptions of several miraculous phenomena like discarnate voices, flying Lamas, and the underground city.

The curious reader may, however, like to know how Mr. Illions overcame the greatest difficulty for a Westerner in travelling in Tibet, namely, that of being unrecognised as a European. Every one may be quite prepared to know that Mr. Illions' body was covered with a cloak, but how could he hide from the Tibetan his defective Tibetan speech with European accent, his long nose, his blue eyes, and his white face? Here it is that Mr. Illions shows his greatest resourcefulness; and if Mr. Paul Brunton really intends going to Tibet, he ought to receive a course of instruction from him in these matters. Mr. Illions overcame these difficulties in the following way: He talked only when in the company of ignorant Tibetans, but pretended to be deaf and dumb when he was in towns or among Lamas. He gave a Tibetan appearance to his nose by applying a plug. As for his eyes, he always kept them half closed. And as for the colour of his face and hands, he dyed those parts with a mixture of 'iodine and oil'! And where did he keep his bottle containing this precious mixture? Here comes the climax: "Had this bottle been found by brigands searching me it would have meant the untimely end of the Tibetan adventure. However, the precious bottle was tucked away so securely that on one occasion the bandits who found even my camera which was not larger than a match-

box, failed to find the bottle. As the secret of its hiding-place might still be useful to me some day, I wish to hold it back, but

I would like to add that its real efficacy rested on its extraordinary simplicity." (It lies ours.) But that's suspicious!

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture was inaugurated on Saturday morning by Swami Virajananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

After prayers Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarker described the aims and objects of the Institute. He said *inter alia*: "It will have for its objects the teachings of that great seer of modern India through the study and promotion of the creative achievements and spiritual experiences of the diverse races, castes, classes and communities of mankind on a scientific, comparative and cosmopolitan basis.

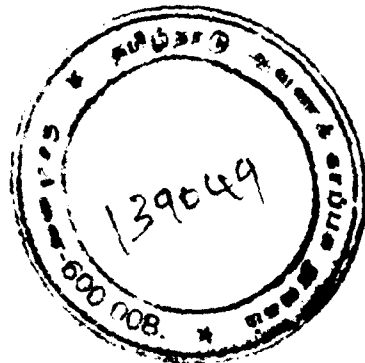
"The importance of such a cultural Institute can hardly be over emphasized in an age when the materialistic outlook on life has blinded human vision to the inner harmony and beauty of our collective existence and has thereby created an atmosphere of mutual distrust, hatred and discord throughout the world. The significant advent of Sri Ramakrishna into the arena of Indian life at this psychological moment and his unique spiritual contribution to the sum total of human thought cannot therefore be better symbolized than by the inauguration of such a cultural institute where the representatives of the East and the West can meet on terms of equality and mutual respect, and work with a consecrated zeal to bring about a complete change in the outlook of men. The philosophies, religions, moralities, arts and crafts,

sciences, literatures, industries, economic developments, measures for the control of poverty, health and educational organisations, etc., of the four quarters of the globe will form the theme of appreciative and rational discussion under the auspices of this Institute.

"In the light of the spiritual realisation of the fundamental unity of mankind and of all faiths—the eternal theme of Indian life as embodied in the living gospel of Sri Ramakrishna—the Institute will attempt in its humble way to supply the cultural and spiritual foundations of a new personality among the men and women of the world and equip them as proper and adequate instruments for the establishment of world-peace, genuine internationalism and a really humane culture on earth.

"Alongside of the main section, the Institute intends to run another section devoted exclusively to the younger generation. Proper arrangements will be made to provide facilities for the youths to get an all-round training of their body, mind and spirit under the guidance of efficient instructors, thus laying the foundation for a healthy growth and development of our social organism."

The first discourse on "The Future of Religion" under the auspices of the newly started Institute was given by Swami Pavitrananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, on Saturday the 12th February at 5-30 p.m., at the Albert Hall (2nd floor).



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