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THE VEDANTA KESARI

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What is Bondage?—II

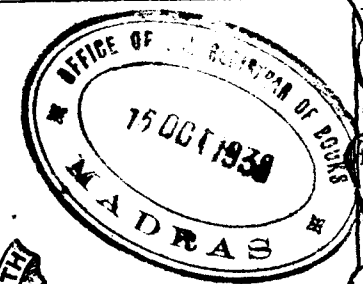
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The Vedanta Kesari

Volume XXV]

OCTOBER—1938

[Number 6



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

—Swami Vivekananda

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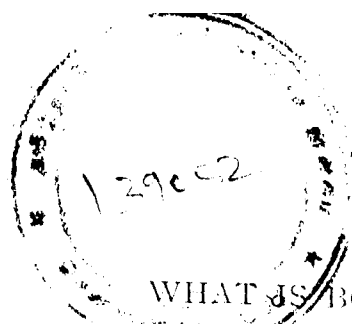
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HINDU ETHICS

तापत्रयेणाभिहतं यदेतदखिलं जगत् । तदा शोच्येषु भूतेषु द्वेषं प्राज्ञः करोति कः ॥
 अयं भद्राणि भूतानि हीनशक्तिरहं परं । मुदं तदापि कुर्वीत हानिद्वेषफलं यतः ॥
 ब्रह्मवैराणि भूतानि द्वेषं कुर्वन्ति चेत् ततः । सुशोच्यान्वयतिमोहेन व्यातानीति मनीषिणाम् ॥
 विस्तारः सर्वभूतस्य विष्णोः सर्वमिदं जगत् । द्रष्टव्यमात्मवत् तस्माद्भेदेन विचक्षणैः ॥
 देवा मनुष्याः पशवः पक्षिवृक्षसरीसृपाः । रूपमेतदनन्तस्य विष्णोर्भिरभिवर्त्यतम् ॥
 एतद् विजानता सर्वं जगत् स्यात्परजङ्गमम् । द्रष्टव्यमात्मवद्विष्णुर्यतोऽयं विश्वरूपवृक् ॥
 एवं ज्ञाते स भगवाननादिः परमेश्वरः । प्रसीदत्यच्युतस्तस्मिन् प्रसन्ने क्लेशसङ्ख्यः ॥

The whole world is stricken with woe caused by the individuals themselves, or by Nature seen and unseen. That being their condition, every living being deserves to be pitied; who, possessed of thought, would then be hostile to any? Supposing one believes, "Other beings are happy; I alone am so abjectly powerless," still one ought to be in good spirits; for the outcome of hatred is only loss. If other beings bear unabated malice towards one, still the wise one ought to consider them as objects of extreme commiseration, thinking, "Ah! these are steeped in their excessive delusion." The whole universe is a spreading-out of the Omnipresent Lord. Hence the discerning person must view it without partiality and as his own self. Gods, men, beasts, birds and trees—these, though existing apparently different, are the veritable configurations of the infinite all-pervading Lord. He who is aware of this must look upon the entire sentient and insentient creation as his own self; because the Supreme Self has invested Himself in this multiform universe. When one experiences this, the supreme beginningless Blessed Lord who is never subjected to any change by the creation, becomes propitious, and when He is gracious, miseries die away.

Vishnu Purana.



WHAT IS BONDAGE?—II

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

IN discussing the nature of bondage in our last instalment, we saw that the fundamental basis of Avidya Maya, or the power of Ignorance that binds man, is egotism (Ahankara). According to the Master's analysis, egotism expresses itself along two channels: (1) pride and vanity and (2) attachment to 'woman and gold'. We have already stated at length the Master's views on the former. We shall now consider what he has said with regard to the latter.

I

In the first place, the Master's description of worldly bondage as consisting in 'woman and gold' should not at all be interpreted to mean that he was a woman-hater. A study of his life and teachings as a whole would reveal to anyone that his attitude towards womankind was one of profound respect bordering on worship. Being all his life a worshipper of the Deity as the Mother of the Universe, he saw in woman the symbol of the Divine Mother in a special sense. He says: "All women are parts of the Divine Mother, and therefore they should be looked upon as mothers by all." In respect of this attitude, he does not make any discrimination even from the point of view of the character of any particular woman. Hence, describing his profound respect for womanhood, he says: "When I

look on a woman of character belonging to a respectable family, I see in her the Mother Divine arrayed in the modest garb of a chaste lady. And again when I look upon the public women of the city sitting in their open verandahs arrayed in the garb of immodesty and shamelessness, I see in them the same Divine Mother sporting in a different way."

Every student of his life knows very well how these words of his were not mere professions, advice gratis given to followers, or pious sentiments reserved for platform purposes. They were precepts which he translated into action in his everyday life; they were ideals that had become unshakable realities in his consciousness.

The vividness of his perception in this regard will come home to the mind of the reader, if we give the following analysis of his thought and conduct by himself: "She has placed me in the state of a Bhakta—of a Vijnani. In this state I see that the Mother Herself has become all this. In the Kali temple I found that Mother has become even the wicked—even the brother of the Bhagavat Pandit. Try though I might, I failed to rebuke Ramlal's mother. I found she was mother in another form. It is because I find the Mother in the maidens that I worship them. My wife strokes my feet, but I salute her

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WHAT IS BONDAGE?—II

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afterwards. Because I am placed in such a condition, I have to return your salutes One day I was meditating on the Divine Mother within the Kali temple. I found it impossible to visualise Her form. Sometime after, I saw Her looking up from the side of the pot used for worship. She was in appearance like a prostitute named Ramani who comes to the ghat for bath. I laughed in wonder and said: 'Very Good. You like to be Ramani to-day. Accept then to-day's worship in that form.' In this way the Mother taught me: 'Even the prostitute is I Myself.' Another day while going in a carriage through Meehua Bazaar, I saw the Mother as a woman out to tempt people, dressed fashionably, with vermilion mark on the forehead and wig on the head, and smoking from a Hookah. Wondering I asked whether the Mother had chosen to take this form also, and prostrated before her." These were not mere fitful thoughts or passing moods but the expressions of a state of mind which had become natural to him.

II

We refer to these facts because they show that there have been few men who respected womanhood so much as Sri Ramakrishna did. In fact he has been criticised often for not having discriminated between noble-born women and women of no character. But this, it must be pointed out, is due to the incapacity of the critics to rise to the high spiritual level from which Sri Ramakrishna viewed womanhood. What is more, they also forget the fact that in inculcating this exalted outlook on womankind, he did not in the least leave room for moral lapses or for

frivolous aestheticism. That was why, while speaking in one breath on the Divinity of womanhood, he speaks in the next on the baneful influence of woman on spiritual life. Just as we have set forth some of his sayings on the former aspect of his teaching, it will be advantageous to do the same with regard to the latter also.

Maya which has devoured everything is, according to him, *Mege*, i.e., 'woman'. However circumspect and controlled a person might be, some taint of carnality is sure to affect any man by association with women, just as one living in a sooty room cannot save one's skin from being blackened to some extent in spite of all one's caution. A fever patient, lying between pitchers of ice-cold water and bottles of savoury pickles, cannot resist the temptation of drinking the water and tasting the sauces. So too a worldly-minded man, suffering from the high fever of lust and is thirsty after sense pleasures, cannot but succumb when placed between beauty's charms on the one side and that of wealth on the other. As a monkey sacrifices its life at the feet of the hunter, so does a man sacrifice himself at the feet of a beautiful woman. Such being the snare of woman, Sri Ramakrishna warns those who have to live with them: "Be careful. Put not too much confidence in woman. They establish their mastery over you so insiduously."

Explaining how the bondage of woman brings about bondages of every other kind, the Master would narrate the interesting story of the priests of Govindaji's temple at Joypore. Once upon a time these priests never married. They were

highly spiritual men. Once the king of the country sent for them, but they refused to go and asked the king to go to them if he wanted to meet them. Sometime later they began to marry, and since then there was no need for the king to send for them at all. For they were in need of money for a hundred purposes, and were, therefore, forced to go to the king and court his favour, saying, "Your Highness, we have come to bless you. Here we have brought you Prasad (things offered to Deity) from the temple. Please accept it." And then addressing the devotees, the Master would add: "You can see for yourself what you have become by serving others. Those of your young men who are learned and educated in the Western fashion, silently put up with the kicks of their masters. Do you know what is at the back of all these humiliations and pangs of thralldom. It is 'woman'—subjection to the attraction of sex."

III

Such uncompromising criticism of 'woman' may leave the impression that the Master hated the fair sex, and had no respect for married life, in spite of all that we have stated before about his recognising in woman the symbol of the Divine Mother. One will, however, be forced to change this impression when it is remembered that he is not even in these sayings condemning womankind but impressing on our mind that, when approached with a sex-contaminated eye, 'woman' is the greatest danger to the spiritual aspirant. By 'woman' he means 'sex', 'carnality'; but the great teacher that he was, endowed with penetrating insight into the

workings of the human mind, he preferred to use the concrete for the abstract and always spoke of the bondage of 'woman' and not of sex.

However a man may indulge in the use of abstract concepts in his philosophical moods, he cannot help being taken up entirely with the concrete in his daily life. One may speak of sweetness, redness, goodness, etc., in the abstract, but one has knowledge and experience only of a sweet fruit, a red light and a good man, *i.e.*, of these abstract qualities as they manifest in objects coming within one's experience. The same is the case with sex. While people may speak of it in the abstract from scientific motives or considerations of etiquette, it is associated in their minds through and through with the opposite sex.

So the Master, whose motive in teaching was the spiritual awakening of men and not the winning of the approval and laudation of genteel society, always spoke of 'woman' when he dealt with the bondage of sex. That his motive in this was purely psychological, we know from how, while speaking on the same subject to his women devotees, he warned them against the dangers from 'man'.

It may, however, be asked why we do not get sayings couched in such terms in the recorded teachings of the Master. This will become clear when it is remembered that all these precious teachings of the Master have been recorded only by men who evidently heard him while he spoke to audiences composed exclusively of men. We have it on the authority of his women devotees that when he spoke to them, he warned them against the dangers from 'men'.

IV

There is another misconception that a person may possibly entertain from a superficial study of the Master's sayings on the bondage of 'woman'. Was he obsessed by an extreme form of monkish prejudice? Had he no due appreciation of the householder's ideal of life? Such misgivings are far from being true. The circumstances of the Master's life were such that he could take a most disinterested view of the two ideals of life represented by the monk and the householder. The Master was a householder in the sense that he was married, that he discharged his duties towards his wife, that he never deserted her as married men do when they take to the life of Sannyasa, and that he won the unqualified love and respect of his wife. At the same time he lived up to the highest ideal of Sannyasa, since he was a life-long celibate in spite of his being married. As these circumstances suggest, if any human being had occasion to enter fully into the spirit of these two ideals and arrive at a due estimation of their greatness, it was the Master.

Hence when he warned the householders against the influence of 'woman', and the bondage she brings about, his object was neither to depreciate the ideal of the householder's life, nor to cast aspersions on women whom he, in fact, honoured as the living symbols of the Divine Mother. What he attacks is the common notion among people that marriage gives them a legal and moral licence for full indulgence of the flesh within its limits. Moral and spiritual life as envisaged by the

Master is far from lending any support to such a notion. According to him, a person who succumbs to it is truly enslaved by 'woman', *i.e.*, sexuality. His conception of the type of life that a spiritually-inclined householder should live is thus described: "As for you householders, you may go amongst women with a mind unattached and fixed upon God. That your mind may be thus non-attached and fixed upon God, it is good that you should often retire into solitude—a place away from either men or women; a place where you may stay at least for three days if not more, or for at least one day if not for three. Your path, again, as married men is to live with your wife like brother and sister after one or two children are born to you, and to pray to the Lord constantly that both of you may have strength to live a perfect life of spirituality and self-control."

These were the lines along which he moulded the lives of innumerable men and women, most of whom were married. One cannot therefore charge him with having no regard for the ideal of the married man and woman, or for family life.

V

In fact what the Master emphasises uncompromisingly is that without perfect control of the sex instinct, one's spiritual capacities do not reach their maximum development, whatever may be the order of life to which one belongs. For according to him God is very near to one who has relinquished the enjoyment of 'woman'. The glorious image of the Almighty God can be reflected only in the heart of one who has preserved

his power and purity through perfect continence. Says the Master: "Nityananda asked Sri Chaitanya, 'Why is it that all my teaching of Divine love produces no tangible result on the minds of men?' Sri Chaitanya replied: 'Because, due to their association with women, they cannot retain the higher teachings. Listen, Brother Nityananda, there is no salvation for the worldly-minded.'"

According to him, if a man practices absolute continence for twelve years, his understanding becomes purified and acquires a peculiar power and subtlety. He calls it the opening of the Medha-nadi. By such an understanding alone can man grasp spiritual truths and gain unshakable conviction with regard to them. If this point of view is properly understood and appreciated, one will cease to accuse the Master of prejudice against womankind or family life. What he wants of spiritual aspirants, whether they are men or women, householders or Sannyasins, is that they should sublimate the whole sex-instinct into a passion for the Divine. This is the purport of his teaching about the bondage of 'woman'.

VI

Next we have to consider his teachings on 'gold', the second item of the Master's favourite formula, 'woman and gold'. His characterisation of 'gold' as the source of bondage should not at all be taken to mean that he did not understand the place of wealth in life. Says the Master: "When the Tantric invokes the Deity through Sava-sadhana (the worship with the corpse), he keeps food and wine ready at hand. For the corpse will be vivified by elementals in

the course of worship, and if the elementals are not then appeased with food and wine, the worship will be interrupted, and the higher spirit will not descend. So, dwelling on the bosom of the carcase of this world, a person who desires to attain beatitude should first provide himself with all things necessary to pacify the clamour of life's demands on him. Otherwise his devotion may be broken and interrupted by the cares and anxieties of life." But he wanted the spiritual aspirant never to make money the end and aim of life. He must understand that wealth can at the most supply him with the requirements of physical life, but is in itself absolutely incapable of bringing him nearer the Truth. He may earn money by honest means, if his idea is to devote it to the life in the family based on discrimination, *i.e.*, to be used as a means of getting food, cloth and housing for the family, of worshipping the Deity and of serving Sadhus, devotees and poor men. Then again, a true devotee should have an attitude of resignation in regard to questions relating to money. He says: "There is necessity for money in family life; but do not ponder much over it and other material gains. Contentment with what comes is the best attitude. Do not be anxious to hoard. For bees labour hard to build their hives and fill them with honey, but man comes to rob them of the fruits of their labours. Those who dedicate their very life and soul to Him, those who are His devotees and have taken refuge in Him, can never think much of worldly matters. With them, expenditure is commensurate with income. As money comes

into their hands in one way, it is spent away in another."

VII

Just as the Master's criticism of 'woman' is really a warning to control the sex-instinct, his condemnation of 'gold' is in fact an exhortation to overcome the acquisitive instinct which expresses itself as greed in the mind of man. The acquisitive instinct in man is not, however, quite different in quality from the self-preservation instinct and its corresponding emotion of fear. In the animal the acquisitive instinct is satisfied when it has filled its stomach and secured a place to rest. But for man, capable of thinking of, and providing for, the future, acquisition means not only satisfying the temporary needs, but also putting himself in a position of security for the future. Hence he earns, and 'gold', which conserves the values thus earned, symbolises his longing for security in this world of change, decay and death. But is this quest for security different from the quest for self-preservation? It does not seem to be so. The fundamental urge behind both seems to be identical. We call it self-preservation when we think of the preservation of the body, and acquisitiveness, when we think of the preservation of the requisites needed for the upkeep of the body.

The significance of 'gold' is more extensive than self-preservation even. For 'gold' not only secures the good things of life but also confers power

on its possessor. The power of finance is what ultimately controls the military, political and cultural destinies of nations. And man's lust for gold is insatiable, not because the necessities of his physical life are unlimited but because the power that gold bestows on him over his fellow-beings is so enchantingly delightful for his ego. Hence the renunciation of gold means also the renunciation of our will to power.

VIII

We may now summarise as follows the analysis we have given of the Master's conception of bondage: The root of bondage is ignorance, and this ignorance has its basic expression as egotism or individuation. The ego flows out and joins the sea of life, branching into three streams. The three streams are the sex instinct or the urge for race-preservation; the acquisitive instinct or the urge for self-preservation, security and power; and the sense of self-importance or the overweening consciousness of one's own powers and attainments in respect of wealth, position, learning and influence. The nature of bondage may, therefore, be described in brief as passion, pride and craving for power. The whole being of man is beaten into these mighty waves of physical and psychical expressions. The quest of spiritual life is to calm these waves, to discover the real nature of the ego, and thus to penetrate the veil of ignorance. Then alone is man freed from bondage.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the original from Bengali.]

ON the previous day the Holy Mother paid a visit to Gupta Maharaj who had been ill.* Boshi and his brother Tabu had been nursing him with great attention. The Mother mentioned it and praised the two brothers very highly. She said: "They are blessed. They are indeed holy men. Who else is a holy man?"

"When Yogin Chatterjee (Swami Nityananda) was ill, his disciples too nursed him whole-heartedly. They all came from East Bengal. The children (disciples) attended the Master at Cossipore Garden. The Master used to say, 'How can they continue in their nursing if they do not enjoy a little pleasure?' He could read everyone's mind and acted accordingly. There was not much need of nursing him, but someone had to stay awake all night. He could eat very little—only a little cream of wheat pudding, and that also had to be strained. One day the Master wanted to eat an Amalaka fruit, but it was not the proper season for that fruit. Durgacharan (Nag Mahashaya) arrived with two or three fruits after three days. They were quite big. For three days Durgacharan had not touched any food. The Master took

the fruits in his hand and burst into tears. He said to Durgacharan, 'I thought you had gone away to Dacca or some such place.' Then he said to me, 'Please make some curry for him and make it hot. He comes from East Bengal and relishes hot curry.' The meal was prepared. The Master said to me, 'Arrange the food on a plate.' But Durgacharan would not eat it unless it was Prasadam. The Master himself took a morsel of the food and then gave it to Durgacharan. Then Durgacharan ate it. At that time a great deal of money was spent for the upkeep of the Cossipore Garden House. There were three kinds of cooking; one for the Master, one for Naren and the other young disciples and the third for the rest. A subscription was arranged to raise the money. One disciple fled away for fear of having to pay the subscription.

"The Master became ill through accepting the sin of others. He said, 'It is the sin of Girish. Girish could not go through the suffering.' The Master had the power to bring about his own death whenever he liked. He could easily have given up his body in Samadhi. He said, 'I want to establish unity amongst them (the

disciples).' Therefore he did not give up his body in spite of all the suffering."

I went upstairs carrying the flowers for the worship. It was a little late in the morning and the Mother had said to me, "Please bring the flowers up to me whenever they are brought." The Holy Mother herself used to arrange everything for the worship, and she herself performed the worship. She beckoned to me to come near her. Seated on the couch she asked me about a certain devotee.

Mother: Is he downstairs?

Disciple: Yes.

Mother: What does he do? Does he study?

Disciple: Perhaps he does so now and then.

Mother: Will he not go to Belur Math?

Disciple: No. He has no such desire.

Mother: Please persuade him to go there.

Disciple: I have talked much with him about it. You might ask him to go to the Math and stay there for a few days at least.

Mother: My child, I have also asked him many times to do so, but he does not listen to me. He does not like to go there lest others should tease him about it. Sarat (Swami Saradananda) said to me about him, 'Should he not pay some heed to what Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) or we ask him to do? Let him stay at the Math at least for a few days and thus respect the wishes of Maharaj.' That is right. Let him go to Puri with Rakhal and spend a few days there. Where will he live alone? Where will he get his food?

Disciple: Getting food is not an important thing; he can live on alms. But he should have gone to the Belur Math in order to obey Swami Brahmananda and other elders.

Mother: Yes, that is true. He should have obeyed the command of the superior. The thing is, he does not want to work. Can one keep his mind in a good state without work? Can one meditate for twentyfour hours of the day? Therefore one should be engaged in some kind of activity or other; that keeps the mind in right condition. How are you getting along with your work?

Disciple: So, so.

Mother: You told me that you were going to Rameswaram. You have not gone there. You have done well. There is so much trouble in taking a trip, in changing trains, and so forth.

Disciple: Sarat Maharaj tried to arrange it for me, but where could he get so much money? The responsibility for the money would have fallen on the shoulders of Sasi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) if I had started on this pilgrimage.

Mother: That is true.

The next day the Holy Mother was preparing betel-leaf in the room adjacent to the Shrine. It was about eleven o'clock. I went upstairs. The Mother, referring to the devotee mentioned above, said, "Has he gone away?"

Disciple: Yes. He will spend today and perhaps tomorrow also in the house of Kanjilal. Sarat Maharaj said, 'If he has gone away out of pique, then he will go from bad to worse from day to day, but if he has gone away from a sense of shame

*Swami Sadanananda: a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

then through the grace of the Master his mind may take a better turn.'

Mother: What is the matter with him? He is, after all, a man and not a woman. All can destroy, but who can build up? All can scold and tease, but how many can suggest the way to make one better? Weakness is inherent in all.

Disciple: Sarat Maharaj said, 'It is possible for a highly developed soul to live alone, but a man with impure mind falls down if he tries to live by himself.'

Mother: What is there to be afraid of? The Master will protect. Are there not many monks who live alone?

Disciple: Even Hriday at last had to go away from the company of the Master.

Mother: But can anyone always enjoy a good thing?

Disciple: He tortured the Master very much and scolded him. Is that not true?

Mother: Would not one who nursed the Master and served him with such attention scold him a little? He who takes care of a man always does so.

Disciple: He also (referring to the monk mentioned above) served you so greatly and alas, such is his fate.

Mother: Why should it not be so without discipline? Otherwise how can one expect to improve himself?

IS HINDU PHILOSOPHY LIVING?

By Jean Herbert

[Monsieur Jean Herbert is a distinguished author and journalist of France. What follows is a slightly abridged translation of a lecture delivered by him in Paris. From a first-hand study of the tendencies in modern Hindu Philosophy mainly as indicated by the lives and works of some of the outstanding religious personalities of the present generation, he draws the conclusion that Hindu Philosophy is vigorously alive even at the present day, making unique contributions towards the evolution of a harmonious and spiritual humanity. We tender our sincere thanks to Mr. P. Seshadri Iyer, B.A., M.L., for this translation from the original.]

PHILOSOPHY IN THE EAST AND THE WEST

THERE is often a tendency to believe that Hindu Philosophy has come to a standstill a few centuries ago, that it has crystallized and that it has produced nothing since. This is an idea very current among the great savants who sufficiently know Sanskrit for plunging themselves into the study of the texts, infinitely precious from all points of view—the Vedas and the Upanishads.

But this notion is almost as naive as the thought that Descartes and Kant are the last European Philosophers and that after them we have had no original thinkers. In fact, India, from the philosophical viewpoint, is not dead. It lives with an infinitely intense life. This does not mean that modern Hindu Philosophy refuses to go to the deep roots of classical Hindu Philosophy. We ourselves have inherited most of the conceptions of Greek Philosophy and the Renaissance.

When we speak of oriental questions, we are obliged to use our current scientific and philosophic vocabulary, which is derived from Greek and Latin and which has consequently given to all words associations of ideas essentially related to Latin and Greek thought. When we turn to India, we cannot, of course, use these terms of Greek or Latin origin except as approximations, and it is evident that they cannot bear the same sense as they have in the philosophy of the ancient Greeks.

We in the West are accustomed to understand by philosophy a system of ideas scaffolded in the abstract, an intellectual construction made by thinkers of genius, more or less great, who set up hypothesis, group suppositions and erect systems more or less consistent.

In India, on the contrary, the notion of Philosophy is quite different. A philosophy is a conception which one has of life, not because one has read of it in such and such a book or one has heard another speak about it, but because one has an internal conviction thereof, which guides his life in details as well as in broad outlines and which one seeks at the same time progressively and continually to verify by experiences of the same nature as those on which modern savants establish their propositions. The conception of philosophy, according to the Hindus, resembles more the conception of chemistry or of physics entertained by a modern chemist or physicist than the idea of philosophy as understood by the great philosophers of the West. Hindu philosophy is still full of life and continues to produce rich fruits, at the same time preserving intact the principles

of classical Indian philosophy. I do not wish to give an exposition of these classical Indian principles nor to enumerate them, but I would like to take up some of those, which seem to me essentially characteristic and which we find again in modern Hindu conceptions.

There is for instance the notion of reincarnation, the fact that a soul on leaving the body, does not disappear or pass away with it, but uses (or reconstructs, according to the philosophic conception) another body to serve as its vehicle to continue its evolution. This idea is as rooted among the Hindus as the idea of life after death among the Christians.

Then there is the notion of cycles, that is to say, that creation is not the bringing forth of something out of nothing by the creator; but there are certain periods when the universe, creation, God or Brahman, (you may call it as you will) manifests, develops, blossoms and differentiates, and other periods when it goes back to the one, the undifferentiated, the absolute. It is this idea which in India takes the place of the notion of creation among us.

Another characteristic is the idea of the Guru which teaches that knowledge, in the most profound sense of the word, cannot be acquired from books, but can be got only from one, who has by his personal experience arrived at the knowledge of that which he teaches.

There is also another important point which is brought into relief, especially during this age, by the great Sri Ramakrishna. It is the idea of the unity of the goal and the multiplicity of the ways. The goal for all Hindus is continuous

spiritual development towards a state where men shall not any more be slaves to birth and death—a state of union with the Divine, the Absolute. It is this which all Hindus seek ; and they hold that this goal can be attained by different ways—different Yogas; the way of devotion, the way of disinterested work, the way of philosophy, the way of meditation and many others. Each of these totally different and often contradictory ways leads to the same goal. The Soul, according to the Hindus, is eternal, unchangeable and pure—All-existence, All-knowledge and All-bliss. Our ignorance alone prevents us from knowing it. Our progress along any one of these ways with the aid of the Guru invariably tends to tear the veil of ignorance.

These are some of the characteristic traits (the enumeration of these Hindu ideas is very incomplete), and these thoughts we find again in all the great modern thinkers.

MODERN HINDU PHILOSOPHY

What then do we mean by modern Hindu Philosophy? Well, it is that which has been produced in India not very long ago, say a century ago if you please, a phenomenon, grave and important. India, which had lived isolated from the West spiritually and intellectually, has suddenly met the West. You may say that there were many Hindus who had already visited Europe and many Europeans who had gone to India. But the Europeans who went there were mostly merchants representing machinery and factories. There were also missionaries and administrators who had above all policed the country

and collected the taxes. They were men, no doubt, excellent in their sphere; but the Hindus in general did not regard them as very strongly developed on the spiritual side. They often regarded them with some scorn.

Thus between the great thinkers of India on the one side and the representatives of Western school of thought on the other, there had not been much fruitful contact, at least so far as the Hindus were concerned. There had not been any gain except for the Europeans who had reaped a rich harvest by which the West has profited much. The Theosophical Society played an important part here because it taught us many things which we had not then known on the practical philosophy of India. Our orientalists and some of our philosophers in Europe beginning with Schopenhauer have very largely profited by the study of Indian Philosophy. But India had not profited by the spiritual or intellectual contact with the West. For the last hundred years, the great thinkers of the West have approached India and have known to respect the Hindus. The latter have said with much surprise: "But then all the Europeans are not soldiers, administrators or representatives of commerce, exclusively pre-occupied with their petty material interests! They also can interest themselves in spiritual things!"

Now the Hindus are a people with a very large heart. When they understood that we of the West were also engaged in spiritual enquiries, they thought that there may possibly be some things to learn of us, and thus was established a fruitful exchange

of ideas between the thinkers of the East and the West. I use the word thinkers for want of a better one; but I have been much criticized in India for employing the term since the Hindus do not take much account of people who work with their intellect alone as the thinkers among us often do. For the Hindus, intellect, thought and reasoning are not ends but only instruments just as our material body which we use and which is indispensable for us. Our intelligence is equally indispensable as a means, but it is not the goal.

THREE TYPES OF INDIAN THINKERS

Thus was established a contact between the great minds of the East and those among us who resemble them. Certain reactions resulted from this contact. You will permit me to employ a classification very rough and consequently somewhat false. We can classify the great Hindus of our age into three categories. There are first those who completely stand aloof from the thought of the West, who value the traditions and the culture of their own race and believe that nothing useful from the standpoint of spiritual development can be brought from the West to the East. They also think that they have the perfect, sufficient and absolute methods to which any addition will not only be superfluous but also dangerous. We may call them, if you please, the 'traditionalists'.

On the contrary, others seeing the immense material power at our disposal and the discoveries incredible to them, which our science and technique have made possible, admire us and say: "The West is right and we are wrong. We are going on

a wrong path. Hence we shall not arrive at anything. These people have sent a handful of soldiers who have conquered a people comprising many thousands. We can do nothing but follow their path." These Hindus have launched themselves into the attempt of following us.

A third group has thought: "We have conceptions, traditions and a culture, of which we know the value because we have tested them; but the West has also certain things which are very valuable. Is it necessary to reject the one for the other? Can we not combine the two?" As a consequence, certain attempts, more or less important, more or less successful, were begun to bring about a synthesis between the conceptions and the acquisitions of the East and those of the West. It is evidently this last group which will be most interesting to us and with which I shall deal at length.

Let us first consider the group of traditionalists, the great sages, some of whom are considered by the Hindus as the Living Free, that is, persons who have reached the end of spiritual development. There are people in this group who prove by their life (because an intellectual opinion has no great value among the Hindus if it cannot be verified in life) that the ancient Yogas, the ancient systems taught by the Vedas, are as efficacious now as they were and will be, and that there is no need to add or subtract anything whatever.

These people specialise themselves; some follow the way of Karmayoga (Yoga of disinterested work), others that of Bhaktiyoga (Yoga of love), and yet others that of Jnanayoga

(Yoga of knowledge) or Rajayoga (way of asceticism). All of them follow strictly and rigorously the discipline taught by the ancient masters. They practise these up to the time when they can come back to tell us: "In the same way as the ancient sages of India, I have made the attempt and followed the path, and I can assure you that this way leads to the same goal, because I have reached it." These are the great Gurus who evidently, and above all, attract the Hindus, the people with traditions and antecedents; but they interest the Europeans also. I have had the occasion to visit one or two groups of disciples gathered around their Guru, and I have had the joy of meeting a certain number of Europeans including Frenchmen who have profited largely by their teachings and feel that they have found their way.

These traditionalist Gurus are of course the most difficult for us to discover, because according to the good tradition of India, they hide themselves and intend that their disciples should be prepared to seek them laboriously before discovering them and to recognise them when they find them out. There are one or two among them, now sufficiently known through some Western intermediaries either because they have themselves written books or articles in English, or because their European disciples having worked with them, have written at length about them.

I may cite the instance of a man called Sri Ramana Maharshi, a pure philosopher who has reached by knowledge of his intellect alone (used as an instrument and not as a goal) to that stage which is considered the

end of spiritual evolution. The Maharshi denies his having discovered anything. He tells us simply; "There exists a well-known system through which people have passed before me and I have done nothing except that I have followed the same path and arrived at the same result."

Another, less known and more difficult of access to us, because he is more traditionalistic, is Swami Ramadas. The method which he has employed, the classical method of India, is to choose, as is the case in all the Yogas, a Divinity, an aspect of the Divinity—perhaps you know that all the innumerable Gods of the Hindu Pantheon are but the aspects of the Divinity—and repeat incessantly His name and to impress in this way not only on the intellect, but on the whole body, on the thoughts, on the sentiments, etc., the ideal which corresponds to that aspect of the Divinity, and, according to the power with which he concentrates on that ideal, to arrive at a stage when he becomes one with the ideal. It is this which Swami Ramadas has done for many years.

Therefore, the Vedas and the Upanishads are not merely old dusty volumes to be piled up in shelves, books which are to be placed at the disposal of the Sanscritists alone; there are in these old texts, great laws, often very detailed, of spiritual development, and even in our age these methods remain as practical as ever. My having spent two or three days with one of these masters has made a veritable revelation to me because all these texts have become living. Formerly, they were only very respectable writings before which I bowed myself with much veneration,

but I have now known that these Vedantic conceptions have a real value even in these days.

The second group, which I have arbitrarily isolated, consists of those who admire occidental thought and have been conquered by the technique of the West. But they have not reached much further than we. Some who belong to this group have understood the art of starting great industrial establishments or making sensational discoveries in certain Sciences. I have particularly in mind one of the great sons of India who passed away not long ago. I mean Sir Jagadis Bose, the great master of a new Science, the psychology of Vegetables, or the study of certain processes which were believed till then to be peculiar to animals but which he discovered under another aspect in the vegetable Kingdom. These scientists of India bring to our technique a preparation different from ours. They have not inherited the same ideas as we. They have a mind more open than ours to certain ways which we have not yet explored. They have also another mental discipline, a power of concentration which they acquire more easily than we do; and here, though we have not any great thing to learn from them, they can at least teach us to place ourselves at certain new angles of vision and indicate certain methods of work which may be useful to us. There are, alas! others in this group who plunge themselves headlong into our imperialist conceptions and make of politics a sort of divinity as we ourselves are tempted to make of it here, nationally and internationally. There are also those who have seen the prodigious success of publicity in

the West and who seek the same for the methods of Yoga, according to the principle which we seem to have admitted now, that the goods which sell most are not the best but are rather those to which the greatest advertisement has been given. The best waste away in silence.

The remaining part of my discourse I devote to treat about that class of persons who seem to me to be the most interesting, those who have attempted, I shall not say to construct a bridge between the East and the West, but, to make a sort of synthesis between our acquisitions and theirs. Among these I wish particularly to take up two who seem to me to occupy a prominent place, at all events a very important position. They are Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo who are, we may say, our contemporaries, because the first passed away less than forty years ago and the second is still living.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GREAT WORK

Let us see what the salient points of their teachings are. You all know of Swami Vivekananda through the grand biography composed by Romain Rolland. He was a Hindu monk, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna whom almost the whole of India regards as an incarnation of the Divinity like all the incarnations known to history. He had therefore received the purest and the highest teaching. Sri Ramakrishna had seen in Swami Vivekananda one of his two or three chosen disciples, and he had transmitted to him all that he knew of the greatest and of the most divine. Swami Vivekananda himself recounts that there was around Sri Ramakrishna a small circle of disciples to

whom he taught monism, the highest philosophic conception which has ever existed in India, and a wider circle to whom the master taught dualism. Swami Vivekananda could thus draw from the truest and the deepest sources. You may tell me that in this there was no difference between him and many other Hindus. It is true. But there is this difference, that before he had even known Sri Ramakrishna, he was a student of a college affiliated to the University of Calcutta and possessed a very profound knowledge of our sciences, our literature and our mentality. He had pursued his studies in English which he knew as well as his own mother-tongue. He could speak directly with the Europeans, which was not the case with the majority of the great Hindu sages who were obliged to have recourse to the medium of an interpreter. Now, this impossibility of communicating directly is especially grave since there are not in the several European languages, words, which exactly correspond to certain terms used in India so that a translation completely perverts the thought.

On the contrary, Swami Vivekananda could speak directly, on equal terms with all the Westerners. He even knew French and was at Paris to deliver an address at the Congress of the History of Religions which was held on the occasion of the Exhibition of 1900. Thus he sought a direct and personal contact with the men belonging to our race. He is, if not the first, at least one of the first among the Hindus who had a profound personal experience of India and its spiritual traditions and also at the same time a direct knowledge of our conceptions, our technique, our

science and our mode of thinking, reasoning and understanding; he was thus one of the first who could directly bring to us the fruits of the spiritual quest of India.

Until then, we had known them either through those who, coming from India, had heard others speak of these researches without having practised them and hence had no authority, or through the orientalists, who were valuable scholars, no doubt, but who had studied only the exterior. In the exclusive effort made by them for understanding the style, they had not generally gone beyond the expression and had often neglected even the foundation of the discipline, in their all-absorbing devotion to form.

Swami Vivekananda brought us, for the first time directly, without any intermediary, the profound thought and the spiritual researches of India. He embarked one fine day for America and, a little after, addressed, when he was yet completely unknown, the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. According to the reports preserved of that memorable meeting, he spoke to an assembly of five or six thousand strangers, without even knowing what he was to speak at the moment he began his address, and aroused the enthusiasm of that gathering. He was certainly one of the most impressive figures at the Parliament of Religions and has left a mark in the history of the religions and spiritual development of the West.

After that first contact, Swami Vivekananda travelled much and stayed in for a long time in the United States and Europe. He delivered many lectures before Western

audiences, in which he gave a direct exposition of what he knew thoroughly and which he could explain in a style and a form of thought we could understand.

Swami Vivekananda wrote very little, but fortunately, one of his faithful English disciples, a stenographer, has recorded a great number of his lectures. The complete text of his works in English is extant and we have begun to publish translations of many of them in French. He has given us the authentic conceptions of the great Hindu masters expressed in a way very comprehensible to us. To the West he has brought the messages of Hindu thought; but his mission was twofold. He saw what the West lacked and gave us the high spiritual conceptions of India. On the other hand he noticed what his country stood in need of and carried there everything which could remedy the poverty of India so that people may not die of hunger but may live under more favourable material conditions for practising better the spiritual discipline.

Thus his work was twofold, he brought to us what he thought we stood in need of, and he carried to India that which he thought India needed. What he sought was less a synthesis, I believe, than an exchange and a renovation. His position is very high in the West as well as in the East. Many important modern movements have been started through his inspiration.

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONTRIBUTION

Another great master whose name I have mentioned early and who belongs to the same category of persons who have imbibed from both cultures,

is Sri Aurobindo. He lives near Madras, at Pondicherry. He has also given a very original teaching, drawn from the great traditions of India, to which he has added something new. He presents the strange phenomenon of having been educated almost exclusively in the West. He pursued all his studies in England; he prepared for the most difficult competitive examinations under the English administration and beat all past records in certain branches such as Greek and Latin. He is a man who commands an English style as pure as that of the best Englishmen of letters in our days. He knows French very well. He reads Goethe and Dante in the original. Consequently he possesses an immense European culture which very few among us can boast of. After passing his examinations, he gave up all that the West could offer him to return to his own motherland.

There he has plunged himself in a profound study of the great schools of thought in India, in the ancient texts, in the commentaries, in the conceptions which his contemporaries have given. He has written commentaries on the most venerable Hindu texts, on the Rig Veda, the Bhagavad Gita, the Isha Upanishad and on many others. They are authorities among his disciples as also among persons who keep aloof from a great part of his teachings. He wields high authority in India through his knowledge and interpretation of the classical Sanskrit texts.

Following the great lines traced by Swami Vivekananda whose works he knows perfectly, Sri Aurobindo has sought a synthesis. He himself says: "The orient has preserved and per-

fects the instrument of spiritual research which we have in India. For that purpose it has had, consciously or not, to renounce scientific and material development for the enriching and increase of power it had to acquire in other directions. On the other side, the West has cultivated scientific, technical, material and social researches which conduced to a raising of the level of life in the different strata of the population; it has made great scientific discoveries, marvellous inventions in all domains, at the cost, doubtless, of spiritual research." The fact that in the West we are orientated almost exclusively to material research, has given us conspicuous success in that; if we had devoted ourselves to spiritual preoccupations, we might not perhaps have come to the marvellous results we can boast of now. But Sri Aurobindo thinks that we have now reached a point where the two branches of researches should unite. From the scientific view-point, for example, it is more than curious to note that the latest discoveries of modern physics or chemistry are exactly the same as those we find in the most ancient Vedic texts: the principles of the conservation of matter and the conservation of energy; in biology, the principle of the evolution of the species; and lastly that other principle which the Western sciences seem to tend to at the present day—the unity of matter and energy, we may almost say, their interchangeability. It is extremely interesting to note that these conceptions are found exactly in the Vedas also.

The Hindus formerly thought that absolute passivity and the most rigorous asceticism are the necessary ele-

ments of spiritual progress; on the contrary they are inclined to consider at the present time that religion is not for empty stomachs and that for meditating, reflecting and seeking to develop even spiritually one should not be haunted by the spectre of famine.

CONCLUSION

There are yet many other points of view in which we can observe the possibility of rapprochement. For instance, we had thought, since the industrial revolution of the 18th century, that science and religion, in the sense in which we use the word religion in the West, are quite incompatible and that a savant cannot be a religious man and vice versa. We now find ourselves before a very great technical development, before formidable and marvellous inventions and before machines which we do not know how to utilise for our good. All these astonishing apparatuses which we have manufactured serve us only for massacring or, in any case, for doing evil to one another. If this is the way in which they serve us, it is not perhaps so desirable to make these inventions. There reigns in the West a very profound feeling of inquietude. We question ourselves whether we are not being crushed by that material civilisation of which we were so proud some twenty or thirty years ago, and in which alone we saw the door to the salvation of humanity. Many ask whether we should not truly learn from elsewhere how we should utilise these instruments we have invented. In all these fields we find the possibilities of rapprochement. There is not such a definite opposition as there was fifty

years ago, and we no more think with Kipling that East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet. All are convinced that the time has come when we can make a grand synthesis from which a type of men, who preserve the mind of the East and the means of action of the West, may emerge. It is only later on that we can judge about this. But I believe that this attempt, which is analogous to the efforts made in the

West and of which I have not spoken here is of extreme interest to us.*

This is an attempt in which we cannot but interest ourselves and which, by continuing the great work begun by Swami Vivekananda and others, will lead us to results whose magnitude it is not yet possible to estimate.

I hope that by these few indications I have shown you that it is not presumptuous to speak of Hindu philosophy as a living thing.

ATTUNEMENT WITH THE ONE

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, which will appear as a serial in the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time. This is the fifth instalment.]

I

MOST people cannot begin their spiritual practices (Sadhana) with a conception of the formless aspect of the Divine. Even the Formless Divine with attributes cannot be adopted by the great many although they may think they can do it. But first they must find out this fact for themselves. Then only can proper instruction be given to them, not before. Very often we find it impossible to think of the Divine as such. So it is proper to think of all the great Incarnations of God, the great Prophets of mankind. To worship God in Spirit and in Truth

is all very well, but how to do it? If we cannot do it, it becomes a meaningless phrase, and nothing but that.

Mere concentration without strict ethical culture is not enough. We must learn to purify our feelings and to attain a sense of vastness, of the Infinite pervading everything. We possess only our small, limited, impure, individual consciousness; but they, the Great Ones, possess Infinite Consciousness. They rise out of the ocean; but the ocean never becomes limited to the wave-form. It is the wave that merges itself into the ocean, that becomes one with it, that

*For example: In philosophy, Emerson and Thoreau, in religion the numerous modern sects who have profoundly imbibed the wisdom of India, without having the courage to avow when they wish

to preserve a Christian attitude. The increasing number of citations from the great Hindu thinkers which are found in the great occidental works which treat of the most diverse subjects is revealing.

comes to have the ocean-consciousness.

"Lord, when I am one with Thee, it is not that Thou becomest myself, but it is I who am lost in Thee."

The wave becomes one with the ocean, loses its wave-consciousness, its wave-form, not that the ocean identifies itself with the wave or the wave-consciousness. This would be a very wrong idea and would lead to erroneous conclusions. The part becomes merged in the whole, never can the whole be identified with the part. Individual consciousness expands itself into Universal Consciousness; but Universal Consciousness can never become individual consciousness. This is the meaning of 'Thou art THAT' or 'I am Brahman'. This is the reply to all those who say, 'How can God become man?' God is never limited, and the Incarnation is only a manifestation, never the whole of God. We are just like small waves and tiny ripples that are merged in the ocean, and it is very difficult for us even to have this full wave-consciousness. We are like bubbles, at the most a very small wave; but the Great Incarnations are mountain-high waves, always fully conscious of their true nature and consciously in touch with the ocean. What happens if you try to take a small bubble out of the water? The bubble only bursts, for no bubble can ever exist by itself without this ocean-background; but the trouble is that we are not conscious of it. We believe ourselves to be separate entities, separate from the ocean and separate from each other, and then all other mistakes follow as a matter of course and cannot be avoided.

II

Although we take our limited existence to be real, we find, when we dive deep into the matter, that it is unreal. The conception of its reality is wholly due to ignorance, to the fact of the bubble imagining itself to be independent of the ocean. Through this we come to cherish so many petty, undignified conceptions. When we get rid of the Upadhis (limiting adjuncts), we rise above all such illusory and misleading conceptions and ideas and become dignified, self-conscious beings. (Self-conscious is used in a higher metaphysical sense.)

Christ does not mean a personality; but a state of absolute existence. Buddha does not mean a personality; but a state of absolute existence. Theirs is always the Saviour's consciousness, the Infinite Consciousness—not the limited individualised one that we possess. Ours is impure, limited consciousness: theirs is unlimited consciousness.

The personality can be merged in the Principle; but the whole Principle can never be identified with the personality. As Substance it is all one and the same—the One Undivided, Indivisible, Eternal, Unchanging Consciousness—but it cannot be denied that there is something which is not that during the time of our clouded, individualised state. This something other than the one Substance creates all this differentiation.

Each one of us has raised a thought-world round himself, and it is that which individualises us all.

Wherefrom did this impulse come? Wherefore did it come? What was our condition before this individualised form came into existence?

Wherefore does this body and all these diverse and manifold thought-forms exist? Why does the Formless assume forms? It is all indescribable. When we study the lives of the Great Ones, we find, however, that their consciousness is the Infinite Consciousness beyond all limitation; and not the limited one, although they appear in a limited form.

The moment this individualised state is brought about, passions and desires crop up and try to get sway over us. If passions, desires, body-consciousness and all the rest really belonged to our essential nature, we could never rid ourselves of them, however hard we might try to do so. But fortunately this is not the case. They are merely our second nature.

III

The touch of the Great Ones brings to us also Universal Consciousness; it bursts the bonds of this limited existence by bringing in new light and a deeper kind of awareness that lies hidden in all of us.

By lifting ourselves consciously to the plane of their thoughts, we get rid of all these wrong and deep-rooted notions of being men and women, i.e., limited beings, drop the limiting adjuncts and get a new and purer sense of existence. Sometimes through the intensity of our feeling we can give such a stimulus to the Cosmic Mind that form arises out of the Cosmic Mind, or if the form does not arise, at least the Cosmic idea does so to show us the way.

If you connect your light with the electric current of a power-station you get plenty of light. The dynamo gives all the necessary current;

but you must connect your wire with that of the dynamo.

By coming into touch with the Great Ones we also are magnetised, as it were, but we must first become attuned. Our attempts at meditation are for polarising our mind. When the contact is established the current flows automatically. So you must make yourselves good conductors. Then the current will flow in a natural and unbroken way. We do not give a stimulus to something that is non-existing, but to something that is at all times, and then as the result of that stimulus something comes up to the conscious plane.

If you go and throw a stone into the water, you see the reaction, but you do not create the water for all that. There is something other than ourselves, something that is more creative than ourselves. So, in a way, prayer becomes something like a very big stone thrown into the water. The water is there, but the stone gives the stimulus to it; and then the reaction follows as a matter of course.

We should develop great intensity in ourselves. Intensity is one of the principal factors in the life of the aspirant. Real spiritual life actually begins with a glimpse of the Truth and not before. It begins when I see at least the reflection of the sun. Before that there can never be any real beginning of spiritual life. Unless we ourselves have at least some glimpse of the Divine, we are all atheists, whatever we may think ourselves to be, or whatever we may call ourselves. Only that person who has had a glimpse of the Divine is not an atheist, all others are atheists.

IV

In the beginning you have to accept a certain proposition which is to be verified by yourself afterwards. Spiritual life is but a constant checking and finding out how far one has realised the truth of the proposition with which one has started, and everything else is but a preparation for it, a preliminary training to make the body and the mind fit; and for that reason all the preliminary conditions and purificatory disciplines have to be gone through and fulfilled before real spiritual life can be taken up.

The mind is just like a mirror. We have allowed it to be hidden under layers and layers of cobwebs and dirt. So there is no reflection. Remove all these layers of dirt and cobwebs, then you will see the picture.

Now you must lead as conscious and as pure a life, physically and mentally, trying as far as possible to erase all the old impressions and bringing in better ideas and better pictures. And this is always a very troublesome and very slow process; but each aspirant has to pass through it.

If an impure mind comes in touch with something holy, there is no reflection. So spiritual life is a cleaning process to make the mind a good reflector of the higher things.

Set fire to all the desires lurking in the mind and then cleanse the mind with the ashes that are formed thereby. And when the mind becomes clean,

then only it takes on any colour. First the dirty cloth must be sent to the laundry, and then afterwards you dye it. When it has become perfectly clean, it will take on any colour beautifully.

So this purifying process must be gone through by everybody without any exception. There is no comfortable high-road leading to salvation. We must first attune our mind to the Truth. The body is to be attuned, polarised, in a certain way. The mind must be attuned, polarised, in a certain way, and unless this condition is fulfilled, at least to a great extent, no contact can be brought about.

The Infinite can never be expressed in terms of the finite. It can only be hinted at.

"Only a part of this Infinite is manifested as what we call the Cosmic Universe."

All the Great Souls rise out of the Cosmic mind of which our individual minds are parts.

Because we bubbles find it impossible to come in touch with the ocean, we want to come in touch with the mighty waves.

By loving them with great intensity, with our whole heart, we come to love their ideas. Until we reach realisation, there should be great intellectual study of the lives of the Great Ones and cultivation of great love for them. This unconsciously colours our mind more and more and takes us finally to the goal.

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICAN LIFE

By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh

[Bhai Manilal C. Parekh is a well-known religious preacher and author. For the past twenty-five years he has been a teacher of religion, first as a missionary of Brahmo Samaj, next as one of the Christian Church and afterwards as an independent teacher of Bhagavata Dharma. The present essay gives a vivid and interesting picture of American life which he had the opportunity of studying directly during his stay in that country. While Bhai Manilal is warmly appreciative of the perfections which the American civilization exhibits in some of its expressions, he criticizes with becoming restraint and judiciousness the harmful tendencies that meet the eyes of even a casual observer of American life.]

NEW VISITOR'S FIRST IMPRESSION

MOST Hindus who go to the United States land first in New York. It is no wonder, then, that the contrast between America and India should strike them to start with, and it is a contrast as keen as could be. Life in India is on the whole rural, and the few cities that we have are not entirely free from the atmosphere of village life that generally prevails over the country, and consequently a city like New York would strike a Hindu as a characteristic embodiment of Western or rather American civilization. The colossal magnitude of this city together with all its mechanical and other complexities of life would naturally frighten him as it often does even the people of Europe, and he would start with prejudice against American life and civilization.

A great deal depends thus on the first impression a traveller has of a country as to how it appears to him. I saw both Chicago and New York after a stay of nearly eight months in the United States, and even then the feeling that was aroused in my mind when I saw the central part of Chicago for the first time, was one of

uncanniness. Its immense structures together with the huge traffic that is going on there at all hours of the day still haunt my memory as something far from human, and I cannot reconcile myself with it even now at this distance of time and place. This feeling was heightened in New York, and I always thought of it as not a city but a monstrosity. I must say, however, that I enjoyed my stay in both these cities as I did my visit all the time I was in the United States, but things in both these cities were on too big a scale for me to be happy in, especially if I had to live there long.

On the other hand I was very happy in my first impression of this great country. I came to California which, of all States, is the most like India, and my acquaintance with American life and civilization began with what I saw in the small University town of Berkeley. I had a long voyage of nearly six weeks, during most of which I saw a good deal of the Chinese and the Japanese on the various boats I came by and also in what little time I spent in both China and Japan. What I saw of these people had aroused in me only feelings of keen contrast, because the Chinese

and the Japanese, in spite of the fact that they are orientals, have a civilization which is very different from ours. At any rate the barriers of race and language were too evident to be overlooked and to be easily crossed. One naturally felt all the time, therefore, that he was moving in an atmosphere which was truly foreign.

The very reverse was the case when I landed in San Francisco. I at once felt the common bond of language through my knowledge of English, and I felt more fully at home than I had done since I left Bombay. There was the racial kinship too between myself and the people amongst whom I had now come, and in comparison with the Chinese and the Japanese, the Americans looked like cousins parted from us only the other day. I may say here in passing that being light in colour I was rarely, if ever, taken during my stay of nearly fourteen months to be a stranger, and this greatly added to the happiness of my visit. Thus for several days at first I myself was surprised at the great similarity of life and manners and even faces of the people that I found in this far country of the Western World to those in India—a thing quite unusual and different from what I had expected.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF AMERICAN LIFE

(a) *The Great Wealth*

The special features of Western or rather American life, however, became clearer to me as time went. The first and perhaps the foremost of these was the phenomenal prosperity of the American people. Evidences of it are found everywhere and in everything

that America has or does. Even in this small town of Berkeley I was struck by this feature of American life from the very first, and although since then I saw something of the poorer side of life in the United States, the feeling still remains with me that the prosperity of this country far surpasses anything one sees anywhere else. It is inconceivably great, and it can be realised only when one sees it. Life in this country is lived on a larger and more magnificent scale than in any other land. Because of this the villages in this country have the character of towns, towns that of cities and these last of super-cities. Houses, school-buildings, shops, theatres and places of amusement, churches and roads, not to speak of sky-scrapers and such other buildings of a Cyclopean character which one finds everywhere in such abundance, are more spacious and comfortable than anywhere else. For the first time in the history of the World, the vastness of Nature has been matched by the power and effort of man, and life is made more easy and comfortable for millions of people than it has ever been in the past.

The standard of life here is so high that every visitor is naturally struck by it. At the first glance one can see that the people here eat and dress better, that their houses have finer furnitures and the shops finer goods than among corresponding classes and circumstances in any other country. For weeks, after I stepped on the shores of this land, I was amazed at the extraordinary wealth and prosperity, wealth and luxury, marks of which I found everywhere. I saw that what were luxuries, and often

rare luxuries, in other countries were necessities and even bare necessities here. I had read a great deal about this wealth of the American people, but the reality that I saw far surpassed anything I had imagined. Often I wondered how such things were possible in this unfortunate world of ours. Sometimes I was pained, without being in the least jealous, at the sight of this great luxury and wealth enjoyed by millions of people, while millions elsewhere, and especially in India, had to live under conditions of extreme poverty and penury. Hitherto I had taken such misery as I had known in India as inevitable in human life, and it came to me as a welcome surprise to learn from the example of the United States that it need not be so.

I was often reminded, however, of the experience that Emerson had in the year 1841 when he went to England. Nearly a century back this sage and prophet of the United States said in regard to the wealth and prosperity of England that it was an argument for atheism. If Emerson had this kind of feeling then, how much more would a Hindu in the year 1930 feel the same way in view of the immensely greater wealth of the States? The fact is that the American philosophy of life is entirely different from that of India. No two countries afford a greater contrast in this matter than these. Of all people, the Hindu has believed in the Gospel of Poverty, whereas the American believes more than any one else perhaps in that of Prosperity. Both these views are extreme, and the full truth does not lie with either of them. I had until now fondly imagined that the Hindu

view of life was the only true one, but I am glad to say that what I saw of the life of the American people has converted me to the belief that both these views of life are mutually complementary, and a wholesome synthesis of the two is what the world needs. It is true perhaps that both America and India can render each other much help in offering valuable correctives to their extreme tendencies.

(b) *Sanitation*

Allied very closely to this phenomenal prosperity of the American people, if not an integral part of it, is the sanitation of this country. It is not that the United States is easily the first in this matter, it is simply perfect. One is often tempted to feel that the immense mechanical development of this country is well worth all the trouble for making this sanitation alone possible, if for nothing else. If cleanliness is next to Godliness, then be sure the American people are nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than any other. They themselves, however, will be the first to deny this last proposition, but that does not alter the fact that the people here live in a present paradise of their own so far as sanitation is concerned. Cleanliness, personal, domestic and civic, is the rule, and the olfactory organ and the eyes of the people are trained better, so far as this side of life is concerned, than elsewhere. The exception in the matter of civic sanitation that I found was Chicago, where dirty papers and even rubbish of all kinds were flying about in many parts of the city. All this gave an appearance to the city which was jarringly discordant with

the experience I had of the rest of the land.

(c) *Dignity of Labour*

What I may call the American love for work is another characteristic of the people that impresses a foreign visitor. Dignity of labour has been raised to a virtue here as perhaps nowhere else. It is a national virtue and is shared even by Rockefellers and Fords. It does one good especially when he comes from old countries such as India, China, etc., to see nearly half of the huge student population of this land engage itself eagerly in all kinds of work and manual labour to pay for their education. This may partly explain the lack of culture of the educated people in the United States so often commented upon especially by the European tourists, but it is well worth remembering that it is just this which has prevented the growth of snobbery and parasitism which are so common in other countries. Dignity of labour is an essential part of all true culture as is being increasingly recognised to-day, and this is one of the lessons that the United States has been teaching the world for a century. Its immense success has set a seal to the recognition of this dignity as nothing else could have done, and in consequence the stature of entire mankind has risen. It was with welcome surprise that I came across several instances of young men with degrees and boys of tender age belonging to good middle class families earning in their vacations money enough to pay for their education by manual labour, and that too, at times, of the roughest kind. A thing like

this is impossible even to-day in most countries.

This attitude towards labour and work has contributed not only towards the economic development of the land but has been of immense benefit mentally and morally also. The educated man here is not the less of a man on this account but rather more, and the ordinary labourer has a love for education, which is more or less absent in men of the corresponding class in other lands. There is no such gulf here between the high and the low in culture as is inevitable in a society where the old ideals prevail and where manual labour is considered mean. In addition to this, the greater health and fitness and beauty of person which an average American, both man and woman, enjoys in comparison with others, have this love for work and labour as one of the causes. It is a great asset to the country that its pioneering character is still retained in this as in many other things.

(d) *Democracy*

Democracy is perhaps the central feature of American life. This country is a real melting pot of many kinds of distinctions. Here are gathered together people belonging to most of the races and representing many faiths. The only parallel to this in this matter is India, where different races and people have poured in from the earliest times down till our times. Those, therefore, are the only countries which have had to face the race-problem on a large scale. India's solution was the Caste-system which originally meant division along the lines of colour. This system, in spite of all the defects that are rightly or

wrongly attributed to it, has rendered a real service to India and has given its civilization a peculiar character. So remarkable have been the results of this system that, until very recent times, many of the important observers, who came from the West ever since India came in close contact with Europe some four centuries back, were struck by it, and it was usual for them to speak of it with admiration. Abbe du Bois, a Roman Catholic Missionary, in his well-known book "Hindu Customs, Manners and Ceremonies" written more than a century back, speaks of this socio-religious system of the Hindus as "the Chef d'oeuvre, the happiest effort of the Hindu Legislator". America is faced to-day by a similar situation and is in the process of evolving a kind of solution of this huge, difficult and delicate problem of race-relations. A new Caste-system is out of question, though I was rather surprised at hearing a well-known English Professor say in one of his classes in an American College, while narrating some of his interesting and funny experiences with one of his American cooks, "Give us a Caste-system."

THE PROBLEM OF RACES

Indeed, there is a Caste-system and something even worse, where the white and the black meet. This is not all. The yellow people also are segregated in communities and compartments of their own. The Red Indians, most honourably to themselves, keep themselves off from the track of the white man and his civilization. The Phillipines, the Mexicans and the Hindus live their

own life apart from others. The Jews form a Caste by themselves because of their religion, if not for their race. The Syrians, the Armenians, the Greeks and people of many other nationalities still distinguish themselves by their original stock, and this is done to such an extent that one is tempted to ask where the Americans are.

None the less among the white people—in general the so-called Nordics—there is a slow but steady merging of national and even racial distinctions. The Jews also are being gradually included in this process. Consequently there is already emerging a new social order such as has been rarely witnessed before. Man here can face man without that fear and subservience on one side and a feeling of superiority reaching even to the point of insolence on the other, which have characterised social relations of people hitherto in most countries. If this constitutes *manhood*, and undoubtedly it is a most important part thereof, then certainly this country is the richest of all, for *manhood* after all is the chief asset of a nation. Again and again while reading the rosy descriptions of socialization and democratization of life in Russia, I felt that the United States had achieved this and much more, and all this was done without any compulsion. It may be true that in this country nine-tenths of the immense wealth of the land is concentrated in the hands of only one-tenth of the population, and that the Government of the country is run by large capitalistic interests, but none the less there is greater freedom here between man

and man than perhaps anywhere else.

There is a dark side to this bright picture, and that constitutes a most serious blot on American life and civilisation. It stultifies a great deal the royal nature of its democracy. This defect, as said before, lies in the sphere of race-relations. The Negroes are out of the pale of this great and unique democracy. The Nordics of North America have undoubtedly the worst colourphobia of all people. The French are infinitely superior to them in this respect. I believe it was Dr. Kilpatrick who said once that the Americans had the worst race-prejudice, and the statement is true indeed. There is no justification for the treatment the Negro gets throughout this vast land and especially in the south, and now, also for the exclusion of the Asiatics from immigration.

The sense of humiliation that every Negro feels in this great land of freedom militates against its democracy and large-hearted humanity, not to speak of its Christianity. It is not the Negro's fault that he has his colour, nor that he is in such numbers in the United States. Rather he was brought here against his will and for the sole convenience of the white man. The black man on the other hand has served the country with his blood, and the foundations of the immense prosperity of this land have been laid to no small extent on Negro labour. In return for this, as it were, the race, has been crucified, and it is out of this crucifixion that the Negro spirituals, who, in many ways are some of the finest products not only

of American but of Christian culture in general, have come. Some of the finest music in the States are heard among the Negroes, and in wit and humour, in loyalty and love, in sweetness and religious emotion, they are a match for any people. They have great moral and spiritual reserves which have yet to be tapped, and when this race will reach its maturity the world will be richer for that.

Sometimes Hindus too have to suffer from this colourphobia on the part of the white man in this hospitable land. Though personally I had no such experience, I came across one instance of such race-prejudice which deserves to be known throughout the States at least. The story is authentic. I heard it first in a Mission Board office and then got it confirmed by the man himself.

A Christian student from India studying in New York was invited last summer (1930) to a New England town by one of the Protestant ministers to speak in his Church. In order to reach this place he had to take a train in the morning from an intermediate place which he reached at 1 A.M. As he could not stay at the Station for the night, he went in a taxi to one of the hotels where he was refused admission on account of his dark skin. In all he tried nine hotels that night, and everywhere he met with refusal. Not knowing where to turn so late at night, he went to the Police Station and asked the officer-in-charge to give him a place to sleep in for the night. Though the officer was rough at first, he, however, took him to a cell kept for prisoners. No sooner, however, was the young

Hindu put into it, the foul air and the dirty smell of the place were too much for him, and he cried out to the officer to take him out of the place. This was done, and then the taxi-driver out of pity for him took him to his own place and gave him shelter for the night. He did more. He gave him his own bed and himself slept in the car. The next morning the Hindu, while parting, expressed his deep gratefulness to the man and said that he had acted towards him the part of the Good Samaritan. To his great surprise, however, he learnt that the man had never heard the story nor had he read the New Testament.

THE GLORY OF DEMOCRACY

In spite of all this, however, the democratic spirit of the American people is a most vital thing and a great asset to the entire world. In this the United States has rightly been an example to the world for over a century. An Abraham Lincoln or a Woodrow Wilson can grow only in this land of freedom. The foundations of the religious, social and political life of this country have been laid upon Liberty and Equality, and the atmosphere here is pervaded by the spirit of the Pil-

grim Fathers. It is not the material wealth of the land alone that has attracted to it people from all lands who have poured themselves into it by the hundred thousand: the personal and social liberty that one has here has been a potent factor in drawing men of different races and nationalities. Not only the non-conformists among Protestants but the Jews, the Armenians, the white Russians, etc., in fact all those who found it impossible to live in the Old World for various reasons, flocked to the hospitable shores of this land, and they and their progeny have had a happy time ever since. In their turn all these groups have contributed very valuable elements to the culture of the land and will continue to do so still, if the steam-roller of Americanism does not press out their special peculiarities and reduce them all to the dead level of a uniform, colourless individualism. The Caste-system in India, while it did harm in some ways, insured cultural autonomy of each group, and this added greatly to the cultural variety and richness of the country, and one wonders if there can be something of an equivalent to this in the United States.

(To be completed in the next issue.)

CULT OF BHAKTI IN THE MAHABHARATA

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

[Dr. Sinha is a noted professor of Meerut College and the author of *Indian Psychology: Perception and Indian Realism*, the two outstanding books published on the respective subjects. In the present article he makes a lucid, concise and delightful study of the Bhakti Cult based especially on the Narayaniya Parva.]

THE NATURE OF THE RELIGION OF DEVOTION

THE exposition of the cult of Bhakti is found in the Narayaniya section of the Mahabharata. "The Bhagavata religion as described in the Mahabharata is the theistic religion of devotion and love."¹ "Bhakti or intense love of God, which is not motivated by any desire, is the essential feature of the Mahabharata religion."² It is a personal religion of loving communion with God. "It is not satisfied with the impersonal Brahman of the Upanishads; it converts Brahman into the personal God or Ishvara."³ The Bhagavata religion is the religion of those who are devoted with their whole souls to Narayana⁴. It is the religion of *sattva* (holiness), or the *Sattvata* religion.⁵ It is the religion of Ekantins, who offer their whole-hearted devotion to God."⁶ Persons are very rare, who are devoted to Narayana with their whole souls.⁷

NARAYANA HIMSELF THE AUTHOR OF THE RELIGION OF DEVOTION

Narayana Himself, the Lord of the Universe, initiated the great saint,

Narada, into the mysteries of the cult of Bhakti with all its details.⁸ This foremost of cults is primeval and eternal. It cannot be easily comprehended. It is exceedingly difficult to practise it. Only those persons in whom *sattva* (purity) predominates can practise it.⁹ This cult was obtained by Narada from Narayana Himself, the Lord of the Universe.¹⁰ This is the religion of those who offer their whole-hearted and undivided devotion to Narayana.¹¹ The illustrious Narayana Himself is the promulgator of this cult, in its entirety, contained in the *Pancharatra* scriptures. In this cult Narayana is the soul object of exposition. The *Pancharatra* scriptures inculcate that Narayana is the one sole object of worship.¹² Narayana imparted the religion of devotion to Narada, Narada explained this eternal and immutable course, called *Ekanta* and followed by the Yatis and the denizens of the white island (Shvetadvipa), to Krishna.¹³ The holy one, Krishna, imparted the religion of devotion to Arjuna when he was disheartened in the field of battle.¹⁴ This is how the religion of devotion

has found currency in the world. Persons of unclean souls cannot comprehend the religion of devotion, one can acquire it only through the grace of God and divine men.¹⁵

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

God is immanent as well as transcendent. He is the Supreme Lord and Creator of the universe.¹⁶ He is called Vishnu because He pervades the whole universe.¹⁷ He is called Vasudeva because He is the abode of all creatures.¹⁸ He is called Narayana. He is the Lord and Creator of the world.¹⁹ He is called Sattvata because the attribute of *sattva* (holiness) constitutes His nature.²⁰ He has never swerved from it. Therefore He is called Achyuta.²¹ *Sattva* in creatures follows from His nature. He is the immanent spirit in all persons in whom *sattva* predominates. For these reasons He is known as Sattvata.²²

The Mahabharata freely preaches the immanence of God. God is immanent in the world. He pervades the universe.²³ He constitutes the warp and woof of the world. Smell, taste, colour, touch and sound, the specific qualities of earth, water, light, air, and ether respectively, have Narayana for their soul. Time also has Narayana for its soul. Mind also, which is the attribute of the Unmanifest (Prakriti) has Narayana for its soul. The Supreme Being is the cause of all these as Purusha. He is, again, the cause of everything as Pradhana (or Prakriti). He is the

foundation of all things. He is the sole agent. He is the cause of the variety of things in the universe. He is the invisible power which controls everything.²⁴

God is the indwelling Spirit in all creatures. "Hari is Himself the Kshetrajna (Soul). He is the Jiva in all creatures, transcending the five primal elements. He is the Mind that directs and controls the five senses."²⁵ "Truth has Narayana for its refuge. *Rita* has Narayana for its soul."²⁶ He is the source of all values. He is the repository of all ideals. He is the eternal fulfilment of all our aspirations. The presiding deities of fame, beauty and prosperity have the Supreme Deity for their soul.²⁷ He resides in fame, knowledge, prosperity, self-restraint, penances, grand achievements and all other covetable things in the universe. He is the restraint of the senses. He is vows and observances. He is mortification. He is severe mortification. He is very severe mortification. He is the embodiment of correct reasoning. He is the embodiment of unswerving Yoga or concentration of mind. It is He who observes vows and performs other religious rites.²⁸ It is He, again, who is the receptacle of the restraint of the senses and penances.²⁹ He accepts the offerings that are dedicated in sacrifices. Whatever acts are performed in honour of the gods or the ancestral spirits, whatever gifts are made, whatever penances are performed,

¹ J. N. Sinha, *The Bhagavata Religion: The Cult of Bhakti, in The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 49. ² Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 486. ³ *Ibid*, p. 486. ⁴ M. Bh., xii, 349, 84. ⁵ *Ibid*, 84; *Ibid*, 82, *Nilakanthi Tika* & M. Bh., xii, 337,

28; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 49. ⁶ M. Bh., xii, 349, 62. ⁷ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 54. ⁸ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 55. ⁹ *Ibid*, xli, 347, 9. ¹⁰ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 82. ¹¹ *Ibid*, xii, 350, 67-68. ¹² *Ibid*, xii, 349, 85. ¹³ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 8. ¹⁴ *Ibid*, xii, 349,

¹⁵ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 61. ¹⁶ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 18; xii, 347, 7; xii, 346, 28; xii, 344, 14. ¹⁷ *Ibid*, xii, 342, 42. ¹⁸ *Ibid*, xii, 342, 40; xii, 348, 91. ¹⁹ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 13. ²⁰ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 75-76. ²¹ *Ibid*, xii, 342, 42. ²² *Ibid*, xii, 349, 58-59; E.T., p. 849. ²³ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 79; E.T., p. 842. ²⁴ *Ibid*, xli, 348, 84. ²⁵ *Ibid*, xii, 339, 4. ²⁶ *Ibid*, xii, 347, 16-17.

have God for their refuge.³⁰ It is He that ordains the end. He is the Supreme Lord, the refuge and protection of all. He is that Being who is called Amrita. He is the immutable and the immortal. He is the refuge of all things and beings.³¹

Thus, God is immanent in the world and in finite creatures. He is the immanent spirit in them all. But He is not wholly immanent in the universe. He is both transcendent and immanent. He is immanent in the universe, and yet transcends it. He is both active and inactive. He is both cause and effect.³² He is endowed with the highest power. He is Supreme³³ endowed with the highest intelligence, He is the Creator and the Ordainer of the universe.³⁴ He is the Creator, the Lord, and the Providence. He transcends the empirical world of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Though really divested of attributes, He assumes attributes for manifesting Himself³⁵. He is regarded as both possessed of, and free from, attributes.³⁶ Thus He is both the unconditioned and the conditioned. In Himself, He is absolute and unconditioned. But He becomes relative and conditioned only to manifest Himself. Transcending the three attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, He is regarded as Purusha in the scriptures. He has created the Unmanifest (Prakriti) constituted by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.³⁷

God is not merely an immanent principle in the world and finite creatures. He transcends them as the Supreme Person. He is the giver of

boons, happiness and wealth. He is the greatest friend. He is kind to all His devotees.³⁸ He is the father and mother of all creatures. He is an object of reverence with the entire universe.³⁹

HUMAN WILL ABSORBED IN DIVINE WILL

The Mahabharata does not seem to believe in the freedom of the human will. The energy of man is the energy of God⁴⁰. Whatever acts, good or bad, are done in heaven or on earth, in the sky or in the waters, are all caused by God.⁴¹ Still He is never touched by acts good or bad. *Sattva* (purity), *rajas* (energy) and *tamas* (inertia) are the three primal attributes. These are the natural tendencies in the finite creatures. They are the main springs of their action. They are created by God in finite souls (Jivas) who enjoy their action. God transcends them all, and they cannot touch Him. Having created them Himself, He is above them all. But though in His essential nature He is free from these attributes, as the Inner Soul of the finite souls, He enjoys and endures their action.⁴² Thus He is in them and yet above them.

God or Narayana has four forms. Vasudeva is the highest form. Vasudeva creates Sankarshana. Sankarshana creates Pradyumna. Pradyumna creates Aniruddha. From Aniruddha springs Brahman. From Brahman spring all creatures, animate and inanimate.⁴³

THE CULT OF BHAKTI

"God cannot be apprehended by the senses. He is beyond the ken of logic or argument, and is attained only through whole-hearted devotion. Penances and religious observances lacking in devotion cannot lead to the attainment of God."⁴⁴ Those who are well versed in the Pancharatra scriptures and perform the duties enjoined by them, and are devoted with their whole souls to Narayana succeed in entering into Him.⁴⁵ The Supreme Lord, Hari, is pleased only with those acts which are well performed with a full knowledge of duties,—which do not entail any injury to any creature.⁴⁶ A devotee should cultivate goodwill to the sentient creation. He should cultivate *ahimsa* in thought, word and deed. He should be full of compassion for all creatures. He should be endowed with the knowledge of the soul. He should always do good to others. He should perform all his duties without any desire of fruits thereof⁴⁷. He should dedicate all his actions to God. He should dedicate all his possessions to the service of God and hold himself as His custodian. He should regard his wealth, wife and children, and animals as obtained from Narayana. He should offer all his possessions to the Supreme Deity. He should discharge all his obligatory and optional duties with a mind fixed on Narayana. He should eat food only after he has dedicated it to Him. He should cultivate *truth* and *non-*

injury (*Ahimsa*). He should never deviate from them. These are the cardinal virtues⁴⁸. The offerings in the Vedic sacrifices should consist of vegetable seeds. Animal sacrifice cannot be the religion of good and righteous people.⁴⁹ A devotee should totally abstain from speaking untruths and doing any injury to any creature. He should purify and consecrate his mind by constantly reciting the holy name of God. Japa (silent repetition of Divine name) is a mighty agent in spiritualising a person. There are three kinds of Japa. One may recite the holy name loudly, or in an inaudible voice, or mentally. Mental Japa is the best of all. A devotee in the highest stage is engaged in silently meditating on God with a heart entirely set upon Him.⁵⁰ A devotee, with his mind wholly concentrated upon God, should always think of Him. Then he can never meet with any obstacles. He is sure to be crowned with ascetic success and is highly blessed. He is freed from the attributes of *rajas* and *tamas*. He is, no doubt, competent to enter into God and abide in Him.⁵¹

Some persons adore Narayana in the form of Aniruddha. Some adore Him in the forms of Aniruddha and Pradyumna. Some adore Him in the forms of Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sankarshana. Others adore Him as consisting of four forms, *viz.*, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Sankarshana and Vasudeva⁵². Those persons who seek God through the path of Know-

⁴⁴ *The Bhagavata Religion, The Cult of Bhakti in The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 49; M.Bh., xii, 340, 16-17; xii, 389, 4. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 350, 71. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 56. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 62-68; cf. *Narada*

Sutra. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* xii, 336, 20-24; cf. also 31. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.* xii, 338, 4-5. ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* xii, 337, 34 & *Nilakanthi Tika* & xii, 339, 2. ⁵¹ *Ibid.* xii, 340, 19-20 & 49. ⁵² *Ibid.* 349, 57.

³⁰ *Ibid.* xii, 348, 90-91. ³¹ *Ibid.* xii, 347, 17-20. ³² *Ibid.* xii, 349, 60. ³³ *Ibid.* xii, 348, 92. ³⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 59. ³⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 348, 92. ³⁶ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 40. ³⁷ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 29-30. ³⁸ *Ibid.* xii, 339, 4. ³⁹ *Ibid.* xii, 340, 127. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* xii, 348, 86. ⁴¹ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 74. ⁴² *Ibid.* xii, 340, 26-28. ⁴³ *Ibid.* xii, 340, 70-72.

ledge realise Him in the highest form only through His three lower forms. But those persons who approach Him through devotion and are devoted to Him with their whole souls at once attain the highest end and realise God in His highest form of Vasudeva, beyond Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.⁵³ Devotion leads to the highest kind of beatitude.

DEVOTION AND MOKSHA

There are three kinds of dispositions according as *tamas* (darkness or ignorance), *rajas* (energy or activity) or *sattva* (purity or holiness) predominates in the mind. The person of *Sattvika* disposition, who is wedded to the attribute of *sattva*, can attain liberation which is regarded as made up of the attribute of *sattva*. The person whose mind is purged of *tamas* and *rajas* and is pervaded by *sattva* can comprehend Brahman.⁵⁴ Devotion leads to the knowledge of Brahman. It purges the mind of *tamas* and *rajas* and fills it with *sattva*. *Sattva* flows from the nature of God. A person whose mind is made of pure *sattva* can attain emancipation through the grace of God. *Emancipation entirely depends upon God*. Hari never confers His grace upon a person whose mind is dominated by *tamas* and *rajas*. He must cast off the principle of *Pravritti* or attachment and adopt the path of *Nivritti* or renunciation, because God shows compassions to him only who surrenders himself entirely to Him.⁵⁵

DEVOTION AND KNOWLEDGE

Devotion leads to wisdom. It dispels all doubts. Hari, the Supreme Deity, resides in the hearts of those

who have succeeded in dispelling all doubts. Madhava never resides in the hearts of those who are tossed by doubts and would dispute away everything with the help of false dialectics⁵⁶. Narayana is the source of all kinds of knowledge. He is the end of all knowledge. "As waves of the ocean, rising from the ocean, rush away from it only to return to it in the end, even so diverse kinds of knowledge, springing from Narayana, return to Narayana in the end."⁵⁷ By constantly meditating on Narayana and devoting his whole soul to Him, a person acquires great wisdom.⁵⁸ Wisdom can be attained only through the grace of God. The person upon whom Narayana looks with compassion succeeds in becoming enlightened. No one can attain wisdom or enlightenment through his own wishes.⁵⁹ The inhabitants of the white island (Svetadvipa) were entirely devoted to Narayana. They were always engaged in worshipping the great Deity who always sported with them. All of them were of enlightened souls endowed as they were with true knowledge.⁶⁰ Thus devotion leads to enlightenment. No one can achieve wisdom by his own efforts. God is the source of all knowledge. He grants the gift of knowledge only to him who is entirely devoted to Him. Knowledge cannot be attained without devotion, and the grace of God.

THE GRACE OF GOD

The Mahabharata teaches the doctrine of grace. No one can comprehend the religion of devotion merely with the help of the intellect. Even if he were to strive for a hundred

⁵³ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 2-4 & *Nilakanthi Tika* & xii, 349, 66 & 57. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 68-70. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 68-79. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* xii, 350, 70;

cf. Narada Sutra. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* xii, 346, 83; E. T., p. 852. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 71. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 75-76. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* xii, 344, 52.

years, he would never be able to comprehend it with the science of argumentation. Without the grace of Narayana, or an accession of high knowledge consequent on His grace, no one can understand the religion of devotion.⁶¹ Even the incorporeal denizens of heaven bow to the Supreme Deity, and through His grace realise their ends which He ordains for them.⁶² The Brahmacharin, the householder, the ascetic, and the Yati—all worship Him with devotion. "It is He who speedily moved to grace, confers on them high ends fraught with felicity."⁶³ Those persons in the world, who, filled with His spirit, devote themselves whole-heartedly to Him, attain higher ends, and succeed in entering Him and residing in Him.⁶⁴ Only those can see Him to whom He becomes gracious.⁶⁵ Narada could see Narayana, the Supreme Lord, in the white island only through His grace.⁶⁶ Hari confers His grace only on those persons who are devoted to Him with their whole souls. He accepts all worship that is offered to Him according to the ordinance.⁶⁷ Emancipation entirely depends upon Narayana.⁶⁸ The person upon whom Narayana bestows His grace can attain higher wisdom. He alone can shake off all desires and is awakened from the slumber of ignorance.⁶⁹ He is the giver of boons. He is the giver of wealth, prosperity and happiness. He is the grantor of every wish.⁷⁰ He gives us strength to restrain our senses. He gives us power to undergo penances and observe vows. He gives us the

power of reasoning correctly. He gives us the power of concentrating our minds on Him. He purges us of all evils and impurities and gives us the highest wisdom. He gives us emancipation. He gives us devotion and love for Him. He enables us to enter into Him through His infinite grace. He communicates to us His infinite bliss and love. He comes down to us and enthrones Himself in our hearts through His grace, and lifts us up to the Divine plane and locks us up in His loving embrace. Through His infinite grace He enlightens us, sanctifies us, consecrates us and attunes us completely to Him. Nothing depends upon us. Everything depends upon Him.⁷¹

THE CULT OF DEVOTION IS

THE BEST OF ALL

God is always fond of those who are devoted to Him. No one is dearer to Him in the three worlds than those persons who are enlightened and possessed of high souls. Dearer even than those persons are those who are entirely devoted to Him. Whatever rites and religious acts are performed by them are all received by God with love and reverence. He is ever affectionate to His devotees.⁷² There exists no one in the universe that is dearer to Him than one who adores Him with devotion.⁷³ It is undoubted that the religion of devotion is superior to that of knowledge and is very dear to God.⁷⁴ Let us, then, all love God with all our hearts, give ourselves up to Him entirely, and share His infinite love, bliss and sweetness.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 6. ⁶² *Ibid.* xii, 335, 38. ⁶³ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 42; E. T., p. 743; *cf. Narada Sutra.* ⁶⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 43; *cf. Gita.* ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 337, 20. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* xii, 344, 24. ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 1. ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 70. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

xii, 349, 75 & *Nilakanthi Tika.* ⁷⁰ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 4. ⁷¹ *Ibid.* xii, 339, 1-4; xii, 340, 12-18, ⁷² *Ibid.* xii, 344, 53-54, 62-63. ⁷³ *Ibid.* xii, 345, 8. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 4.

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 34 TO 42

Introduction

The discussion on Para Bhakti or the Supreme spiritual realisation comes to an end with the last Sutra. The remaining portion of the treatise is devoted to a consideration of the means by which this highest realisation becomes possible to us. We have already seen how the various faculties of the mind should co-operate with one another before the natural perfection of the human soul can manifest itself. Spiritual Sadhana or practice has thus reference to the culture of these various faculties. The Bhakti Sastra is, however, concerned only with the culture and purification of emotions, and the culture of the other functions comes in only in so far as they are necessary and helpful to the culture and purification of the emotions. Narada, therefore, takes up only the emotional side of Sadhana for treatment. According to him, the culture and purification of the emotions is done through a kind of love towards God, and this love for God, which is a *means*, is known as Aparā Bhakti as distinguished from Para Bhakti or Supreme love which, being the end, has been identified with the highest spiritual realisation. In the Bhakti Sastra, all self-effort is directed towards achieving this lower love or Aparā Bhakti, which is the only direct means of Para Bhakti.

In the next nine Sutras, Narada discusses the positive and negative aspects of spiritual practice in their relation to Divine grace.

The thirty-fourth Sutra forms an introduction to the whole of the ensuing discussion. Narada does not want to base his teaching solely on his own individual experience, for he is conscious that however much he may have been personally helped by particular practices, these need not necessarily be helpful to all, owing to differences in circumstances and environment—physical, temperamental or social. He therefore proposes to deal with only the universal elements of spiritual practice that have been accepted as necessary and unavoidable by all the teachers of the Bhakti School. He puts his own experiments and experiences to the test, as it were, in the light of the experiences of others, and thus separates the grain from the chaff. His teaching which follows, therefore, must be taken to be the essence of all Bhakti Sadhana, being broad-based on the consensus of opinion of experts in the line. It steers clear of everything that smacks of sectarianism. One may, therefore, safely adopt him as a safe guide, whatever may be the sect or denomination one may belong to by birth or persuasion. If on the other hand, any of the teachings of a particular sect goes against these essential and universal principles enunciated here-

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under, these are to be rejected, as being injurious to the end in view. Difference in opinion is pardonable when it is with reference to the highest realisation which in itself is indescribable. *Vide* Sutra 15 where Narada discusses them. But here, in the sphere of Aparā Bhakti, the means described are all capable of being scrutinised by the discriminating intellect, and it is easy to find out the essence. There is no room therefore for differences of opinion here, and Narada proposes to give only such of the means as are essential and universal, as advocated by all the writers on Bhakti.

तस्याः साधनानि गायन्त्याचार्याः ॥ ३४ ॥

तस्याः of that (Para Bhakti) साधनानि means आचार्याः teachers गायन्ति sing.

34. Teachers sing of the following as the means of spiritual realisation.

Notes. 1. *Teachers*—They are those who have had first-hand experience of the upward struggle and the consequent realisation, and who out of infinite mercy, feels for the miseries of the world, and stretch out a helping hand to those who have not yet dared to begin the ascent. These should be carefully distinguished from writers on religion and religious practices, like the modern psychologists of religion, who have had no first-hand experience of this struggle or realisation, but who study these only objectively as found in other persons. Such writers are not safe guides. This is the force of the word *Acharya*, which comes from '*Achar*', which means 'to practise'.

2. *Sing*—The word sing is used to suggest the idea of joy which accom-

panies the serving of others spiritually. The real teachers teach because they experience a celestial joy in helping others.

As noted by Sri Sankara in his commentary on Gita II:55, all spiritual practice consists in putting forth the necessary effort to develop in oneself those characteristics which are always present in a realised man. These characteristics may be roughly classified into two groups: 1. Absence of the evils of Samsara and 2. Presence of a divine bliss. A spiritual aspirant must necessarily, therefore, use his will to cultivate these two. He should reject everything that subjects him to the bondage of Samsara and acquire the bliss of a divine life. Thus spiritual practice takes two forms—one negative, and the other positive. In fact these two are parts of one and the same Sadhana—the obverse and reverse of the same coin. The seed must lose itself or allow itself to be destroyed before it can develop into a tree. Spiritual life too is a slow growth, and growth involves a giving up of the lower stages for higher ones, the two forming part of one process. Some emphasise the negative aspect, while others give preference to the positive. The former argue that if one cuts asunder the fetters that bind, nothing more is necessary to give freedom; when the obstructing bund is removed, the water flows of its own accord without any separate effort. The latter argue that even fetters can be broken only with the help of a sword or an axe, and so the attempt should be directed to using the axe; darkness can vanish only in the presence of light, and the attempt therefore must be to light a lamp.

and not to drive away the darkness. Each is right from his own standpoint, but to emphasise the one at the expense of the other is risky. Thus in the name of negative practice, one is likely to run to excess in the direction of asceticism and be dead to all the noble feelings which are helpful to the achievement of the goal. So also, in the name of positive practice, one may get oneself entangled irredeemably in the worldly life and may not care for renunciation at all. Both these dangers are to be avoided by a happy combination of the two. Our Acharyas have therefore taken care to emphasise both the aspects in their proper proportions.

It is possible for a man to renounce the world on the sole ground that it is full of evil and miseries. He need not have any conception of the possibility of a higher happiness. But it is only when this renunciation is coupled with a knowledge and faith in the possibility of this higher bliss that Sadhana becomes easily fruitful. Renunciation and communion (Tyaga and Bhajana), dispassion and practice (Vairagya and Abhyasa), thus form the corner stones of all spiritual practice.

So in the 35th Sutra, Narada presents to us the essence of the negative aspect of spiritual practice, viz., renunciation.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Thoughts from the Eternal Law: By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar, Advocate, Tinnevely. Printed at the Madras Law Journal Press, Mylapore, Madras. Pages 185. Price Re. 1.

This is a clear analysis, and in many respects an intelligent presentation, of the fundamental principles of Hinduism, which Mr. Aiyar rightly prefers to describe by the name of Sanatana Dharma or Eternal Law than by the other more common but meaningless epithet. The teachings of the Indian sages lie scattered in an extensive religious literature, and emphasise and elaborate different points of philosophy, theology, ritual and social practices that are often difficult to reconcile. That Mr. Aiyar has, however, been able to give a clear and synthetic presentation of these doctrines of the Sruties, Smrities, Puranas and ritualistic books in a small book of this kind, does much credit to the author's erudition and grasp of essential principles. A student or teacher of Hindu religion will find it, on the whole, a good book for consultation.

Two excellent features of the book must be specially alluded to here. Mr.

Aiyar does not approach Hindu thought as merely a dogmatic theology or a dry metaphysics, but as a scheme of beliefs and practices devised for the evolution, or rather the gradual expression, of the spiritual principle in man. Again he rightly emphasises that, in this scheme, the question of competency is of the greatest importance if the doctrines and practices inculcated by the sages are to be of real use in their application to life. In other words, a man's concern now is not with the highest truth, but with the phase of it that stands as the immediately next stage of evolution accessible to him. The failure to grasp this point is the reason why we have in our midst to-day so many philosophers and theologians who can give eloquent disquisitions on the most abstruse doctrines of Vedanta, but who are at the same time devoid of any standard of honesty, justice and decency in matters of everyday life.

There are, however, certain views expressed in the book with which we cannot agree and which the author could very well have avoided introducing in this book, on account of their highly controver-

sial nature. For example, he is violently opposed to hotels and the practice of selling food, and in justification of this view, attributes the physical degeneration of Indians to these. But curiously enough, he forgets that there are countries outside India where hotel-keeping is practised much more extensively than here, without, however, any prejudice to the health of the people. In fact what is wanted in India is not the disappearance of hotels, but an effective supervision of them. In themselves the hotels are highly necessary in these days of rapid communication and industrialisation, and without them men, who for the sake of their work have to live separated from their families or have to be constantly on the move, will be put to great inconvenience. Besides, hotels afford a useful avenue of employment to many men.

Still more contentious is his view on marriage. The wife's will, he contends, should be dependent on the husband's. This can be achieved only if the girl is married before she develops a self-will. Self-will normally develops at the age of seven or eight. "So at about that age the child, if a boy, is committed to the care of a teacher who can train him up in right conduct and, if a girl, is committed to the care of a husband who takes up the responsibility of training and maintaining her in right conduct." Apart from the question whether matrimony can ever be a substitute for education in the case of girls, one may question if any person has the right to break the will of another or impair its natural growth, unless it be in the relation between master and slave. Then, again, it is doubtful whether the Hindu ideal of the wife as Sahadharma-charini, 'companion in righteous living', can ever be fulfilled by a poor creature who is not allowed to develop a will of its own; for, true companionship can be found only between equals and not between one with a will and another without it.

One feels that Mr. Aiyar reaches the summit of reactionary spirit when he pleads vigorously in favour of the practice of untouchability. In connection with this, he diverts a little from his main topic, in order to have a dig at 'M. K. Gandhi' for leading the movement against 'untouch-

ability, because he does not know Sanskrit and is therefore not aware of what the Sastras say. But Mr. Aiyar ignores that if Mr. Gandhi does not know Sanskrit, he has at least the help of many sound Sanskrit scholars. Then again, should one necessarily be a Sanskrit Pandit in order to understand the spirit of the Sastras? He justifies the practice of untouchability on the ground that, space being matter in contact with bodies, 'the amount of space we maintain about our body with reference to particular people' has a bearing on our character. That there is no caste prejudice and ill-will behind the practice, Mr. Aiyar tries to prove by referring to the practice of segregating women in Hindu families under certain conditions. While this custom has some hygienic justification undoubtedly, it is open to question whether it has any spiritual efficacy. But the custom of untouchability, as practised in Hindu society to-day, has not even much of hygienic justification and absolutely none on spiritual grounds. What one is pained to notice in all this discussion of Mr. Aiyar is that he entirely fails to see how the practice of untouchability, whatever its theory in the Sastras, has actually kept millions of Indians in degradation from generation to generation, while the flame of the brightest culture that man has ever evolved was burning in their neighbourhood. Quoting Sastras and indulging in subtle metaphysical justifications based on questionable premises are never going to satisfy men who feel the tragedy of this situation keenly.

Barring some of the views expressed on social questions, we have nothing but praise for the book.

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Srutikalpalatika : By Waman Pandit. (Sanskrit). Published by Tukaram Pundalik Sheteye, Madhavog, Bombay. Pp. 268. Price 3-8-0.

The *Srutikalpalatika* is an elaborate commentary in 38 chapters of beautiful Sanskrit prose, from the pen of Waman Pandit, the famous Maharashtra scholar and poet of the 16th century, on the well-known *Sruti Gita*, an epitome of Vedanta, which forms the 87th chapter of the Xth Skandha of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Sruti Gita* pur-

ports to be a hymn sung by the Vedas in praise of Brahman to awaken Him from his sleep for starting creation. It is an abstruse treatise and naturally there have been innumerable commentaries on the same by scholars of various schools of Vedanta. Among such known commentaries are the Sridharee, Chitsukhee Shankaree, Shuhrdaya, Praharshinee, Vijayadhwa etc. The present commentary expounds the philosophy of Wamana, the main principle of which is said to be 'Knowledge of the unqualified and devotion to the qualified'. Any new commentary on this

abstruse text must be welcome to all students of Vedanta; much more so when it comes from such a renowned scholar as Wamana. The author commands a beautiful style and his exposition is supported by profuse quotations from the Shastras. In fact there is no authoritative scripture which he has not laid under contribution in the preparation of the commentary. The publishers deserve the thanks of all lovers of Vedanta and Sanskrit literature for bringing out an edition of this rare manuscript which sees the light for the first time.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A Correction

In the August and September issues of the *Vedanta Kesari*, we published an article entitled 'The Spiritual Outlook in the West' by Gaston de Mengel. We have come to learn from a Western reader that it is an unfair attack on some of the countries of the West, and that it is, therefore, in many respects offensive to the sentiments of people there. We regret to have given occasion for such misunderstanding, and now hasten to add that the views expressed therein are entirely the writer's and do not in any way reflect the ideas of the *Vedanta Kesari* or of the Movement, the ideas of which it reflects. Swami Vivekananda the founder of the Ramakrishna Movement, had deep regard for the Western culture, and was of opinion that India has to learn many things of great value from it. Especially with regard to French culture, he has given a glowing picture in his works (*vide* Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. V, Pp. 360 and 409-420). Besides the inestimable contributions of the West to Science, organisation, politics, literature, fine arts, etc., it has also given to the world some of its greatest mystics and God-men. Our readers would remember that the *Vedanta Kesari* has been showing appreciation of the

spiritual heritage of the West by publishing a series of articles on Western mystics by W. H. Koch.

Ramakrishna Mission Flood Relief Work 6th Weekly Report

In the week ending with 2nd September, 90 mds. of rice were distributed among 2451 recipients belonging to 39 villages in unions Raghunathpur, Ulpur and Satkira from the Ramakrishna Mission Relief centres at Nijra and Silna in the Gopalganj subdivision of the Faridpur District. The situation continues to be critical. The water which has been rising all along has invaded nearly 95% of the houses. The poor, helpless people come in boats to receive the doles of rice. A few villages in Dumuria union are also being enlisted. We require at least Rs. 500 per week for continuing the relief. Our Malda centre has been doing relief on a small scale. The success of the work depends entirely on the sympathy and co-operation of the charitable public. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O. Dt., Howrah. (2) The President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.

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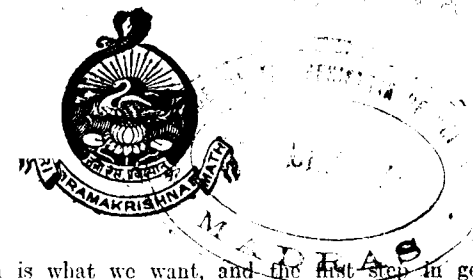
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THE VEDANTA KESARI

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MAHASAMADHI

At 8-40 a.m. Sunday the twenty-third October, His Holiness Srimat Swami Suddhanandaji Maharaj, the fifth President of the Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, has passed away in his sixty-seventh year, casting a gloom of profound sorrow on the minds of the members, friends and well-wishers of the organisation to which he belonged for over forty years and which he served with true self-dedication all through that long period.

As a beloved disciple of the great Swami Vivekananda, Swami Suddhananda had a remarkable spiritual training under him for over six years in his youth. The Swami was a keen student of religion throughout his life and an untiring teacher full of love and sympathy, whose calm influence was a constant factor in the moulding of the character of younger monastic members of the Order. His literary labours bore fruit in the form of valuable religious writings including the classical translation of the important works of Swami Vivekananda into Bengali. From 1927 to 1938 he bore the office of the Secretary of the Mission, and for the following six months nearly he was the President of the Mission and the Order. Almost the whole of his monastic career was spent at the Balur Math, taking a lively part in all the activities calculated to further the spiritual ideals of the Mission. May his ideal spirit of holiness and service, which is but a ray inseparable from the splendour of the Great Master, ever continue to cheer the pilgrims that tread the selfsame path.

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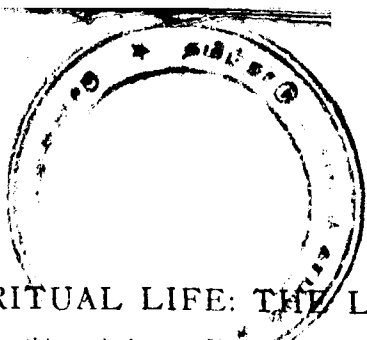
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SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE LAWS OF ITS GROWTH—I

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Spiritual Life: The Laws of Its Growth—I' is the seventh of the series.]

THE Master's teachings with regard to the nature of man and the state of bondage are not primarily meant to be a structure of thought for the satisfaction of the academic mind. They are, on the other hand, based on the aspirations and experiences of the spiritually-minded, and their primary aim is to help man to rise above his present limitations and realise the higher nature latent in himself. This higher realisation is possible only through spiritual disciplines; but these disciplines in their turn have a significance only for minds that have passed through the long process of purification and ethical culture culminating in an intense longing for the Lord. Hence in the Master's instructions, besides the various sayings of deep philosophical significance, we also come across many teachings on ethics, social life and preparatory disciplines, which have a bearing on the production of an intense longing for God in the minds of the aspirants. We shall attempt a survey of these teachings below. They may appear somewhat disjointed, but the unity of their purport would become clear if it is recognised that by practising them alone can the longing for the Divine be established in the heart of man.

I

A common question that confronts a spiritual aspirant is how far external

observances, rituals and socio-religious rules are really connected with spiritual growth. According to the Master, they are related as husk is with the grain within. Though the husk does not become the plant, yet if the seed is to sprout at all, it should not at first be separated from the grain. Rituals and external observances do not constitute spirituality, and they fall off in the fullness of time. But for the beginner their protective and educative influence is highly necessary. For example, dress has a great influence on thought. European dress makes one behave like a Saheb. If a person dresses himself like a fop, he will be humming love songs. In the same way the ochre robe of the Sannyasin brings sacred thoughts to the mind of a sincere aspirant. Food too has an influence on the mind. It is good to observe such rules in the matter of the quality and acceptance of it as are not prejudicial to the growth of mental purity. A man who is following the path of Jnana is not much affected by food; but a Bhakta has to discriminate in this matter and should eat only such food as he can freely offer to his Lord. "At the same time," says the Master, "I must say that if a man loves God even while living upon the flesh of the pig, he is blessed; and wretched is he who lives on milk and rice but is absorbed in 'woman and gold'."

A large number of caste-rules observed in India and several principles of social etiquette followed in other advanced societies are meant to be safe-guards in the early stages of one's spiritual life. When a man has grown spiritually, he naturally transcends these rules, but there is no use of prematurely brushing them aside to assume an air of spiritual superiority. Such men are like immature mangoes artificially made ripe.

This should not, however, be taken to mean that the Master was a social reactionary, and could not appreciate the point of view of those men who discarded outworn social conventions from genuine spiritual motives. For he says: "People of this age care for the essence of everything. They will accept the essentials of religion and not its non-essentials. Those who take fish do not want the useless head and tail of fish, but only the soft middle portion of it; so the ancient rules and commandments of our scriptures must be pruned and purged of all their accretions to make them suit the needs of our modern times."

Among other external observances helpful for the growth of devotion, the institutions of image-worship and pilgrimage occupy an important place. Just as a man learns to write by drawing big scrawls at first, so an aspirant must acquire the power of mental concentration by fixing the mind on forms and images. Again, in the case of one who is truly devoted, the Divine image creates a vivid consciousness of God, just as the toy fruit and a toy elephant remind one of the real fruit and the living animal. It was the Master's conviction that for many people image worship is absolutely necessary for spiritual growth. And

to those who have conscientious objection to the practice of image worship, the Master says: "Even if there is anything wrong in image worship, does He not know that all worship is meant for Him? He will surely be pleased to accept the worship, knowing that it is meant for Him alone. Love God. That is the duty nearest to you."

As for pilgrimage, while the Master recognised its value to the fullest extent, his attitude towards it was tinged with a spirit of criticism. The milk of the cow, says he, pervades the whole body of the animal through its blood stream; but one can milk it only from its teats. In the same way, though God pervades everything, His manifestation is felt more clearly in sacred temples and places of pilgrimage sanctified by the fervour and devotion of innumerable devotees. For in such places spiritual ideas are present in a solidified form, as it were, and sincere men are likely to have spiritual awakening more easily there than in other places.

But the Master was not blind to the worldly influences rampant in those places. When he went to Benares with Mathur Babu, he saw the people there as well as the pilgrims indulging in the same type of worldly talks as in other places, and so he remarked to his cousin and attendant Hriday: "What have we come to see here. Things are just the same here as well as there, with but one point of difference, that the inhabitants of these places seem to have better digestive power."

According to the Master, even places of pilgrimage can help only those who have a spark of devotion within, and accordingly a favourite

maxim of his was, "He who has got it (spirituality) here (*i.e.*, within), finds it there (in holy places) also." Another instruction of his to those who go on pilgrimage with genuine spiritual intentions is this: "As cows, after eating their fill, lie down quietly at a place and chew the cud, so after visiting a sacred spot or a place of pilgrimage, you must sit down in a solitary spot and ruminate over the holy thoughts, until you got immersed in them. You must not devote yourselves to sense pursuits and drive away the higher ideas from your mind immediately after you turn away from those places."

II

The Master warns every spiritual aspirant against the snare of occult powers. Those who set their mind on occult powers get stuck to them, and do not rise to higher levels of spirituality. Occult powers are trivial. After fourteen years of austerities a man acquires the power of crossing a river on foot. He could as well have done this by paying a few pice to the ferry-man. It is dangerous too to have occult powers. Men who are not possessed of control over the senses are sure to misuse them. The Master cites the example of a man who had the power of going about invisible with the magical power of an amulet. Later on the man used his power in an illicit love affair, and became a fallen soul.

It is also foolish for a spiritual aspirant to go after occult powers. To pray to God for such powers is like a man going to a king and begging for a pumpkin.

III

Another obstacle in the way of spiritual aspirants is a narrow and fanatical outlook. According to the Master a religious fanatic is worse than a dog. A dog recognises his Master in any garb, but a fanatic fails to recognise his God when He is presented in terms and concepts that are not familiar to Him. For, according to the Master, all religions invoke the same Sacchidananda, be it by the name of Allah, God, Hari, or Brahman, just as the same substance is meant though called by different names as 'water', 'vaari', 'aqua' or 'pani'. Every religion is a path to God as the different ghats of a tank leading to the same water. As the one reservoir supplies gas to the gas-lamps in different localities, the same God illumines the religions and religious teachers of different times and climes. Fanaticism is therefore due to ignorance regarding the nature of the Deity or due only to a partial knowledge of Him. It is like blind men quarrelling about the form of the elephant after knowing it only by touching the tusk, trunk, leg and ear of the animal; or it is like children disputing about the colour of the chameleon without knowing that the chameleon changes colour every now and then. The right attitude for an aspirant is therefore not to dispute about the truth of the different religions, but to follow his own faith while showing due respect to those of others at the same time. "Look at the young daughter-in-law in a Hindu joint-family," says the Master, "she respects her father-in-law, mother-in-law, and others in the family, obeys them, and ministers to their wants;

but at the same time she loves her husband in a way quite different from her love for others. In the same way, be firm in your faith towards the particular form of the Deity you adore, but do not despise those of others. Honour them too; for they all represent one authority and one Love."

IV

Next we may make a passing review of a group of moral virtues that the Master recommends for spiritual aspirants. Alms and charities, especially when given to fit recipients, are conducive to spiritual life. Works of service should not, however, be done in an egotistic spirit or in a condescending demeanour. A spiritual man must bear in mind that God dwells even in the meanest of the mean, and when he serves anyone, he must offer that service in all humility as an act of worship to the indwelling Divinity.

A spiritual aspirant should cultivate forbearance. Look at the anvil of the blacksmith—how it is hammered and beaten but yet moves not from its place. Let men learn endurance and patience from it.

A spiritual aspirant should be reticent. He must keep his faith and sentiments to himself, and as far as possible he must do his devotional practices in private, unseen by others.

He should never be conceited; for humility is the true sign of wisdom. Look at the tree laden with fruits; it bends low. So is a truly spiritual man, lowly and meek. But meekness does not mean want of self-respect. For no humility is humility that humiliates the self, and no pride is pride that expresses the glory of the Self.

A true aspirant must be simple-minded. For then spiritual instructions easily fructify in him, as seeds germinate and bear fruit quickly when sown in tilled soil free from stones. Only by virtue of much penance people become simple-minded; and to the simple-minded alone God reveals His own nature. But along with such instructions the Master would also warn his disciples: "You are to be devotees, but not simpletons on that account."

A devotee should not neglect his family. There are so many debts that one has to repay—the debt to the Gods, the debt to the Rishis and also the debt to the parents and the wife. Father and mother are of prime importance to man, and unless they are pleased no devotional practice will be of any avail. Even Lord Chaitanya took care to see that he did not wound his mother's feelings when he took Sannyasa. The parents should be served to one's best capacity during their life-time, and after their death, their post-funeral rites should be performed according to one's means. Wife and children have to be provided for, at least with bare subsistence. Under one condition, however, a devotee is free from all obligations. That is when he becomes mad with love of God. "Then who is father, who is mother, and who is wife? He loves God so deeply that he becomes mad. He has no duty, he is absolved from all debts. When a man reaches that state, he forgets the whole world; he becomes unconscious of even the body which is so dear to everyone."

An aspirant must wean himself from extreme attachment to the body. As to how this is to be done, the

Master says: "The human frame is made up of decaying matter. It is a collection of flesh, bones, marrow, blood and other unclean substances subject to putrification. By practising such analysis of the body constantly, one's love of it vanishes." Though a devotee should thus have a vivid consciousness of the worthlessness and transitoriness of the body, he must take care of it in order that it may be in a fit condition for practising spiritual disciplines. He must bear illness and other sufferings of the body patiently. They are the taxes which the soul has to pay for the use of the body, as the tenant pays house-rent for the use of the house. Besides, sufferings often have a chastening effect on the mind of man. As the iron must be heated and hammered again and again before it becomes steel, the ordinary man has to be put in the furnace of tribulation and hammered with the persecutions of the world before he becomes pure and humble, and fit to enter the presence of the Lord.

A sincere aspirant should do his utmost to overcome the bondage of the senses and the desires pertaining to them. For he alone is a true man who is dead even in this life, that is, whose passions and propensities have been annihilated as in a dead body. As to how these passions like lust and anger can be conquered, the Master says: "So long as these passions are directed towards the world and its objects, they behave as enemies. But when they are directed towards God, they become the best friends of man; for then they lead him to God. The lust for the things of the world must be changed into a hankering for God; the anger that

man feels in relation to others should be turned towards God for His not manifesting Himself to him. One should deal with all the passions in the same manner. These passions cannot be eradicated, but they can be educated." For those who have not already attained perfection, it will also be necessary to keep aloof from objects of temptation as far as possible.

Two virtues on which the Master insists uncompromisingly are truth and Brahmacharya (continence). Spiritual striving is the quest after God who is the soul of truth, and as such, unless one speaks the truth in all matters, one cannot progress in it at all. Through truth one can realise God, and truthfulness, according to the Master, is the Tapasya (austerity) of the age of Kali. According to him even the wearing of a false garb is bad. For if the mind is not in accord with the garb, one grows hypocritical and all fear of doing wrong and uttering falsehood gradually disappears. Spiritual ruin is the sure consequence of it. The great task of spiritual life is to make thought word and action tally.

Equally important is Brahmacharya or continence. Sexuality discolours one's mind and dissipates one's energies. Thus in one who indulges in sex the mind is unfit to reflect the Divine, and his emotions being drained off through fleshly indulgences, his mind lacks in the vigour needed for the steep ascent of the spirit. That is why Sannyasa, requiring absolute celibacy, is recommended for those who aspire after the higher achievements of spiritual life. Even in the case of beginners who are not capable of practising this

difficult disciple, some kind of regulation and disciplining of sex life is necessary if any progress is to be made in the spiritual life.

V

All these mental and moral training that a spiritual aspirant undergoes is to build a secure foundation for the edifice of devotional life. Hence prayer and cultivation of devotion are of utmost importance in the Master's teachings. Addressing the devotees, the Master says, "God is extremely attentive, my boys. He has heard every time you have prayed to Him. He will surely reveal Himself to you some day or other, at least at the time of death." Man need not postpone cultivating the habit of prayer till he arrives at settled conviction about the nature of God. If one cannot settle whether

God has form or not, the Master advises one to pray: "O Lord, I cannot understand whether Thou art with form or without it. Whatever Thou mayest be, have mercy on me. Do Thou reveal Thyself unto me." One may even attribute the various forms and aspects of God current in society to imagination and have no faith in them. Yet God will shower His grace on a person if he believes in a Divine Power that creates and directs the world, and prays with a distressed heart, "O God, I do not know Thy real nature. Deign to reveal Thyself to me as Thou art." If the spirit of devotion is thus cultured, there is little danger for an aspirant. The ship of life steers clear of every danger, if the mind, its compass needle, is always turned towards God without oscillation.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

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

IT was a Sunday afternoon, when a large number of devotees had assembled in Mahapurushji's room. He was enquiring about the welfare of some and was giving replies to the questions of others. It seemed, all the time, that his mind was completely in-drawn. At about 3 p.m. a group of devotees, who had returned from a visit to Dakshineswar, enter-

ed Sri Mahapurushji's room. The Swami was delighted to see them and asked, "Well, where are you all coming from?"

They took their seats after salutations with all reverence. One of them said, "To-day we had been to Dakshineswar; we have worshipped Gods in different Shrines and have taken the consecrated food of Mother Kali

there. The day has been very delightfully spent. As we visited Master's room, the Panchavati, the Bilva tree, etc., the mind turned on the different modes of Sadhana which Sri Ramakrishna practised for so many years.

Mahapurushji: Oh yes, that is indeed true. The Master lived there for a period of about thirty years and practised, in those very place, the different types of Sadhanas, accompanied by constant divine ecstasies and lofty spiritual experiences. The room in which he lived is not an ordinary place. To my mind Dakshineswar is as sacred as Benares. It is nothing short of it. I cannot view it in any other way. My salutation to the Master is offered from this place as it is not possible for me to go there always. Can you find any other place equal to this? As Benares is supra-mundane, so is Dakshineswar.

Devotee: Maharaj, we are having a great desire of learning from you about your stay at the Cossipore garden-house, and also the early history of the starting of the Math by Swamiji.

Mahapurush Maharaj kept silent for a while, as if he was attempting to bring his mind down to the ordinary plane of consciousness. Then he began to speak in a low voice: "When the disease of the Master's throat reached an acute stage, he was brought to the Cossipore garden-house for better treatment and nursing. We all joined to render service to him. Afterwards the Master passed away in that place."

Devotee: Could you ascertain that the Master had actually left the body?

Maharaj: No. At first none of us could apprehend that. We thought

the Master had passed into the super-conscious state, because it would sometimes so happen that he would remain absorbed in Samadhi even for two or three days consecutively. So thinking him to be in Samadhi we uttered the Names of Gods and Goddesses to call him back to his ordinary consciousness. Thus the whole night passed away in this condition; no improvement was perceptible. Next day Dr. Mahendra Nath Sarkar was called for. After examining the Master minutely the doctor declared that he had passed away. He found no vestige of life left in the body. The doctor advised us to photograph him which we did, accordingly. Then at about 2 or 2-30 p.m., the last rite was gone through at the Cossipore burning Ghat.

Devotee: You had then to pass your days in stress and strain?

Maharaj: Not at all. We felt nothing of it. We were spending our days with one definite purpose. We were all so much engrossed in the service of the Master and in meditation and austerities that days and nights passed without our being conscious of it. That was a unique period of our life. After Master's passing away, all, except Latu and myself, went back to their respective homes. Swamiji also did the same, but he used to come every day and take care of us. The sacred remains of Sri Ramakrishna's body were in that Cossipore garden-house because the period of lease did not lapse as yet. Once Swamiji and others conferred together and decided to take the remains somewhere on the banks of the Ganges, because the Master had desired so. But a suitable place could not be had. On the other hand, Ram

Babu and others were making preparations to take them to Kankurgachi. We were pained to think of it, particularly at the thought that the last wishes of the Master would not be redeemed. We informed Balaram Babu to come with an earthen vessel. He hurried to us on information. That very night we sifted the bones from the ashes, sealed them up in that vessel with mud, and despatched the sacred vessel to Balaram Babu's house. As daily worship was in vogue in that house, these sacred remains were also regularly worshipped there. Ram Babu, in the meantime, took the remaining ashes and bones to Kankurgachi. We did not disclose what we had been doing; he could also scent nothing. Those sacred remains are being worshipped at the Math now. Swamiji took them over to the Math premises on his head. He would name the casket containing the sacred remains as 'Casket of Atmarama'. We also do the same.

Devotee: Had you any vision of the Master after he left the mortal world?

Mahapurushji: Holy Mother had a vision of Sri Ramakrishna after going to Brindavan. I also repaired to Brindavan. Latu and someone else were at Cossipore. Swamiji used to come to Balaram Babu's house and would discuss about the ways and means of starting an organisation which would knit all of us together by a common purpose. It happened thus: One day Suresh Babu came to Swamiji and said, "O Brother Naren, Sri Ramakrishna appeared before me last night and told, 'My children are left forlorn here and there, what have you done for them?'

I am in great mental agony since I saw that vision. See what could be done; I have full consent to your decision." Swamiji was overjoyed to find his ardent desire attaining fulfilment in an uncalculated manner. He remarked, "I am also thinking about the same matter for the last few days. That has happily come about. At the very start it is advisable to hire a house. What do you think of it?" Suresh Babu readily agreed. After some search a two-storied house was rented for Rupees ten per month at Baranagore. The house was a dilapidated one; people of the neighbourhood would call it 'Haunted house'. Visitors would fear to tread its grounds. However we all occupied that house. By this time I returned from Brindaban. Finding me again Swamiji said, "Tarakda, you have come; it is all for the best. I was also thinking of your arrival. We have rented a house; come and live there." We began to live there. At that time we were seized with a spirit of strong dispassion. Days were spent in austerities, worship and recital of sacred scriptures. These would go on unabated, day in and day out. We would not feel the pinch of hunger and thirst. Devotional songs and Kirtana would be going on very often. At times we participated in Puja and ecstatic dance. At such occasions the door-keeper on the ground floor would fear the collapse of the roof. Amidst spiritual joy and delight we passed our days at that time. Thus you can understand how the corner-stone of our organisation was laid amidst this scene of renunciation, penances and austerities.

REPETITION OF DIVINE NAME

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. We are publishing in the *Vedanta Kesari* for the past few months notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany. The present instalment, which forms the sixth, throws some light on the practice of Japa.]

I

FAITH is most essential before taking up Japa or repetition of Divine Name. It does not matter even if it becomes mechanical to some extent. The beginner will find that his centre of consciousness is continually shifting, going up or coming down. This is a most difficult situation for all aspirants. You must never allow yourselves to get into a drowsy state during your attempts at meditation or during Japa. This is most dangerous. Sleep, drowsiness, and meditation should never be connected in any way. If you feel very drowsy while you are doing Japa, just get up and pace the room till this drowsiness leaves you.

In the beginner there are mostly two states of mind. In one the mind becomes awfully restless, in the other it falls down to the subliminal plane. Both are to be avoided if you want to make some real progress.

When the mind is awfully restless and out-going, you should doggedly persist in your Japa, even do it mechanically, without giving way to this restlessness. In that way part of your mind is always engaged in Japa. Thus the whole mind cannot become or remain restless.

The other state, that of drowsiness, is most dangerous, and should be

avoided at all costs. There are people for whom sitting for meditation is an invitation to sleep. A restless, terribly out-going mind is even better. One is Rajas, the other Tamas; and Tamas is even lower than Rajas. Hence it can have no place in spiritual life or striving.

Imagine that along with each repetition of the name of your Ishtam or your Mantra your whole body, your whole mind, senses, etc., are purified. This faith must be made very firm because in a way, this is the idea underlying Japa. The name of the Ishtam soothes one's nerves, calms the mind, changes the body. When the mind is in a state of great tension or is depressed, begin at once humming the name, and imagine that this is bringing about a balanced state, a new sort of rhythm, in the body and in the mind. Actually you will feel how it soothes the whole nervous system, how it stops the out-going tendency of the mind more and more. Rhythmic breathing brings about calmness and a certain rhythm in the nervous system, and this again facilitates spiritual practices. The Holy Thought brings about a certain rhythm in body and mind. Think with each repetition of the name of your Ishtam or of your Mantra that you are becoming purer and purer. You

cannot know the effect all at once; but if you go on for some time steadily and doggedly you will feel it; and then after some years, you will be astonished to find what a great change has come over you. There is great scope for experiments. This body is to be polarised and made rhythmic, at least to some extent; and the nerves too are to be polarised and made rhythmic. Through practice, we must make the body, the senses, the mind and the breath rhythmic; then only we come to have the proper mood for spiritual practices and meditation, and we can begin them in right earnest. Everything else belongs to the preliminary steps.

II

While doing your breathing exercises, try to give the following suggestions to your mind: I am breathing in purity, breathing out all impurity. I am breathing in strength, breathing out all weakness. I am breathing in calmness, breathing out all restlessness. I am breathing in freedom, breathing out all bondage. These suggestions may be given even while doing your Japa. They are very helpful in preparing the ground for the real practices.

Strict regularity and a fixed daily routine for all spiritual practices are very much wanted; deep thinking is very essential in the aspirant's life. Then in the fullness of time through habit, the right mood just comes and makes everything else easier. Once this habit is formed, you will make greater progress and feel the strain of all these practices much less.

Everything is difficult in this path. Visualisation is difficult, control of

the mind is difficult, meditation is difficult. Japa is difficult, but if done properly a little less so. So new strength must be gained. And for this the suggestions I mentioned are very helpful. Make use of the great power of sound and sound-symbols. Man is a psychological animal; we must know how to calm our mind and body. Just as this mind of ours is ever ready to deceive us, we must be ever ready to deceive this mind, taking the help of something higher.

You must try to feel that the Holy name, the Holy Mantra, purifies you. If you just try for some time, this feeling is sure to come. Make the experiment yourself. Verify everything that is being told you. If you do not realise these truths yourself, it would be ever so much better to burn all the books on religion, to throw all the holy scriptures overboard.

You cannot realise the great effect of Japa now. This rhythmic repetition of the name of the Ishtam has a great effect and is one of the most essential practices in the life of the beginner. OM is a very fine rhythmic syllable. So we should take its help.

III

Immediately after sitting down for meditation with folded hands, one says: "Whether impure or pure, under all conditions whoever remembers the Lord, becomes purified inwardly and outwardly."

The aspirant thinks that along the Sushumna-canal the Jiva (individualised soul) is taken to the centre in the head and is connected with the Universal Spirit. And then he thinks that the gross and the subtle bodies are burnt away, and he himself be-

comes one with the Absolute. I am He, I am He!

"Do Thou appear here, do Thou stay here, do Thou be steady, do Thou come near me and accept my worship."

Right prayer requires first great intensity, great concentration and one-pointedness. Without these, no prayer will be of any avail.

"Do Thou save me, O Lord, Thou who hast taken this form of the Universe."

Saying this Mantra we remember the All-Pervading Being, the Being with these thousands of heads, thousands of eyes and thousands of feet, who envelopes and permeates this whole universe, nay, even exists beyond.

"Being subject to the limitations (workings) of the vital energy, intellect and the body, whatever sin has been committed by me in the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, in thought word and deed, by means of the different organs of senses—may all that be offered to Brahman. I surrender myself, with all whom I call my own at the feet of the Lord."

IV

Transcend both good and evil; for wherever there is good, there you unavoidably get bad too. Happiness and misery always go together. The moment you accept happiness you must take misery too. All the pairs of opposites go together, so you can never have one without getting the other also. The only solution is to transcend them and reach a plane

beyond all relative good and evil, all relative happiness and misery. There is no such thing as absolute good or absolute evil, absolute happiness or absolute misery, on this phenomenal plane.

Cheerfulness is a sign of great progress, but many people do not understand this. Spiritual life eases all heart-burn, so it makes people cheerful.

"Let us meditate on the excellent glory of that Divine Being who illumines everything. May He guide our understanding." (Gayatri).

Always take the help of the sound-symbol, for sound and thought are inter-related. Thoughts manifest themselves in different sounds. Is there any eternal relation between the thought and the sound? Take for instance the word cow. We express this 'thing' 'cow' with the help of different sound-symbols. For each language a different sound-symbol is used to express the thought 'cow'. The bovine idea finds its expression; and there is an inseparable connection between this idea and its sound-symbol.

Now we find that the Divine idea finds its expression in different Holy Names, and there is an inseparable connection between the holy idea and the sound. That is why we make use of the sound in our spiritual life. It becomes easier for us to call up the thought with the help of the sound. We should see that we pass from the sound-symbol to the thought; otherwise the sound does not help us.

ASCETICISM AND UNION WITH THE DIVINE

By Wolfram H. Koch

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality and a master of several European languages. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe. His writings dealing with the life and teachings of the saints and mystics of mediæval Europe, familiarises us with the rich spiritual tradition of mystic Christianity, which in India is much less known than the official form of Christianity so enthusiastically propagated by the various Churches. The place of asceticism in spiritual endeavour forms the theme of the first part of the present study, while the second part is a *catena* of excerpts from a valuable work called 'De Adhaerendo Deo,' full of practical suggestions for the spiritual aspirant. The evident similarity between these teachings and those of the Indian Yogis tends to prove the Vedantic truth that the aim and spirit of all genuine religious quest is the same.]

I

THE little treatise 'De Adhaerendo Deo,' generally attributed to Albert the Great, the great schoolman, theologian and famous teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, is one of the gems of Western ascetic and mystic literature. The really sensitive reader will fully realise the joy and gladness of the mystic quest, in spite of the apparent austerity and sacrifice of all that the world holds dear and to which the world clings as the most precious treasure and fulfilment of human life.

It is one of the great errors of our times, including the more extreme and all too sweeping forms of some branches of psycho-analysis and modern psycho-analytic faddism, to overlook the joys and satisfaction of the ascetic adventure—the deep inner gladness of a Seuse, a St. Francis, a Teresa de Jesus, a St. John of the Cross—by riveting the whole attention to the apparent self-torture and rigour of some forms of the ascetic life. There is, no doubt, this side to it, especially during the preliminary stages of purification; but people who

only see this negative aspect will never be able to judge fairly; for they are not able to realise the positive, inner meaning of even some of the more repulsive practices and attempts which the out-and-out ascetic or devotee indulges in during his maddest yearning after God and after Union with that Love which never changes and never fetters the human soul to the animal.

On the contrary, these mystics, even the gloomier ones among them, are just like rays of different luminosity gliding hither and thither over the roads of the world and now and then kindling other rays by their illuminating touch, although they may be centuries apart, and speaking widely different languages.

Instead of discussing their so-called aberrations and the apparently negative attitude towards things and ordinary human relationships, as seen by the worldly materialistic mind, rather all of them should be called the 'Giullari di Dio' (the mountebanks) and the joyous buffoons and vagrant singers of God—as the early companions of St. Francis used to call them-

selves, while they wandered over the roads and hills of Umbria, overflowing with gladness and charity and self-denial. For if there is any real joy to be found in this life of ours, the mystic knows it; and none else. The joy and happiness sought by the worldly-minded are mere phantoms that fade away like the light of a bright winter day into long and desperate hours of darkness and forsakenness, leaving us more utterly alone and without light than ever and heightening human suffering sometimes to breaking point. There is, no doubt, more of self-torture in the life of the so-called sane worldly man than in that of the most God-intoxicated devotee, although there may be far less of self-denial. This self-torture is not recognised as such, since people have become so familiar with it that they no longer realise its true nature and fundamental unhealthiness, but just take it as simply belonging to the day's work. Whatever the mystic path and adventure may be, it is essentially the most beautiful homecoming ever given to a human being, the one unchanging fulfilment granted him in life and by life, after the curse of separation and separateness, imagined or real, has been removed.

The worldly mind rather approves of the strangest expressions of worldly love, and the Troubadours of the world have always been hailed and applauded by the general public. The public can appreciate the madness of the Troubadour for some human being whom he wishes to serve in all possible chivalrous ways, in tournaments and tiltings, in song and music, even at the cost of his life. When love takes the form of extreme attachment to

transient beauty of body and mind, the world recognises its value and makes much of it in its annals. When love takes the form of detachment from ephemeral beauty and longing feeling for something beyond all change and all dependence, the world feels bewildered and sees nothing but madness and pathological aberration in the sacrifice and the chivalry that this too implies. To a sympathetic observer who is able to take a more realistic view of things, the greatest of the Western mystics appear to be, as it were, the Troubadours of the Lord, the Tumblers of our Lady. He perceives how much inner joy there is even in so gloomy a figure as St. Dominic—the St. Dominic as he is generally painted—, even in the wildest ascetic practices of a Seuse, a Teresa or an Angela of Foligno. Essentially, the mystic quest is a joyous quest, revealing much more joy than is known to the average man through momentary flashes of happiness.

The Hermit of Hampole, one of the most typical—because most intensely personal—Western minstrels of God, a true 'Giullare di Dio' in every sense, and perhaps for that reason the one who bears the greatest likeness to St. Francis and his early companions at San Damiano and the Porziuncola, says in the opening chapters of his great Love Song, the rapturous 'Incendium Amoris' (Fire of Love), of this love and joy as experienced by himself:—

"More have I marvelled than I showed when forsooth I first felt my heart wax warm truly, not in the imagination but as if it were burned with sensible fire. I was forsooth amazed as the burning in my soul burst up; and of an unwonted solace, oft-times because of my ignorance of

such healthy abundance, I have groped (i.e., searched) my breast seeking whether this burning were from any bodily cause outwardly. But when I knew that it was only kindled inwardly from a ghostly cause, and that this burning was nought of fleshly love or concupiscence, in this I conceived it was the gift of my Maker. Gladly therefore I am molten into the desire of greater love; and especially for the inflowing of this most sweet, delightful and ghostly sweetness; the which, with that ghostly flame, has pithily comforted my mind."

"Truly affluence of this everlasting love comes not to me in idleness; nor might I feel this ghostly heat while I was weary bodily for travel, or truly, unmanly occupied with worldly mirth, or else given without measure to disputation; but I have felt myself truly that in such things it waxes cold, until, putting a-back all things in which I might outwardly be occupied, I have striven to be only in the sight of my Saviour and to dwell in full inward burning."

"While the love of temporal things occupies the heart of any man, it altogether suffers him to have no devotion. Truly the love of God and of this world may never be together in one soul, but whichever love is stronger puts out the other that thus it may openly be known who is this world's lover and who Christ's follower. Certainly as Christ's lovers behave themselves towards the world and the flesh, so lovers of the world behave themselves towards God and their own souls."

"The perfect, forsooth, that are taken up into this surpassing plenty of endless friendship, and imbued with sweetness that shall not waste, live anew in the clear chalice of full sweet charity; and in the holy counsel of mirth they draw into their souls happy heat, by the which gladdened, they have greater comfort of ghostly lectuary (i.e., that which melts in the mouth) than may be trowed."

The Hermit of Hampole, too, knew the necessity of asceticism and of the withdrawal of the mind from outside and worldly things, even from those apparently harmless,—for during the process of purification all outside

things contain in them a germ of danger and distraction. But like all his fellow-seekers he never meant to drive people into the waste and barren lands of gloomy self-condemnation and constant self-torture as many moderns would have it with reference to all such writings and counsels, because they, in their materialistic strait-jackets, can no longer even conceive of the inner joy of a Seuse, a Tauler, a St. Catherine of Genoa and all the others whose whole life, after they had passed through the purificatory stages and processes, was, taken in its inner essence, but a marvellous symphony or a majestic fugue glorifying the ultimate union with the source of all joy and harmony. So these people, not realising the essential manliness of ascetic treatises like Richard Rolle's 'De Emendatione vitae' (Of the Amending of Life) and the 'De Adhaerendo Deo', search for some pathological cause to explain away the experience of the highest consummation of life these mystics had. They cannot see that, to the true mystic who is of healthy mind and body, detachment from his kith and kin and from all that the world holds dear, simply means attachment to something more joy-giving and reliable than the objects from which he detaches himself. No sane person will snatch at a momentary joy and gladness if he is given the possibility of having joy and gladness for his constant and faithful companions, filling him and radiating from him to all he lives with or meets. There is a very deep sense in Christ's words, "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" (St. Luke XIV:26, 27).

Such teachings may not be comfortable or satisfactory to the average so-called pious minds that would like to combine both materialism and a comfortable religion more or less based on everyday morality; but their implication is very clear to anybody who is able to take an unbiased attitude, though the ideal may be too high to be reached at once without making use of a series of stepping-stones. And the mystics and seers of Truth of all ages and climes have been trying again and again in different ways and with different means to point out all such stepping-stones to us and persuade us to make use of them for our own growth and liberation and for the welfare of others.

Now, whether it was Albert the Great, the Dominican, the profound thinker and scholar, the naturalist and scientist, or whether it was John of Kastl, the Benedictine monk and mystic, who wrote the little treatise on the union with the Divine and ascetic practices leading up to it, surely it will, in spite of its shortness, ever remain one of the gems of spiritual literature as it deals with what is most essential in the Divine adventure for every earnest spiritual aspirant, be he of the East or of the West. And notwithstanding all the negations it contains, it is a cheerful guide to that eternal joy of the true Tumbler of our Lady, of the spiritual Troubadour—and every real monk belongs to their company—a guide to that joy which makes sacrifice appear as nothing, a state of mind so well-known to worldly lovers to whom sacrifice for their beloved never means anything negative but rather the very

fulfilment of all their aspirations and longings. It is a curious fact in this topsy-turvy world of ours that anyone may have very strong feelings and emotions with reference to other persons or to some other person, and even show them quite plainly without being considered a lunatic, but the moment the same intensity of feeling is given expression to with reference to some higher and more permanent ideal, the world grows suspicious and puts such a person under the category of those suffering from mental delusions or of the morally and physically unbalanced.

The author of the present treatise, whoever he be, speaks from his own experience and knowledge of the spiritual life and its preliminaries, and this not as the gloomy ascetic of the Inquisition, as such a one is generally painted in lurid colours in the works of later writers of the Reformation, but as the friend and doctor of others who wishes to cure them of their delusions and of their worldly blindness and help them to attain true inner poise and gladness by pointing out to them deeper values of life which can only be seen after we have made some real progress in our detachment from things and people.

II

Unfortunately, space does not allow of a full translation of the whole work being given, but it is to be hoped that the chosen passages will help the reader to a clear conception of some eternal spiritual truths and of the ways and means to attain union with the Divine, as seen and experienced by its author. If, to some, the rules seem too strict and the advice given too inhuman, let them think of the

lover wishing to sacrifice his all for the beloved. This will help them in understanding the attitude of every true spiritual Troubadour and his yearning for union with the object of his love.

At the beginning of the little treatise the author very touchingly says:

"It has come to my mind, in so far as this is possible during the length of time of this exile and pilgrimage, to write once more at the end of my life and to try to deal with the most complete detachment to be attained in this life and of the pure, tranquil and strong union of the soul thus attached to God alone. All the more, as Christian perfection itself has no other end but that charity which unites one to God. Everyone is obliged, for reasons of salvation, to join that union with God, through charity, which is brought about by strict fulfilment of precepts and conformity with the Divine Will: this strict fulfilment of precepts removes all that is opposed to the essence and virtue of charity."

Even in these few sentences we feel how, to the author, this 'most complete detachment' really means the most perfect and unalterable love to which every spiritual man should attain, and which he should even become so as to help his fellow-men along the thorny road to higher evolution and to a deeper understanding of the ultimate values of life, drawing them away from the wild-goose chase after the ephemeral which only unmans men more and more by enticing them to run into desperate ventures to obtain they know not what and making them come back to the one support of all life, the only unchanging Reality in and beyond all.

We shall now turn to the words of the author himself, where he tries to teach us something of the path to be traversed with its self-denial, sacrifice, struggle and final joy of achievement.

DETACHMENT FROM ALL THAT IS CREATED

If anyone really desires to reach or to approach such a state of union, this is what is necessary:—Under all circumstances his eyes and his senses must be closed to everything outside; there must not be anything to embarrass, trouble, preoccupy or disquiet him; and he must entirely detach himself from all things as being useless, harmful and pernicious for that end.

Having done so, he must recollect himself completely within himself; and there he must not hold anything else before the eyes of his mind than Jesus, endeavouring with all his strength and care to penetrate into him through him, i.e., through him as man into him as God, through the wounds of his humanity to the most intimate sanctuary of his Divinity. At the same time he should surrender himself with everything that concerns him in all simplicity and singleness of mind in a blind abandonment to the infallible care of His Divine Providence, according to the words of St. Peter—"Cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

If the monk does not do this, what does it profit him to win the whole world losing his soul? The station he has embraced, the holiness he professes, the outward appearance which symbolises it, his poor dress, shaven head and all outward observances—what do these profit him without a life based on humility and truth, the life of Jesus Christ dwelling within him through the faith created by charity, according to that word of the Gospel, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'. For this Kingdom of Heaven is Jesus Christ.

The more the mind is preoccupied with the thought and care for lower and human things, the more it moves away from higher and heavenly things; and the greater the fervour with which one withdraws one's faculties from the memory, love and thought of lower things so as to turn them towards the higher, the greater will be the perfection of prayer and the purer the contemplation.

It is not possible for the soul to apply itself at the same time perfectly to two objects which are as opposed to each other as light and darkness. Now, to unite oneself to God means dwelling in light, to attach oneself to the world means being plunged into darkness.

And this is the highest perfection of man in this life: To be united to God in such a way that the soul finds itself wholly with all its faculties and powers gathered into God its Lord, so that it forms with Him but one spirit, and that nothing occupies its memory any longer but God, and that all its affections, made one in the joy of Love, delight only in the Creator who is their sweet and perfect rest.

God is the form of the soul and must imprint Himself upon it just as the seal upon wax, the trade-mark on its object. Now this is only realised when reason is perfectly illumined, according to its capacity, by the knowledge of God, the highest truth, and the will entirely captivated to love the highest Good, and memory fully absorbed in the contemplation and enjoyment of eternal Bliss, and the sweet and delicious restfulness of such Bliss. It is the undeviating continuance in this state of mind that makes the glory of the Blessed and the perfection of their home, and it is manifest that the perfect beginning of this state is perfection in this very life.

Happy is he who, withdrawing himself continually from all phantoms and images, falls back upon his inmost being and there uplifts himself to God. He ends in forgetting all representations of senses to a certain degree, and thus, with his understanding and will made bare, simple and pure, succeeds in applying himself to the most eminently simple object: God.

So eject from your mind all phantoms and forms of created things in order to occupy yourself with God with intelligence, heart and will, utterly denuded. This is the goal of all spiritual exercises, namely, to enable one to betake oneself to God and to rest in Him within oneself through a very pure act of the understanding and a very fervent movement of the will, without encumbrance of sense-images.

For this reason it is absolutely necessary that whatever may have been heard, seen, done, said or anything similar, it must not bring into the soul either images or distracting occupations; and the mind must avoid shaping therefrom representations and feeding therewith the imagination, either before, after or during, such a time. When images of outward objects no

longer rise in the memory of the mind, one can freely devote oneself to prayer, to meditation, to psalmody or to any other work and spiritual exercise without having to fear the backslidings which cause distractions.

If you constantly occupy your imagination day and night with your own concerns, making your mind the slave of no end of idle ideas, running from one thought to another and revolving them again and again in every possible manner and direction, you spend your time and your energy uselessly and foolishly. So whatever happens and however and wherever, receive it with perfect equanimity of soul in silence and peace as coming from the fatherly hands of Divine Providence.

As far as possible keep apart from all your acquaintances and friends and all men as well as from the affairs of the world which might hinder your intentions. Zealously grasp all opportunities to find place, time and means to devote yourself to inner rest and contemplation. Do not love anything so much as silence and solitude. Avoid the shipwrecks of the world which surrounds you and flee from all the troubles of a noisy and agitated world.

Therefore, at all times, your principal endeavour should be to possess your heart pure, free and calm, keeping yourself like a stranger to the outer senses. Recollect yourself continually within and as much as possible hold the paths to your heart, carefully closed to all representations of sense and to all images of earthly things.

One should clearly know that among all spiritual exercises the purification of the heart claims in a certain way the foremost place; nay, it is the end to which all these exercises are directed, and the reward which generally crowns all the efforts of the truly inward and religious man in this life.

Struggle energetically to collect all the scattered forces of your heart again and all the affections of your soul and to lead them back to the only true, pure and sovereign good, and to possess them recollected within yourself. Then endeavour to keep your mind busy with Divine things pertaining to God, and abandoning all the frail objects of the earth, try to

make your heart incessantly rise towards these realities of the higher world and, through an intense effort with the grace of Jesus Christ, to transform it there.

Thus work without ceasing and with all your strength and singleness of heart, until you succeed in no longer being agitated or troubled by the phantoms of exterior things, and in keeping yourself always firmly established in God, as if your soul were already beyond time in the Now of Eternity, that is to say, in the bosom of Divinity, abandoning yourself through that love of Jesus Christ that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith, and trusting yourself wholly, fully and absolutely to God in all the trials and events of life, finding your joy in patiently and always obeying His will and good pleasure.

These truths, well meditated upon, will do more for the happiness of your life than all the riches, all the pleasures, all the honours, nay, even more than all wisdom and science of this deceitful world, of this corruptible life and existence, even should you surpass in all the gifts all those that ever lived.

THE NAKEDNESS OF THE MIND

It is a certain truth that the more you denude yourself of images and outward embarrassments of the world and of the senses, the more of its strength and its inner sensibility will your soul recover, wherewith you taste the things from above. Therefore learn to sever yourself from phantoms and representations of senses. There is nothing that pleases God so much as a mind bare of this sort of images. He even finds His "delights with the children of men," that is, with those who, free from all these occupations, distractions and passions, occupy themselves with Him and endeavour to unite themselves to Him with a calm, simple and pure mind.

Otherwise, if your memory, imagination and thought are often busy with such things, be it that they present themselves for the first time, or that they come to you from the past, how could your soul not be caught and not receive all these impressions of the diverse objects that occupy you? The Holy Ghost separates Himself from perverse thoughts and "His power, when it is tired, reproveth the unwise."

Always remember this as the fundamental principle of the spiritual doctrine: You who aspire after the knowledge of God and after His service, after His sweet familiarity, if you really wish to possess God, you must denude your heart of all affection pertaining to the senses, not only of affection for some person, whoever he be, but also of affection for any thing, whatsoever it be, in order that,—thus detached from everything—you may incline towards God with all your heart and all your forces without any division, free from all care and all preoccupation, relying on His Providence only with full trust for everything.

INNER RECOLLECTEDNESS

In spiritual progress and the work of intimate union to God within yourself there must be no rest, no turning back, before having reached the goal. If your mind allows itself to be caught and stops at the lower things that cross its path, it finds itself at once dragged away by innumerable distractions and along countless by-paths. It divides itself, as it were, in itself, gets dissipated and dispersed over as many objects as there are to attract its desires. Then any movement one makes is but aimless agitation. One runs without ever arriving, one tires oneself out without ever attaining rest.

But if, on the contrary, our heart and our mind, carried away by love and desire, cut themselves off from the innumerable lower distractions, if, step by step abandoning these lower things, so as to collect themselves within on the only immutable Good that gives all satisfaction, they learn to dwell within themselves only and attach themselves to that Good through a love that no longer knows any separation, then, instead of losing themselves in dissipation, they recollect themselves in unity and fortify themselves the more, the more they lift themselves up, carried along by knowledge and yearning. They acquire the habit of inwardly abiding within this true and highest Good. They end by becoming absolutely inseparable from it, and in this way reach the immutable possession of true life, which is God Himself. Then they rest for ever without fearing the vicissitudes of change and time, in this inner quiet and secret abode of Divinity,

being perfectly established within themselves in Jesus Christ who is for those who come to him "the way and the truth and the life".

THE PERFECT BEARING OF THE MIND

Above all it is important to hold your mind well unsullied without representations or pictures of sense, and free from anything that might bring embarrassment to it. Therefore, do not preoccupy yourself either with the world nor with your friends, nor with prosperity or the future, with yourself or with others, not even too much with your own sins. But with a certain simplicity of purity and without pictures think that you are beyond and outside this world with God alone, as if your soul were already in Eternity far from the body in the state of separation from it. Certainly it would not occupy itself with the things of the earth, nor would it be anxious about what was happening in this world, whether there was peace or war, fine weather or rain, nor about any mundane thing, but wholly in conformity with God it would have its thoughts, desires and affections engaged with God alone.

So in the manner of this soul, abandon even from now on your body and all created things, present and future, and in nakedness and detachment keep the mind focussed as much as you can on the uncreated light. Have your mind purged of any image that might embarrass it and veil this light from you, like an angel bound to a body who is in no way hindered by the workings of the flesh, nor embarrassed by vain and futile thoughts.

Therefore the mind should strengthen itself against temptations, persecutions and insults of all sorts, so that it dwells unshakably established in God, always self-composed whatever be its fortune.

The faithful soul must be united to God, make and hold its will conformable to the Divine Will, and for that reason have no inward occupation with or attachment for any creature, as if it were existing before its creation and as if there existed but the soul and God alone; and it should in this state receive everything, generally and particularly, from the hands of Divine Providence with perfect unvariableness and unshakable security, waiting for the Lord

alone in all things in patience, silence and peace.

To denude one's mind of all images is the sovereign means to arrive at a truly spiritual life, at this union with God, which is brought about in the highest part of the soul through good will, and which makes the soul wholly conformable to God.

Let us go straight to God. Let Him alone be the centre, and the object, and the motive and the end of all our contemplation, of our whole life, of all our works—He who with a mere sign of His will could and would still produce in infinite number beings more perfect than any that exist. He fills all. He is, according to his own essence, wholly and completely in all things, both generally and particularly, more intimate, more present to everything than that thing ever is to itself. In Him everything finds itself reunited to unity and everything lives eternally.

CONTEMPLATION

To the extent to which the soul withdraws from everything and inwardly falls back upon itself, the eye of contemplation opens itself more and more, and the soul makes use of itself as a ladder to cross all that is created and to arrive at contemplating Divinity. And in this contemplation it is kindled with the love of Heavenly and Divine things and of those of Eternity and no longer looks at the things of time except from a distance, as mere nothings.

In this way advancing in God through the way of elimination, we first deny everything that is corporeal and that can in any way be perceived by the senses and pictured by the imagination; secondly, we deny even what is purely intellectual, and finally even that existence by which He dwells in the creatures. This is, according to St. Dionysius, the most excellent manner in which we can be united to God in our present condition of travellers on the way.

After all, O my Soul, why vainly occupy thyself with so many things which always leave thee empty? Seek, love, this only perfect Good that contains all good. It suffices thee. Unfortunate is he who knows and possesses everything else, but ignores this Good. And he who knows everything else and this Good at the same time, is not happier because he knows everything else, but only because of this Good. So St. John

said: "This is eternal life; that they may know Thee, the only true God". And the Prophet has it, "I shall be satisfied when Thy Glory shall appear."

With these words we will take leave of the author, however fragmentary the chosen passages and however faint the echo of his thoughts carried to our ear may be, for, as Pascal so beautifully expressed it in his 'Pensees':

There is always light enough for those who desire to see God and darkness enough for those who have no such desire. This light will illumine the chosen and this darkness will make them humble. And here we see the baseness and the nobility of man. We cannot find happiness in ourselves. We cannot find it in the world around us, and in the end we discover that our true joy is not to be found in ourselves or in this world, but in God.

If we constantly think of and act up to the precepts given us by the great God-Men of the world—which

can be summed up in the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "If you give your mind to God in solitude, you will receive the spirit of renunciation and devotion. If you give the same mind to the world, it will become vulgar and think only about the world which is another name for 'Woman and Gold'"—we shall all, one day, belong, consciously and full of gladness, to the company of the 'Giullari di Dio,' the merry Tumblers of our Lady, singing our own songs of joy and fulfilment for Him and in Him who is the

"Father of all! in every age
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by
sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

—Pope.

THE SACRED GOSPEL OF SRIVAISHNAVAS

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

[Mr. Srinivasachariar is the joint-editor of the *Ramakrishna Vijayam*, the Tamil organ of the Mission, and a pious Srivaishnava. He attempts a brief and authoritative exposition of the two major texts of the Srivaishnava faith known as the 'sacred couplet,' which may be termed the systole and diastole of Srivaishnavism.]

THE SACRED COUPLETS

THE Sacred couplet consists of the two sentences *Sriman nara-yana-charanau saranam prapadye* and *Srimate narayanaya namah*. The first one is a declaration of the Jivatman or the individual Soul that he seeks refuge in the feet of the Lord through the meditation of Lakshmi, and the second is a fervent prayer for service to the Dual Personality—the Divine Mother eternally associated with the father of the Universe.

Just as Narayana, the Supreme

Lord, is the means and the end sought after by the devotee, so also is Sri both the mediatrix and the partaker of His service. Sri, as the name itself implies, conveys a double meaning: the Being that is worshipped by all mortals with a view to attain salvation, and also the Being that worships the Lord as the eternal, ideal, devotee and servant. The constant association of Sri with God as his inseparable essence like that of the fragrance with the flower and the lustre with the gem, makes Her function of media-

tion available to mortals at all times, in all places and under all conditions. The consciousness of wanton dire sinfulness on the part of the Jivas (individual Souls) resulting from an overwhelming sense of fear to approach the Lord for forgiveness and redemption, and the disinterested witness-like attitude adopted by the Supreme Being towards the workings of the law of Karma in the world of sport or Leela, creates a yawning gulf between the two; and this can be bridged only by the effective intercession of Lakshmi who could hold the Lord captive by the invincible charms of Her sweet and unique devotion to Him and Her extreme dependence on Him. Her appeal to the Supreme Being, who is infatuated with Her devotion, for mercy on behalf of Her frail suffering children can never go in vain; and even the most heinous sins of man do not stand as a bar either to Her ever-ready advocacy, or His joyous submission to Her persuasions. What Her presence meant in Her incarnation as Sita to Indra's son who, disguised as a crow, perpetrated a grievous crime to Her and what Her absence meant to Ravana who was not guilty of such a flagrant offence, is well-known to the readers of the Ramayana: while the latter lost his head, the former was forgiven and saved by Her intercession. To those sinful ones who desire to approach God directly, He appears only as a transcendent Being possessing absolute independence and infinite supremacy, and maintaining an attitude of cold solicitude for the ultimate weal of all mankind, and as a stern Ruler guided by uncompromising eternal laws of His making; but to those who seek to reach Him through

Sri, to those who view Him in the proper perspective furnished by Her, He appears as an all-loving Person teeming with qualities essential for protection of the Jivas. They are: (1) an intense love like that of the cow for the new-born calf—a love that is not only blind to all faults that the Jiva, who is the object of that love, may have, but even relishes those sins; (2) a profound consciousness of the proprietorship of all Jivas, which assures them that His property would be taken care of by Him; (3) extreme affability and condescension that make Him easy of approach at their own levels; (4) wisdom to discern keenly at a glance the actual needs of the Jivas and (5) the power to supply those needs at will. The mediation of Lakshmi evokes these qualities lying dormant in the Lord's mind, and they dispel from the minds of even desperate weaklings the oppressing feelings of fear, lack of confidence, estrangement and impotence, and fill their minds with faith, hope, courage, and cheer. This function of Sri can be compared to that of a filter-bed which purifies the water and passes it on. The filter-bed is not the means to pass on the water, but it removes the dirt and sends on pure water. So also Lakshmi withholds the sins as the Jivatma passes on to God.

Since Lakshmi acts only as the mediatrix and takes no part in the means, the feet of the Lord alone form the sole and sure means of salvation; and hence the devotee desirous of getting rid of the obstacles to God-realisation and enjoying the bliss of eternal service to Him, seeks refuge in the feet of the Lord and clings to them firmly, making thereby the end

itself the means. The act of taking refuge may be by words, or acts, or by contemplation—by any one, or more or all of these—since, after all, these are only accessories, God alone constituting the direct means. However, mental contemplation is stressed in preference to physical or oral acts, in as much as realisation is more the concern of the mind than of the body or the mouth. This act of taking refuge is sincerely done once only, and once for all, since surrender to God or Prapatti stultifies itself by repetition; yet the contemplation of the completed act on subsequent occasions in moments of contrition for having strayed away from the ideal owing to inherent human frailty, is neither forbidden nor contradictory. On the other hand it should be resorted to often and often as a guarantee for the prevention of a future relapse into the ante-Prapatti stage, and also because of the intense bliss it generates, which makes the enjoyer reluctant to give up the act.

In the second part of the Mantra the devotee prays for selfless service to God for its own sake, utterly regardless of all motives of reward or enjoyment. Here God is the final goal of all human aspirations, and Lakshmi's function then is to accept the service rendered by the Jiva, as His inseparable partner, and to pass

it on to Him after sweetening it and intensifying its value. Since Seshatva or serviceability to God implies Seshatva to Sri, service to the Dual Personality is the duty, the birth-right and the privilege of every soul; and in this respect the indefatigable Lakshmana, whose sole aim of life was to render service to the Eternal Pair—Rama and Sita—stands out as the ideal devotee and the pattern of true service for all times. This service should be perpetual, and should be directed along channels that will afford an ever-increasing delight in God. It should have for its aim the sole enjoyment of God without the least trace of enjoyment for the self, or jointly, for self and God. The word *namah* in the second sentence indicates this renunciation of the fruits of service. It also emphasises the idea that no enjoyment direct or indirect should be sought after by the individual for his own sake. Even the soul-ravishing beauty of the Lord and Sri, tempting the devotee to divert his attention from loving service to the selfish enjoyment of the beauty, should be considered a mighty obstacle by the devotee; and hence there should be an incessant prayer not only for service but also for the removal of all obstacles to such service.

FAITH AND RATIONALISM

By S. R. Sarma, M.A.

[In the following paragraphs Professor Sarma maintains that not only faith has its own part to play in the proper and effective functioning of reason but also that it is the only guide to take us to the realms of Truth where reason throws no light.]

IF there are any two words that need to be carefully analysed to-day more than any others, they are *Faith* and *Rationalism*. These words indeed are very familiar, but that is no guarantee of their being well understood with their fullest implications. Faith and Rationalism are too often considered to be contradictories. What could be more obvious than the opposition between 'Men of Faith' and 'Rationalists'? In the modern world the latter consider themselves the leaders of progress; and the former are classed with fossils. Yet this is a case of my 'doxy' being *orthodoxy* and your 'doxy' being *heterodoxy*. Nothing could be more irrational. Take a living illustration. Is Mahatma Gandhi a leader of progress or is he a fossil? In other words, is he a Rationalist, or a Man of Faith? Though extremists might dub him or denounce him as being the one or the other, to the thoughtful he must appear as one in whom both the faculties are actively present and exercised. He is a living refutation of the compartmental view of life.

Rationalism is perhaps better defined negatively than positively. It is the philosophy that rejects everything not acceptable to our normal reasoning faculty. Its facade is attractive. A history of religion appears to be a history of the substitu-

tion of superstitions. With the advancement of enlightenment old superstitions are no doubt liquidated. Our religion therefore is certainly more rationalised than that of our remote ancestors. Shamanism and fetish-worship have yielded place to Vedanta, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, etc. Within these folds, however, are endless distinctions, each claiming to be more true than all others. To the Rationalist this appears to be a war of mutual extermination, and he presumes that all are equally superstitious, all are equally deluded.

What then is the basis of Faith? Or is it only self-deception? "Faith," says Rabindranath Tagore, "is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark." It is therefore not mere belief or hope; it is a sense of certainty about the future. It is the faculty of penetrating further than the myopic multitude can see. It is a search-light that can scan the encircling gloom and spot out Truth. Those who deny it are simply prosaic persons who lack the poetic vision. They are music-deaf and cannot appreciate divine symphonies. The persistence of these is not a refutation of either poetry or music. Rationalism cannot therefore liquidate Faith.

Rationalism is faith in Reason. But reason is only one of our facul-

ties. If reason raises man above the mere animal, so does faith. Faith does not belong to the sub-human world. The degree of faith is the measure of man's superiority over lower creatures. The range of the eye of faith is even greater than that of reason. But there is no antithesis between the two, any more than between our eyes and ears. Ordinarily we may trust our eyes more than our ears. But there are spheres where we are compelled to rely upon our ears more than our eyes. I would sooner allow my ears to judge a musician than my eyes.

Life is larger than what would be admitted by reason. To ignore its vastness and complexity by the test of reason alone is to put on blinkers. To throw away faith as something irrational is to throw away the most precious part of life. Trust is the noblest element in our human relations, and trust is faith. We must have faith in ourselves, our neighbours, friends, relations, institutions, society, philosophy, and way of living.

Without that we cannot lead a rational life. Both rationalism and faith must be assigned their proper places. We cannot do without either. Much energy is wasted in mutual recriminations by the votaries of partial views. The vision of life as a whole alone is capable of giving peace and harmony. And we cannot view life as a whole without both reason and faith.

India led in the vanguard of civilisation when she possessed this supreme faculty. We have suffered not because we had too much of faith, and too little of rationalism, but because we lost faith in ourselves and were dazzled by philosophies other than our own. These should have enriched our lives instead of impoverishing them. We have betimes realised this. That is why there is a renaissance in our national life. Faith is reviving without making us more irrational. Rationalism must reinforce our faith instead of undermining it, for in their synthesis lies our salvation.

RAJA YOGA—ITS GOAL AND METHOD

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the Head of the Vedanta centre of Hollywood, U.S.A., and the author of *Vedic Religion and Philosophy*. He sets forth below the psychology and ethics of Yoga in a form easily understandable to the modern reader.]

PATANJALI has defined Yoga as 'restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms'. What in the West is known as mind is called in Eastern psychology the Chitta or 'mind-stuff'. The Chitta according to this psychology, comprises the Manas or that which receives the im-

pressions from the outer senses; the Buddhi or the discriminating intellect; and the Aham or the sense of ego. The Chitta or mind-stuff, despite the fact that it perceives and is conscious, is not the Self, but only the instrument of the Self. The Self is Intelligence Itself, the Knower, the Seer,

the Subject; the Chitta reflects the divine illumination and so it appears—but only appears—to see and to know. Knowledge or perception according to Patanjali, is a Vritti, a wave in the mind. All knowledge is objective, the Seer, the real Self or the Purusha who is behind all knowledge, remaining unknown. What Western Psychologists call introspection or knowledge of the subjective mind—even that Patanjali regards as objective, since the mind is not the Seer, but only an instrument of seeing, and since it is as much an object of perception as is the objective world. Man thinks that he knows himself, but that is an error which he falls into, by identifying himself with his mind and with the waves that rise upon it. Something external impinges on his mind and raises in it a wave of happiness or a wave of misery, with the result that he regards himself as either happy or unhappy. This delusion continues as long as he remains ignorant of the true nature of his Self—which is said to be Shuddha (pure), Buddha (enlightened) and Mukta (free). Now the method of Yoga is to control completely the waves of the mind, 'restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms', so that the real, free, and divine nature of the Self may at last be revealed.

In order to make clear what has just been explained, the commentators employ a simple image. If the surface of a lake, they say, is covered with ripples, or its water is muddy, the bottom cannot be seen. The lake is the Chitta, and the bottom of the lake is the Self.

With respect to the predominance of the three Gunas, again, the mind may be divided into three states or

conditions. When Tamas prevails, there is darkness; when Rajas, there is restlessness; and when Sattva, there is calm, serenity, tranquillity. This calm is the extreme reverse of dullness and darkness; and when this calm possesses the mind as a result of control over the waves of the mind, and a greater knowledge is revealed, at once there appears a greater reflection of Purusha.

Whenever the waves of the mind are made tranquil, knowledge of the Self is revealed. This it was that Christ meant when he said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The subdual of the waves that would possess the mind is not a superficial process, nor a momentary one, but a complete transformation. It is a change that can be achieved by Yogic discipline. Doubtless St. Paul had reference to this kind of restraint when he said, "Be ye transformed by the renewal of your own mind."

In order to achieve this renewal of the mind, Yoga psychology considers not only the actual states (Vrittis) of the mind-stuff (Chitta), but also the latent states called the Samskaras, or 'potentialities.' Before we can hope to restrain the mind-waves successfully, we must endeavour to eradicate the potentialities, the root impressions, which control the actual states of the Vrittis. For when one mental state passes into another, it is not altogether lost, but leaves behind it an impression in the Chitta—an impression or Samskara, which in turn tends to give rise to similar Vrittis, or states. Thus the Vrittis cause the Samskaras, and the Samskaras cause the Vrittis. The Samskaras are like deep roots in the soil of the Chitta,

from which grow the actual plants, the Vrittis. To destroy the weeds we must eradicate the roots, and to do this it is not enough to restrain the actual Vrittis, but it is also necessary through Yoga discipline, to overcome, weaken, and destroy the Samskaras or the potentialities of the actual states.

Modern Western psychology, particularly Freudian, takes into consideration these potentialities. Freud postulates three 'areas', or states of mind; the unconscious, the pre-conscious, and the conscious. The unconscious is the receptacle of such of our past experiences as have been definitely forgotten and cannot be recalled by the ordinary method of recollection. The pre-conscious is that part of the mind in which are stored experiences which, though apparently forgotten, can be recalled by an effort of the will. Modern Western psychologists differ in their explanation of the unconscious mind, some holding that it is the receptacle of our individual past experiences, and of these alone, while others would include also the common experience of the race.

Yoga psychology agrees with the Western view that the unconscious is a depository of certain individual past experiences, but it differs radically as to the interpretation of those experiences. To Patanjali our individual past is not limited to the present life, as all Western Psychologists would assume, but extends indefinitely backward through a succession of incarnations. According to the law of Karma, our birth is the result of our past lives, in each of which, and in the present one, we possess the same Chitta. In the 'unconscious mind', if we may adopt the Freudian

term, are stored the impressions and the tendencies which have been formed in our previous existences, and which, taken together, have made us what we are.

The Samskaras or potentialities represent therefore the root impressions received from all our past experiences, including those of our former lives; and they have moulded our characters so that, even though largely forgotten, they still control or influence our every act and thought. They may also take on fresh life and potency without our conscious effort or will. Now Yoga philosophy proposes a method of discipline—and this is the very core of its doctrine—whereby these root impressions may first be overcome, and then destroyed, and whereby a complete transformation of character may in the end be effected. Yoga psychology agrees with Freud that the conscious is controlled and guided by the unconscious, but it insists that there is a power inherent in the mind, through which, restraining itself, it can overcome the unconscious and all its tendencies, and achieve by so doing a complete renewal. Thus is its original purity restored—a purity that reflects the supreme purity and infinite knowledge of the Divine Self. Thus at last does the Self learn its true nature—its utter separateness from the non-self—and attain to freedom.

Any thought-wave arising in the mind or any perception apprehended by the mind, is a Vritti. The objects of perception and of thought are innumerable; innumerable therefore, are the Vrittis. But in general terms Patanjali makes of them five divisions. First are Pramanas or valid

states of cognition, such as perception, inference and scriptural testimony.

These five general kinds of Vrittis have again been classified into two main divisions: Klishta, those which lead towards bondage and suffering, and Aklishta, those which lead towards freedom and illumination. This distinction is made by the great Yogi because of an important psychological fact. Though the ideal is the attainment of a state in which 'all modifications of the mind-stuff are controlled', such a state is not possible except through a twofold process. First, the thought-waves that are impure and lead to bondage and suffering, must be overcome by raising the Vrittis that 'lead to liberation'. Then these good Vrittis themselves must be eliminated, so that all motion of the mind-stuff may cease and Pure Intelligence may stand revealed.

Could it be, one wonders, that the 'will to liberation' described in Yoga philosophy is the force which Freud wrongly interprets as the 'death-instinct'? Freud finds within us two innate tendencies: the life-instinct and the death-instinct. But the death-instinct is not, he thinks, to be found in its pure form, but is inextricably mixed with its opposite, the life-instinct—a fact that explains the strange phenomena of sadism and masochism and the feeling of alternate love and hate towards the same object. We are not concerned, however, with the truth or falsity of Freud's explanation of the phenomena we have just mentioned, but rather with the fact that by his characterization of these two instincts as antithetical he almost arrived at the position taken by Yoga psychology—and yet somehow failed to do so.

Yoga mentions the two opposed instincts: the 'will to live' and the 'will to liberation'. The 'will to liberation' (Plato's 'inner check' and Buddha's 'higher will'), exists, according to Yoga, side by side with the 'will to live' (the 'will to desire'), though in some men it is weak and in others strong. It is the principal purpose of Yoga psychology to show how the 'higher will' may be strengthened and the 'will to live' overcome.

As the 'will to liberation' gains in strength, the 'will to live', what Freud calls the 'life-instinct', grows weaker. Evidence of this fact may be seen in the lives of all who check the lower craving. And, strange though it may seem, this craving can be completely overcome, though the 'will to liberation' cannot. This latter, which Freud misnames the 'death instinct', is to be found mixed with the 'life-instinct' in all souls.

The concrete means by which spiritual control is exercised, Patanjali analyzes in considerable detail. Control, he says, is 'by practice and non-attachment.'

There are stages of non-attachment, the commentators point out, through which we pass as we practice the Yoga disciplines and as we strive to attain to the supreme ideal of renunciation. There are four such stages. The first is Yatamaana, when there arises an inner struggle from not permitting the mind to seek gratification of the senses. The second is Vyatireka, when through self-analysis we realise the measure of our own achievement in the field of self-control. We realise what desires we can control and what we, as yet, cannot. Then with vigour and enthusiasm we must continue to attack all desires that still

remain in the way of illumination. The third is Ekendriya, when greater self-control is achieved, and the heart, knowing their ephemeral and shadowy nature, no longer desires the objects of enjoyment; yet there may still remain in the heart a longing curiosity. When this longing also has been overcome, we attain the fourth and the highest stage of renunciation. This is known as Vasikara.

This, the supreme goal of renunciation, is achieved only by a person who has attained complete enlighten-

ment. "That supreme non-attachment comes from knowledge of the Self"—says Patanjali. And the Gita says: "Objects fall away from the abstinent man, leaving the longing behind. But his longing also ceases, who sees the Supreme." And, again, summing up the whole truth of Yoga the Gita has: "With the heart unattached to external objects, he realises the joy that is in the Self. With the heart devoted to the meditation of Brahman, he attains undecaying happiness."

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICAN LIFE

By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh

(Continued from the previous issue)

[Bhai Manilal C. Parekh is a well-known religious preacher and author. For the past twenty-five years he has been a teacher of religion, first as a missionary of Brahmo Samaj, next as one of the Christian Church and afterwards as an independent teacher of Bhagavata Dharma. The present essay gives a vivid and interesting picture of American life which he had the opportunity of studying directly during his stay in that country. While Bhai Manilal is warmly appreciative of the perfections which the American civilization exhibits in some of its expressions, he criticizes with becoming restraint and judiciousness the harmful tendencies that meet the eyes of even a casual observer of American life.]

FREEDOM OF WOMEN

AS an integral part of this unique democracy, almost as a crown thereof, is the marvellous freedom and development of the women of the land. In my tour round the world, nowhere did I see women so free and cultured as in the United States. Indeed, if I may say so without any disrespect to the American man, the woman here on the whole is even more cultured than man. This advance on the part of women is a most noticeable feature of the land and it is found all over the land. It is no small part of the

moral and spiritual achievement of this nation that its womanhood should be so entirely free from that fear and inferiority-complex which have been hitherto for ages an integral part of feminine nature.

The sight of this freedom was a most welcome surprise to me. The reality far surpassed anything I had conceived in regard to this liberty from what I had read in books or heard from friends. In schools, in colleges, at homes, in churches in the streets, in railway trains, in fact everywhere, I found women meeting persons of the opposite sex as perfect

equals, and this was entirely different from what I had known or seen in Asia or Europe. I might almost say that the American woman is freer from sex-consciousness than any other. I say this with full knowledge of the fact that there is a tremendous amount of sex-complex in the country.

I was also extremely surprised at the keen intellectual interest that women everywhere take in the larger problems of human life. The women here are alive to what is happening all over the world as they are nowhere else. The extraordinarily large number of Women's Clubs scattered all over the land abundantly testifies to this fact; and the women's share of interest and work is very often fifty fifty, and at times even more, in those clubs and associations which are not reserved exclusively for men. It seems as if the men here glory in the fact that women are so advanced intellectually, and everywhere woman is paid deference to by man as his intellectual equal if not superior. This thing is entirely peculiar to this land. There is no talking down to woman here as in most other lands. Often it is the other way about. This may be due to several causes: one of the most potent being the fact that women predominate so largely in the teaching profession. Co-education is also a cause of this feeling of equality and comradeship between man and woman. A part of the credit for this belongs to the husbands also, for nowhere in the world they are so humble and patient and deferential, if not obedient, as in the United States.

This very remarkable advance, however, is not without some serious drawbacks. It has been attained with a certain amount of 'de-womani-

sation', if such a term can be allowed. The equality between man and woman which is no longer a theory but a veritable fact has resulted in the reproduction of masculine features in the American woman. This also was to me a matter of surprise from the very first. Nor am I alone in this observation. I found more than one Hindu feeling the same way. Nor does this masculinity in women seem to be a recent growth.

Sometimes I have wondered whether there is anything in the American man corresponding to this change in woman so that the usual difference between man and woman has been eliminated on both sides, though the change is more noticeable in woman than in man. Whatever it be, it seems that if men and women live and work together in all the spheres of life as they have been doing in this country, and that if there is no delimitation of frontiers of respective fields of work, there is bound to be a certain amount of assimilation on both sides in mentality as in physical appearance, and this is just what is happening here. There is a corresponding loss in chivalry and romance which is so often complained of in this land. The woman has also suffered a loss in respect and reverence which are sometimes paid to women in many other countries. It seems, however, that this is a price that must be paid for the close fellowship and comradeship which she enjoys. Is it in full consciousness of these facts or in consequence of some subtle intuition which never fails a woman, much less a whole race of them, that the American women go through a course of fasting, year-in and year-out, in order to ward off

the evils of grossness which is sure to attach itself to them because of their work in those soiled spheres which have been reserved for men so far? Short of the masculinity mentioned above, the American women as a class are the most attractive of all in form, manners and person.

CHILDREN OF AMERICA

One wonders if it is an integral part of this democracy that the children here should be so free as they are. Does it mean an all-round levelling up or down, a razing down of distinctions of all kinds, of class and sex and age also? At any rate, it would seem so to a visitor who after all can judge only from appearances. Freedom is in the air, and not only the young people but boys and girls of tender age, and even children, breathe it. It is imbibed with one's mother's milk. Children of four and five are treated as comrades and they behave as such not always to their advantage. Such parental authority as is still found in almost all countries of both Asia and Europe is conspicuous by its absence, and this lack of discipline at home has its counterpart in the school and later on in the college and the university. The children are not only free but they seem to know too much. During my short stay in the United States I came to know of crimes such as murders committed by children of four and five and a little older, (of course without their being fully conscious of what they were doing) like of which I had never heard before. Such things happen because they are denied nothing and feel in themselves the maturity of age while they are so young.

Perhaps this is a case of too much love of, and consequent indulgence towards, children on the part of parents. Japan is said to be a Paradise for children. The same may be said with equal truth of this country. Perhaps the comparatively smaller number of children also has something to do with the remarkable tenderness which I have seen lavished in this country on infants and children. One may almost say that the soul of this virile race is withdrawn from all else only to be emptied and poured on these 'little ones'. Men perhaps are more tender towards them than women. Often these children and young boys and girls carry a cross in their little hearts owing to the strained relations between their parents, and sometimes they are potent means of reconciliation between them.

A great deal is being done by both parents and the nation for the proper education of children and young people, and new and costly experiments are being made all the time. Researches are carried on to such an extent, and so much attention is being paid and money spent in the field of education, that the educationists of the world are not without reason looking for guidance and help from the United States. But as a humble student and observer of life, I might say that the great need is to lay the foundations of their marvellous edifice of education deep down in the spirit of reverence—reverence for the parent, for the teacher, for those who are older than oneself. One of the most beautiful sights I saw, in the United States, however, was the tender love and respect with which an American friend of mine, an ex-missionary from India, regarded his old mother, and I felt

that it was something of which even a Hindu, who is well-known for such reverence, might well be proud. In spite of all the differences between one people and another, one wonders if human nature is not much the same everywhere.

YOUTHFULNESS OF THE NATION

If I be asked to name the outstanding characteristic of the American people, I would say it is their youthfulness. This country is as young in spirit as it is in age. It is doubtful, however, if the same could be said of Canada or Australia. At any rate, these countries have not become self-conscious and it is the essential quality of youthfulness to be conscious of itself. This youthfulness is a national characteristic, and it is reflected everywhere. There is a buoyancy of life here which defies age and makes old people young. It is the philosophy of life which is largely responsible for this. Of course this philosophy bears a close relation to the soil and circumstances in which it has grown and they both act and react upon each other. This is something very like what had happened in India in the early stages of the Aryan settlement. There is no note of pessimism in the early Vedic hymns,—a note which became so common in later times. The Rishis, *i.e.*, the sages and seers, then believed in the full employment and enjoyment of all the powers of nature and man, and in living the full span of life which was not less than a hundred years. This has its counter-part in the United States in the rise of such teachers as Emerson and Walt Whitman and in such semi-philosophical movements as New Thought and Christian Science. Even the orthodox Christian Church

has not remained unaffected by this, and all negative ideas such as those of old age, disease, poverty, death, etc., are almost universally, by tacit consent as it were, kept out of the scheme of thought and life. The peculiar quality of American idealism has its origin in this youthfulness of spirit, the idealism which inspires keen interest in the heart of an average American in great causes all over the world and gives rise to world-embracing charities at the hands of its multi-millionaires.

Some of the defects of this country which are too glaring to escape the notice of even a casual visitor are also due to the same spirit of youthfulness. Its sex-obsession is a national vice on a large scale. The awful titles alone of the movies and the talkies, each worse than the other, and the huge posters representing some of the scenes, not to talk of the pictures themselves, are sufficient to show the degeneracy of the public taste which is not only not shocked by such things but almost revels in them. There is a levelling down of social life in regard to marriage especially, and divorce has become too common in almost all strata of life to cause any shock or flutter.

The machine civilisation which has taken such a firm hold of this country is characterised by a fastness which has penetrated all life. There is a general loosening of all ties, and friendships are difficult to form. People are volatile, and where everything is changing and moving so fast, friends and partners in life also are apt to change too soon. Another ugly feature of this machine-ridden life is the spirit of violence that resides in this civilization. One of the first

painful surprises I had was to see how lightly dreadful accidents involving deaths of people were taken by both men and women. The people seemed to take these things as a matter of course, and this was because people had got used to them by a too frequent occurrence of such accidents. Things that would cause real horror in India seemed to leave the American people altogether cold. There are no less than forty thousand deaths from automobile accidents in the land every year and an equal number of murders, some of them committed under most awful conditions. During the months I was there, I read of several instances wherein a father or mother killed the whole of his or her family numbering once or twice seven or eight persons, and that too in a most gruesome manner or in cold blood. The number of suicides is about the same as that of murders, a fact which testifies to the deep restlessness of the people.

If I am not mistaken, of all civilized countries America stands first in the toll of life she is paying in all these matters, and that is most serious matter for all her thoughtful men and women to consider. All this is strangely anomalous with the fact that during my stay over a year I rarely witnessed a quarrel and did not even once hear loud speaking. A Hindu friend of mine had the same experience and he significantly added that to witness such things one had to go to the talkies. He also said that things were so ordered because of this very machine civilization that one rarely had occasion to lose one's temper. Is it then in the nature of things that this machine civilization which is so considerate about individual

comfort should be so reckless of other's good as to destroy life on a large scale and to breed social disintegration and violence?

The spirit of advertisement is another national vice of people. They have carried the art of advertisement in business to perfection, and the spirit of it has pervaded everything that the American thinks or does. From the President down to the commonest man everybody seems to be affected by it. Thus the ethics and methods of the market are imported into the academies and the churches. Because of this, life here wears an aspect of inflation as nowhere else. Everything has to seem larger and better than it really is and thus the art of *seeming* has been sedulously cultivated much to the detriment of *being*. Not only is humility at a discount but bombast is recognised as legitimate. One of the very first things I heard when I set my foot on the Canadian soil was that the difference between the Canadians and the people of the United States lay primarily in the bombast of the latter. I heard the same criticism in England. Evidently foreigners resent this boastfulness which has become a national vice and has formed a part of the mental make up of the American so that very often he is unconscious of it.

The so-called American hypocrisy bears a very close relation to this national habit. Of course this is a thing in which no nation can throw stones at another. I found that the British had the same reputation on the continent, whereas the fact was that in things in which they were considered hypocritical by the French for example, the latter's behaviour

was much worse on the whole though of an opposite kind. There is, however, a wide divergence between the avowed profession and practice of the people in such matters as Prohibition etc., which has rightly given colour to this charge. But I found the climax of this hypocrisy reached in a superscription which has become more than a national motto and which is placed in a setting which brings out completely the hollowness of the sentiment expressed therein. Success and achievement are the divinities at the shrine of which most Americans worship, and to a large extent this success is measured by the amount of wealth a man has. Evidently this is the genesis of the phrase *the Almighty Dollar*. But the irony of it all comes out in the words which every silver dollar or half-dollar bears, I mean the words "IN GOD WE TRUST".

Has this country found its soul yet? I asked this question of many people in the States, of people who have lived here for more than two or four decades but failed to find any satisfactory answer. Many of them frankly said that they doubted if it had any soul of its own yet. I was told that it had not yet had a culture of its own, let alone the soul. A very thoughtful Austrian girl said to me: "These people here have our civilization, but not our culture and we feel stultified when our culture is attri-

buted to them." This lack of a great original culture and of soul is due to the fact that the American people have gone through not a single national travail while several such are needed for the soul of a nation to be born. Life is easy, too easy here, and people know neither suffering, nor poverty, nor renunciation which are things essential for a great culture to be borne.

Nevertheless the soul of America is being born slowly and steadily though imperceptibly, and while I am writing this there rises before me the marvellous womanhood of this country arrayed in its singular beauty of person and manner and culture of both mind and heart, and I feel sure that a country which can produce women such as these will not wait long for the attainment of the full stature on the part of its soul. We were three of us in one of the rooms in a hospital in one of the cities of the States, myself, an American Jew who is a scholar and a fine American woman. We were talking about this very subject when the Jew said pointing to the woman, "she is the soul of America." Yes, it is the good and noble women of this land whose number is legion who represent its soul and who are generating a new culture and a new spirit that will not only be a boon and a blessing to this country but to all the world.

(Concluded)

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.]

तत् तु विषयत्यागात् सङ्गत्यागाच्च ॥ ३५ ॥

तत् That (The Prema and Amrita referred to in Sutras 2 & 3) तु but विषयत्यागात् by giving up the objective reality of the world as it appears to an ego-centric intellect संगत्यागात् by renunciation of attachment च and.

35. But¹ that state of supreme Love and Immortality is made possible only by giving up the objective² reality of the world as it appears to the ego-centric intellect and senses, and³ the consequent renunciation of attachment.

Notes. 1. But—This word is meant to suggest that the Sutra is an answer to a possible Purvapaksha or objection. The objection may be stated thus:—If the highest realisation is only a kind of love, why not begin practice by loving such objects in the world as are pleasure-giving and attractive, and if the highest realisation is only a kind of happiness or bliss, why not begin by trying to enjoy as much sensual happiness as possible. The Sutra answers that such procedure is dangerous and risky and is based on false premises.

2. Objective reality—So long as one is alive, one cannot refuse to see

the objective world, nor is it possible for one to escape it however much one may try to run away from it. But one can refuse to consider it as the real. Vedanta recognises three grades of reality—the Paramarthika, the Vyavaharika and the Pratibhasika. The world conjured up by a magician belongs to the third class. The reality of the objects of the world as they appear to us in our ordinary life belongs to the second class. Only the reality of God is Paramarthika. Reality depends upon indestructibility under any circumstances. The magician's world vanishes at the end of the performance, and the world of ordinary waking state disappears in sleep. These cannot be considered as really real, but only apparently real for the time being. Only God or Atman, which forms the substratum of all objective phenomena, exists eternally, without in the least forgoing its real nature under any circumstances, and in all states of consciousness. To know this ephemeral nature of all objective phenomena is what is meant by Vishayatyaga. In the earlier stages, this can be practised only by actually abandoning as worthless all objects that excite and tempt the lower mind. Sri Ramakrishna brings all these objects under his formula of 'sex and wealth' or 'woman and gold'. This renunciation of the object itself is necessary only in the

early stages, and need be practised only with reference to objects which are capable of causing attachment and bondage. The Sannyasa Ashrama represents the highest stage of this form of Sadhana, where man has to retire from the world altogether. All casts of gift, Brahmacharya, austerities, etc., represent this renunciation of objects in the earlier stages.

Practice of this renunciation of the objects of senses must be voluntary and not forced. Thus the poor man does not in the least benefit by his giving up food on any day, because he is compelled to do it. Neither does the patient who is prevented from taking ordinary food, or, he who is segregated from his family for consideration of health. The renunciation in these cases are not voluntary. There must be the capacity and possibility of enjoying the object; only voluntary surrender of such an object constitutes true renunciation. This renunciation of objects should not also be carried to absurd lengths, as in the case of many ascetics who practise self-torture for its own sake. Such extreme asceticism is a disease which has its root in some aberration of the mind, and one who is addicted to it is a fit subject for psycho-analytic treatment. What constitutes such extreme cases is to be judged from the circumstances of each case.

Examples of Janaka, Ramananda Roy, Pundarika Vidyanidhi, Vidyanaraya, etc., are often cited by worldly-minded people as authority for convincing themselves that there is no real necessity to practise this kind of renunciation. These examples are rather exceptions that prove the rule, and are in fact not fit to be taken as models to be followed by a

beginner who runs the risk of getting entangled in the meshes of Maya. These instances only prove the fact that when one has attained Para Bhakti or highest realisation, one need not be a practitioner of this form of Sadhana. From that time worldly objects will not have the power of tempting him from the path of virtue and love of God. Only they who have reached this stage can feel themselves safe from temptation. Cf. Kumara Sambhava, Canto I, Verse 59, which says, "They alone are heroes whose hearts will not yield to temptation: cf. also the story of the devil's temptation of Jesus and Buddha's temptation by Mara. But to the novice, it is safer to keep out of temptation. Thus Bhishma says in Shantiparva of Mahabharata, Chapter CLXXX, Slokas 30, 33: "There is no possibility of desire arising in a man who does not know the pleasureableness of an object. And this pleasureableness is known only by actual contact with it by sight, touch, hearing, etc. Safer it is therefore for a man not to enjoy or see or touch such objects."

Again it is often advocated by people who cannot give up worldly enjoyments that these enjoyments are required as a necessary prelude to renunciation, since only such enjoyment leading to a satiation could put down the desire for enjoyment once for all. This also is a dangerous doctrine. For never is it possible to suppress desire by enjoyment. Says the Mahabharata as well as Manu II, 94, "Desires are never quenched by enjoyment. It rather inflames them all the more as ghee only inflames fire and does not put it out." Therefore says the Yogavasishta, Nirvanaprakaranam.

Chapter LXXVII, St. 81 and 83: "The slightest desire must be nipped in the bud by abstinence as it otherwise leads to perdition, just as one would destroy the sprout of a poison tree. Hook the fish of desire by abstinence."

3. *And renunciation of all attachment*—This part of the Sutra is very important. It shows that mere renunciation of an object of enjoyment is not sufficient, unless it is accompanied by a renunciation of all attachment to it mentally. If objects of enjoyments are given up by force, it is repression, and it would lead to all kinds of evil consequences, described in detail by psycho-analysts. In Gita III, 6 and 7 it is pointed out that

mere renunciation of objects of enjoyment externally, while all the time mentally enjoying them, is a kind of false practice of renunciation, and that it is far better to renounce all attachments mentally even while enjoying them externally.

Thus Narada is an advocate of renunciation both external and mental, and he has the support of Santiparva 192.17 which also speaks of the necessity for both kinds of renunciation. Of these two, the former is necessary only in the preliminary stages, while the latter is necessary at all times.

This external and mental renunciation forms the basis of many of the spiritual practices advocated by all religions.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Srimad Bhagavatam (Sanskrit): Published by V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 292, Esplanade, Madras. Vols. I & II. Pp. 2215 Cro. 8 Vo. Price Rs. 5-8-0.

Bhagavata has come down to us from the shining past as a living book of perennial interest. It has soaked into the religious mind of the nation, and its appeal is profound to all persons who approach it, be they predominantly emotional, intellectual or dynamic. The essence of all scriptures, Vedas, Upanishads, Gita and the like, are submerged in it. Besides, it is a perfect piece of art standing quite apart in style, diction, form, spirit and even metre. A sensitive, profound, highly erudite and immaculately pure mind alone could plumb its depths; but its sweet sanctifying aroma can be enjoyed by any devout heart. It has a wonderful efficacy to sustain the reverent mind at red-hot devotional fervour through the marvellous array of divine hymns, mystic revelations, philosophic reflections, didactic dialogues, ethical lessons, picturesque descriptions, arresting narrations and idyllic scenes. Quite naturally therefore, even at the present day, in hundreds of places experts expound this

thrilling text to enthusiastic throngs of expectant hearers; and translations and commentaries in the spoken tongues are produced in addition to the already existing forest of Sanskrit commentaries representing every Vaishnava school. Scores of editions in almost all Indian scripts are in the market, as it may be well expected in view of its primacy and popularity.

The above edition is an advance upon all the existing editions of the text in one respect or other. We are convinced that it is the most convenient, attractive and modestly priced edition of the text we have come across. In this edition all octosyllabic verses are printed each distich below the other, and verses of longer metres in four lines; words and lines are well spaced, and there is an ample margin of white space outlying the printed region to relieve, refresh and delight the readers' plodding eyes. Though the Nirnaya Sagar text may hold its own for cheapness, this one is easily superior to it in typographical arrangement; and this edition has fewer misprints than the Madhava Vilas text which is printed in bolder attractive type. However, we note that in this text, although it is claimed to

be critical, the MSS. used are not indicated as scientific scholarship would expect. Again, we think, collation with some other North Indian edition, e.g., the Brindaban edition, would have given it better readings in some places. Nevertheless this edition, though we do not claim anything like ideal perfection for it, is a protest against the slovenly and awkward way of printing lengthwise on strips of paper a foot and a half long (perhaps due to the force of orthodox prejudice and inexorable conservatism) everything solid, without pause or space, dovetailing the final consonants into the initial letters of succeeding words even where no euphonic law demands it, thus complicating the few positions in which the Devanagari characters can represent simple sounds as the Roman without violence—and to add to it all, neglecting to put up a contents and index or even to punctuate properly. We heartily recommend this very good edition to all who go in for a Bhagavatam text. Here is value enough for the money paid.

Shakespeare Criticism: By C. Nanyana Menon, M.A., Ph.D. Published by Oxford University Press, Amen House, London, E.C. 4. Cloth Bound Price Rs. 3. Pages 276.

Among English authors there is perhaps none who has drawn the attention of so many critics and admirers as Shakespeare. In India his hold over the minds of literary men continues undisputed. Every cultured Indian feels that, even though Shakespeare was a foreigner, he is as much his own as Kalidasa. This is undoubtedly due to the universality of Shakespeare's genius.

It is perhaps due to this nearness of Shakespeare to the universal human heart, in which there is no difference between East and West, that an Indian Professor like Dr. Menon has been able to enter so deeply into his literary and dramatic art, and produce a work that deserves a place among the best books on Shakespearean criticism from the pen of noted English writers.

The author says that the purpose of the book is to show that almost everything written on Shakespeare is true.

Shakespeare, he admits, was not original; but the duty of an artist is not to be original, but to help us realise 'the indestructible prototyp preserved in our minds'. What beauty does is to revive old memories. The poet is a creator only in the sense that his individual imagination coincides with the cosmic. Because this is more true of Shakespeare than of other poets, critics have found in him an inexhaustible reserve of thoughts and beauties. This is not to say that they read more into him than is right. For if critics turn to writers of lesser genius they will not find there the opportunities for this deeper analysis.

Dr. Menon points out that the great plays of Shakespeare can be duly appreciated only by one who has got the capacity to identify oneself in imagination with the principal characters.

What is expected of a true critic is a dynamic response. To approach a Shakespearean drama as a stage-manager or a scholar would be the best way to tamper with imaginative identification. One would then be more aware of the stage-carpenter, the actor and the ulterior motives of the writer than of the characters of the play. Hindu philosophy holds that in relation to the universe, God is not only the Spectator but also the Actor inasmuch as He is the reality behind all appearance. Similarly, when we appreciate a great play we become both spectator and actor. In appreciating 'Lear', 'we do not see Lear but become Lear'.

In regard to the plays and characters taken for analysis and illustrations, the author confines himself mainly to the great tragedies; for the genius of Shakespeare flowered mainly in his tragedies. "The kernel" says the writer, "of every Shakespearean play—tragedy, comedy, or history—is the potential in us. Hamlet and Falstaff are the obverse and the reverse of the same medal. When the emotional stress is shifted from the centre to the circumference and from the circumference to a point outside this design, tragedy changes into comedy and history."

It is interesting to note the following observations of the author summarising the moral of Shakespearean plays: "Do we, after witnessing tragedy, feel that the

quintessence of Shakespeare is this: Don't expect woman to be chaste (Hamlet, Othello), politics to be pure (Brutus), or children and friends to be grateful (Lear, Timon), for it is not their duty to be so? To suggest that one should avoid suffering by renouncing one's ideals is like proposing that the cure of life's ills is to refuse to live..... The bull challenges his father and even kills him; the commandment, 'Honour thy father', is written only on the tablets of the human heart. It is harder to live like men than to vegetate,

but it is also nobler. Arctic explorers and even Everest climbers incur suffering and risk; so in the world of values—the exploration of which is more essential for the welfare of the race—a Lear or a Hamlet prospers his lonely way."

These extracts will give an idea of Dr. Menon's penetrating insight into Shakespeare's thought, and also of the simple, forceful and beautiful English style he wields. It is a delight to go through Dr. Menon's book, both as a piece of literature and as a piece of literary criticism.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work

In the week ending with 6—10—1938, 110 mds. 14 srs. of rice were distributed among 3,011 recipients belonging to 49 villages from the Ramakrishna Mission relief centres at Silna and Nijra, centres in the Gopalganj Sub-division of the Faridpur District, besides 1 md. of salt and 213 new pieces of cloth and 422 old clothes.

In the week ending 9—10—38, 21 mds. 23 srs. of rice were distributed among 424 recipients of 15 villages from Paresnathpur, Kedarchandpur and Sarbangapur centres in the Sadar Sub-division of the Murshidabad District. Inspection of villages and enlisting of recipients are being continued.

We shall require not less than Rs. 850 per week for the relief work in both the areas, besides a few thousand pieces of cloth for the most needy. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Howrah Dt., (2) President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.

The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Periyanaickenpalayam (Coimbatore Dt.) for the year 1937

The general enthusiasm to correct and supplement our existing system of education is shared foremost by institutions like the Vidyalaya, which are run on Gurukula lines in suitable rural surroundings with the full intent on the uplift of the rural population. The strength of this residential school for the reported year was 92

and the Rural Service Section of the Vidyalaya extended its beneficial activities to outlying villages. The Vidyalaya has a decidedly vocational bias; every day two periods of 40 minutes are devoted to the training of the eyes and the hands of the boys through productive labour; the subjects chosen at present being tailoring, carpentry and spinning and carding. The boys are being trained in habits of self-help, self-reliance and co-operative work by affording them opportunity to manage the day to day function of the school to a large measure through their own executive committee and court. The Rural Service Section is doing valuable work through study circles, Library, summer school, lantern lectures, slack-season school, medical aid, sports and rural exhibitions. The receipts for 1937 were Rs. 22,644-12-2 of which the balance sheet shows Rs. 8,928-10-4, and the budget for 1938 on the items of school, building, boarding and rural service is Rs. 23,490 towards which contributions are earnestly solicited by the management.

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sargachi, Murshidabad Report for 1937

This report embodies the work of the above institution since its inception in 1898. It was started by His Holiness Sri-mat Swami Akhandanandajee Maharaj, the late president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission with the object of relieving the sufferings of the rural people. The different activities commenced by him

with this end in view are being carried on by the present management along the line chalked out by the revered founder. It is one of those pioneer institutions started in the whole of India with similar motives; and we may say that it anticipated far ahead the interest in the rural population so much talked of in the present day.

The activities of the Ashrama fall under: (1) Orphanage, (2) Free Upper-primary School, (3) Night School, (4) Industrial School, (5) Charitable dispensary, (6) Preaching work, (7) Temporary Relief and (8) arrangement of religious festivals.

From the statement of accounts it is noted that its financial position is far from being satisfactory. If only more funds are forthcoming, the serious handicap under which the Free primary school and the charitable dispensary at present labours could be removed. The management will thankfully receive and acknowledge any contribution from the sympathetic public specified for the purpose.

**The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission
(Ceylon Branch), Wellawatta, Colombo,
for the years 1935-37.**

The noteworthy events in connection with this centre for the year 1935-36 are the opening of the new Math building, Jerbai Memorial Hall, and the inaugural functions of Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Centenary celebrations. The Math section carried on as usual its work of ministering to the spiritual needs of the public by conducting regular weekly classes through the resident Swamis, and by organising extensive tours for preaching the message of Vedanta. Religious festivals and birthday anniversaries of religious prophets were also held for creating religious fervour among the people. During the year under review, 3 English and 9 Tamil schools with 78 teachers and 2,326 pupils were conducted by the Mission. The Orphanage, which is a Students' Home rendered educational help to 48 orphans and destitute children.

The activities of the year 1936-37 (upto June 1937) include among others the happy concluding functions of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations. The Ashram organised a convention of Religions, which was attended with signal success. Celebrations were held at several

other places through the efforts of the workers of the Mission, and public were much benefited by the programme of special Puja, devotional music and lectures on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The regular work of cultural and religious ministrations was carried on by the resident Swamis who conducted scripture classes every week. The Ashram organised special religious lectures by inviting some of the delegates of the Parliament of Religions held at Calcutta.

The educational activities of the Mission continued with unabated enthusiasm. The addition of 3 more schools marked the expansion of work. During the year under review 15 schools were conducted with 84 teachers and 2624 pupils. The Rural Reconstruction Centre, an offshoot of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebration, worked well with the help and co-operation of the sympathetic public. This well-organised work of the mission serving the public amidst an ever-increasing demand could not with its slender financial resources meet the needs fully and effectively. So it stands in urgent need of funds. To consolidate its educational and rural reconstruction work on a strong financial basis, the management looks up to the sympathetic public for help of every kind.

**The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Math
and Mission, Baikura, for 1937**

This centre of the Mission is in existence for 28 years. In the reported year the Charitable Dispensary, which forms a chief medium of service of the centre, rendered medical aid to 85,008 patients as against 74,699 of the previous year. The monastic side of the work consisted of Puja, festivals, celebrations of anniversaries, management of library, preaching and scriptural classes. Besides the Dispensary work, famine and flood relief as well as other sundry works of help were also undertaken. The total receipts for the year were Rs. 2,772-5-3 and expenditure Rs. 2,279-5-3. The management appeals for funds towards the extension of the workers' quarters as well as for enhancing the efficiency of the medical relief.

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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

[OL. XXV]

DECEMBER, 1938

[No. 8]

HINDU ETHICS

हृदि यदि भगवाननादिरास्ते हरिरसि शङ्खगदाधरोऽव्ययात्मा
 तद्वधमघविघातकर्तृभिन्नं भवति कथं सति चान्धकारमर्के ॥
 हरति परधनं निहन्ति जन्तून् वदति तयानृतनिष्ठुराणि यश्च
 अशुभजनितदुर्मदस्य पुंसः कलुषमतेर्हृदि तस्य नास्त्यनन्तः ॥
 न सहति परसम्पदं विनिन्दां कलुषमतिः कुरुते सतामसाधुः
 न यजति न ददाति यश्च सन्तं मनसि न तस्य जनार्दनोऽधमस्य ॥
 परमसुहृदि बान्धवे कलत्रे सुततनयापितृमातृभृत्यवर्गे
 शठमतिरुपयाति योऽर्थतृष्णां तमधमचेष्टमवेहि नास्य भक्तम् ॥
 अशुभमतिरसत्प्रवृत्तिसक्तः सततमनार्थकुशीलसङ्गमतः
 अनुदिनकृतपापबन्धयुक्तः पुरुषपशुर्नहि वासुदेवभक्तः ॥

If the beginningless Hari, whose is perfect lordship, knowledge, glory, prosperity, mercy and dispassion, and who is the immutable Self of all, resides in the heart, wielding divine weapons and obstructing the inroads of vice, how can there be any sin? Can darkness lurk in broad day-light? But the Infinite Being does not manifest Himself in evil-minded persons who strip others of their property, utter rankling falsehood, slay animals and are filled with malignant pride begotten of sin. Such vile persons burn at heart for others' prosperity, rail at good men, worship no God and never give in charity although they possess ample. The heart of the depraved is not the throne of God. He who is perverse, basely-behaved and is in the habit of subjecting to hardships the best friends, relatives, wife, son, daughter, father, mother and servants through greed of wealth—know him to be far from being a devotee of the Lord. The man of evil intent given to wicked deeds, perpetually addicted to the company of characterless, uncultured chums and fast bound by the series of sins perpetrated day after day, is certainly not a man but a beast. Assuredly he is no lover of Him.

—Vishnu Purana.

SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE LAWS OF ITS GROWTH—II

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Spiritual Life: Laws of its Growth—II' forms the eighth of the series.]

I

IN the last instalment we made a brief survey of many teachings of the Master on the mental and moral laws governing spiritual growth. In the following paragraphs too we are considering the same subject, especially in reference to the higher levels of spiritual life.

According to the Master, the most fundamental law governing higher development in spiritual life is faith. Knowledge relating to God, says he, keeps pace with faith. When there is little faith, it is idle to look for much knowledge. The cow which comes to be over-nice in matters of eating is not liberal in the supply of milk. But the cow which welcomes all kinds of food—herbs, leaves, grass, husks, straw and the rest—and eats them up with great relish, yields plenty of milk. Her milk comes down into the pail in torrents.

The following is a significant event that sheds light on the Master's conception of faith. A disciple once spoke of faith disparagingly as 'blind faith' in the Master's presence. The Master thereupon remarked: "Well, can you explain to me what you mean by 'blind faith'? Is not faith wholly 'blind'? What again are its eyes? Say either 'faith' or 'knowledge'. Or else, what is this queer notion that faith in some instances is 'blind' and in others 'with eyes'?"

It appears from this that faith is an energy of the soul, a variety of unconscious and unlearned, but withal unerring, wisdom like instinct. Its worth is to be measured by the standard of purity attained by the soul in whom it manifests. Our conceptions regarding the ultimate truth are distorted and even dictated by the constitution of our mind. Often we come across people who say that they do not believe in God and higher life because these cannot be proved. With very rare exceptions—and these exceptions can be easily found out from their terrible earnestness and one-pointed devotion to truth—the general run of atheists and agnostics are so, not because of convictions born of an earnest quest, but because of convenience and the impulsion of their desires. Their minds are full of hankerings for the enjoyment of the flesh, and this blinds their vision and their imaginative faculty to all other aspects of existence save what is conducive to the satisfaction of these cravings. Thus, their view of truth is as much based upon faith as that of the pious soul, with, however, this difference. The worldly-minded atheists and agnostics have the light of their soul distorted and discoloured by their impure desires. In the case of a true devotee, the mind is comparatively free from such desires and proportionately free from these

distortions and discolourations. As a result the luminous energy of his soul shines as faith in God and in man's spiritual destiny. Hence the Master says: "Indeed, till the heart becomes pure, one cannot even believe in the existence of God." Faith, as pointed out here, is only the unconscious or semi-conscious urge of truth, unerring in its effect but not possessing the potency of a direct contact in regard to its source and object. This is so because the film of desires and the shell of ego have not been completely penetrated. When this is done, faith matures into knowledge or full luminosity. Faith and Knowledge are not therefore contradictories but complimentary developments, in spite of their difference in quality. This difference consists in the emergent quality of patency inherent in Knowledge. In other words faith is an indirect pre-vision of Truth, and Knowledge a direct vision of it.

Allied to faith in God is faith in the Guru or the spiritual guide and preceptor. According to the Master, a Guru is necessary in the case of the generality of men. When going to a strange country, one must abide by the directions of a guide who knows the way. Taking the advice of many would lead to utter confusion. So in trying to reach God one must follow implicitly the advice of a single Guru who knows the way to God. But there is no need of anyone troubling about finding out a Guru. For if one is in right earnest to learn about the mysteries of God, He will send the right teacher to such an aspirant. In the case of aspirants whose sincerity and yearning for God are very intense, there may be no necessity for a Guru. But such

yearning and sincerity are very rare. Hence the necessity of Guru.

Faith in Guru is inculcated on the basis of the theory that it is the illuminating power of God which, out of mercy for the faithful disciple, manifests itself through a competent teacher leading a holy life. Hence a man who is full of faith does not regard his Guru as a mere man. "Before the disciple realises the Deity," says the Master, "he sees the Guru in the first dawn of Divine illumination, and it is the Guru who afterwards reveals the Deity, transforming himself mysteriously into the form of the Deity."

"There are sayings of the Master wherein he seems to subscribe to the doctrine of indiscriminate, uncritical and absolute obedience to the Guru as expressed in the popular saying: "Though my Guru may visit the tavern, still he is holy Rai Nityananda." This should not, however, be taken to mean that the Master supports the various abuses of Guruism prevalent in our country. In fact no one has condemned false teachers as vehemently as he has done. A spiritual teacher, he says, should have the badge of authority, which consists in a godly life and Divine realisation. Only then can his teaching be effective. An unworthy teacher who undertakes to save another is like a water-snake trying to devour a big frog. It fails to swallow the frog, and in the attempt only injures the creature and itself too. In the same way an incompetent Guru only ruins himself and others. Thus the Master warns people against the dangers from false Gurus. In the case of his own disciples he encouraged those of them who were critically minded 'to

test him as the money-changer tests a coin', before accepting him. Hence when the Master says, "Though my Guru visits the tavern, still he is holy Rai Nityananda", his purpose is not to encourage the indiscretions and abuses of Guruism. He only points to the exalted ideal of faith that spiritual aspirants of the highest order possess.

He illustrates this high level of faith from an incident in Sri Chaitanya's life. On seeing the mud of which drums used in devotional music are made, Chaitanya was lost in ecstasy, because the very association of the mud with devotional music filled his mind with Divine fervour. Likewise, when one has true devotion to the Guru, he will be reminded of the Guru on seeing the Guru's relatives or even villagers, and his mind will be lost in an ecstasy of devotion. "At this stage," says the Master, "the disciple fails to see any defect in the Guru. Now only he can say, 'Even if my Guru frequents the taverns, he is the Lord, Eternal Bliss, all the same.' Otherwise, a human being cannot but be a mixture of virtues and vices. But the disciple, on account of his devotion, no longer sees man as man but as God Himself, just as one sees everything yellow if he has jaundice. His devotion then reveals to Him that God alone is everything."

Genuine faith in God and the Guru engenders resignation to the Divine will. For it is a necessary accompaniment of it. The state of absolute resignation is like the condition of a labourer reclining on a pillow after fatiguing work. It is the cessation of all anxieties and worries. The man of resignation is like a kitten. The

kitten knows only to mew piteously, and the mother grasps it by the neck and carries it about. It has no risk of a fall. So is a man of true resignation guided safely by the grace of God.

It should, however, be carefully borne in mind that resignation does not mean idleness or moral irresponsibility. For the decision to remain inactive is as much due to egotism as the activities undertaken by the worldly-minded. By resignation is not therefore meant either activity or inactivity, but an attitude of complete trust in the Divine as the initiator and sustainer of all actions done through one's instrumentality. As for moral lapse and irresponsibility, they are the sure indications that a person's resignation is a mere hypocritical profession. Says the Master: "Duryodhana also said, 'O Lord, Thou abidest in my heart, and I do as Thou makest me do.' But he who really believes that God is the doer and that he himself is only an instrument, cannot commit any sin. A perfect dancer never takes a wrong step. Indeed, until the heart becomes pure one cannot even believe in the existence of God."

II

As important as faith and resignation are the allied virtues of discrimination and dispassion (*Viveka* and *Vairagya*), in the development of spiritual life. Describing the nature of these, the Master says: "*Viveka* means the sifting of the real from the unreal; and *Vairagya*, dispassion for the objects of the world. 'Woman and gold' are both unreal; the only reality is God. Of what use is money? Why, it gives us food and clothing

and a place to live in. Thus far it is useful, and no further. Surely you cannot see God with the help of money. Money is certainly not the end of life. What again is there in the beauty of the human body. Using your discrimination you shall find that the body of even the most beautiful woman is made up of flesh and blood, skin and bones, fat and marrow, nay, as in the case of other animals, of entrails, of urine, excreta and the rest. The wonder is that man can lose sight of God and give his mind entirely to things of this nature." Such searching criticism of a few objects of the world would reveal to one the real nature of all worldly objects—their triviality and transitoriness—just as the testing of a few grains of rice from the cooking pot would show whether the whole rice is boiled or not.

As in the case of all spiritual disciplines, this process of discrimination has also to be practised with perseverance until it leaves a permanent impression on the mind and alters the mind's natural habits of thought and evaluation. In fact the Master always insists on the absolute necessity of slow and persistent practice of disciplines. He used to say that even Sri Krishna underwent tremendous spiritual practices connected with the worship of Radha Yantra. The fruition of one's effort would, however, depend upon the strength of one's faith; for where there is perfect faith a little practice is enough. The faith in the power of the Lord's name will itself set all doubts at rest and purify the mind even without much discrimination and devotional practices. This, however, is the case only with exceptional men. In others, just

as the fire made by burning bamboo is soon extinguished unless kept alive by constant blowing, the fire of spirituality will die out in the absence of constant practice.

The Master says that practice is of three kinds, *viz.*, of the nature of birds, of the nature of monkeys, and of the nature of ants. The first two stand for different degrees of violence and hurry in devotional practices. The devotees coming under this category often get frustrated in their attempts just as a berry that a bird violently pecks at, or a fruit that a monkey carries in the mouth while jumping from branch to branch, may at any time fall down. But the ant creeps gently and steadily carrying its food, and enjoys the same comfortably in its hole. The aspirant resembling the ant is the best; for there is sureness of attaining and enjoying the fruit. Genuine aspirants of this type evince much patience, and are never deterred by delay or temporary failures. They are like anglers who would wait for hours in order to hook a big fish. They are like hereditary peasants who do not give up their profession of agriculture even if it does not rain for twelve years.

Besides discrimination, there are other spiritual disciplines too which the Master recommends to aspirants for slow and steady practice, for attaining higher development in spiritual life. Among these, the most important are Japa (repetition of the Divine 'names') and meditation. The repetition of Divine 'names', especially with a feeling of delight in it, is one of the most effective forms of spiritual practice. By chanting the 'name' of the Lord with devotion

even a mountain of sins vanishes as a mountain of cotton burns to ashes and disappears if a spark of fire falls on it. If one continues to repeat the Divine 'name' with concentration and devotion, one is sure to have the Divine vision ultimately. Suppose a big log of wood is immersed in the Ganges, and to one end of it is attached a chain, of which the other extremity is fixed on the bank. If you follow the chain, holding it link by link, you can gradually dive into the water and trace your way to it along the course of the chain. So also if one becomes absorbed in the repetition of the holy 'name', one will eventually realise Him.

By repeating the Divine 'name' with concentration, one's mind is gradually taken to that state of complete absorption known as meditation. Then the mind is diluted in the Lord as the crude medicine is diluted in spirit. The breath gets suspended, the senses of perception automatically close themselves to all stimuli, the mind becomes filled with intense love of God, and the real nature of the object of meditation gets infused into the mind of the meditator. A person has become perfect in meditation, if on sitting down to meditate, he becomes immediately surrounded with a divine atmosphere and his soul communes with God.

III

Such an advanced state of meditation would, however, come to one only if the mind is full of dispassion for the world and longing for God. These qualities in turn are the final fruits of the steady practice of discrimination and all the other disciplines that have been mentioned before. Dis-

passion is the firm conviction that everything in the world, from the humble position of a scavenger to the dignified position of the king, are trivial in nature, and a readiness on that account to sacrifice body, mind and riches in the pursuit of the Divine. It is the supreme purifying agent for the mind as alum is for muddy water.

Dispassion alone can give one that peace of mind required for earnest spiritual practice. A kite carrying a fish is chased by crows and other kites. But when, tired of this annoyance, it throws away the fish, the chasing birds leave it, and follow the kite that happens to catch the discarded fish. The first kite then sits calm and tranquil on the branch of a tree. In the same way unless a man throws away the burden of worldly desires, he cannot have the peace of mind for following the spiritual path.

Dispassion is of two kinds—moderate and intense. Moderate dispassion is slow and procrastinating, and there is no knowing when it will become mature. Intense dispassion is like digging a large tank in one night. There is vehemence in it, and the longing for God in one having it, is unadulterated by any worldly ambition. To him the world appears to be a well wherein he fears he may be drowned any moment. His relations seem to him as so many venomous serpents from whom he is inclined to fly away. And such is the strength of his impulse and determination that he never thinks even of setting his domestic affairs before taking to the path of God.

With the growth of dispassion there develops the allied virtue of a steady and intense yearning for God. This yearning for God is the culmination

of all spiritual endeavours; for as the glow of dawn heralds the rising sun, intense yearning is the sure sign that one will have the Divine realisation very soon. Look at the little child. So long as it remains engrossed in play with the toys, the mother engages herself in cooking and other household work; but when the little one finds no more satisfaction in toys, throws them aside and weeps with a loud cry for the mother, the mother can no longer remain in the kitchen. She drops down the rice pot, perhaps, from the hearth, and runs in hot haste to the child and takes it up in her arms. So does the Divine Mother behave towards the aspirant yearning for Her.

But the yearning must be intense. Both in his teachings and in his life the Master has set a striking example of this, unprecedented in history. In his life this craving was manifest as something organic with his personality, absorbing all the energies of the body, mind and soul in its intensity. Describing the intensity of it as felt by him, he compares it to the need for air that a man held under water experiences. "Do you know how intense our longing for God should be?" asks the Master. "The love that a devoted wife possesses for her

husband, the attachment that a miser feels for his hoarded wealth, and the clinging desire that the worldly-minded foster for the things of the world—when the intensity of your heart's longing for the Lord is equal to the combination of these three, then shall you attain Him."

In country plays depicting the life of Krishna, the play commences with the beating of drums and the loud singing of 'O Krishna, come. Come, O dear!' But the person who plays the part of Krishna pays no heed to this noise and goes complacently chatting and smoking in the green-room. But as soon as this noise ceases, and the pious sage Narada enters the stage with sweet and soft music, and, with a heart overflowing with love, calls upon Krishna to appear, Krishna finds that he can no longer remain indifferent and hurriedly comes on the stage. So long as the aspirant calls on the Lord with mere lip-prayers of 'Come, O Lord', the Lord will not come. When the Lord does come, the heart of the devotee gets melted into divine emotion, and his loud utterances will all cease for ever. The Lord cannot delay in coming when His devotee calls Him from the depth of his heart over-flowing with profound love.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York for the English translation of the original from Bengali.]

It was the first day of the Durga Puja, the worship of the Divine Mother. Two young men arrived at Jayaramvati. The following day they gathered some lotuses and offered them at the feet of the Holy Mother. One of them said to her, "Mother, Please initiate me into Sannyasa." His companion joined him in the request. "My child," replied the Mother, "You will have everything. Why worry?" "But you must make me a Sannyasi," insisted the young man. "Please give me the ochre robe of a monk."

Mother (rather seriously): What will you do, my child, with the ochre robe? What is there in it? You are not married; you are a Sannyasi. You will get by and by, things that are needful for your spiritual life.

Devotee: Mother, it is my desire to throw away my clothes and sacred thread and be immersed constantly in the contemplation of God like Trilinga Swami.

Mother (with a smile): That's all right. You will have everything in time.

The devotee said, rather impatiently, "Let me, then, throw away my clothes and sacred thread." As he was about to give effect to his words,

the Holy Mother became worried and said to him, "Don't do it, please stop. These will drop off of themselves in proper time." Still the devotee continued with his demand and said, "Mother, give me a little bit of the Master's madness. Make me mad." Continuing he said, "Mother, you are denying me devotion to God. Won't you show me the Master?" "Oh, yes!" said the Mother, "you will have everything, my child." The young men saluted the Mother and went out.

While eating the midday meal the same devotee tasted the *Payesh*¹ and said, "Oh Mother, what kind of *Payesh* is it that you have cooked? It is not at all good." "What shall I do," said the Mother, "we do not get good milk here." Kedar's mother said, "Well, my child, you are all her children. Bring her articles of food in large quantities. She will feed you nicely." But the young man paid no heed to these words and said, "Mother, this time I have not eaten enough. Next time I must get enough food to fill my stomach. Please see me again at the Udbodhan." The Mother nodded her assent.

¹ Rice boiled in milk with sugar.

In the forenoon, a devotee had arrived from Shillong. Doubtful about the divine nature of the Mother he had taken a vow that he would not visit her unless he had seen her in a dream seven times. He had the requisite visions. Therefore he had come to Jayaramvati to pay her his respect. In the afternoon, as he was about to take leave of her, he said, "Mother, I shall say good-bye now. Do I need anything else?"

Mother: Yes, surely. You must get your initiation.

Devotee: I may have it at Bagh-Bazar in Calcutta.

Mother: But, my child, please finish that task. Have your initiation to-day.

Devotee: But I have eaten the Prasadam.

Mother: That will not do any harm.

After the initiation, the devotee took his departure.

The mental state of the eccentric devotee, referred to above, took a turn for the worse as he returned home from Jayaramvati. He became restless for the vision of the Master and felt piqued to think that the Holy Mother could by her mere will make him get a vision of Sri Ramakrishna and yet refused to do so. In a very angry state of mind he came back to Jayaramvati and said to her, "Mother, won't you enable me to see the Master?" The Mother said tenderly, "Yes, you will see Him; don't be so restless." He could not stand it any longer. He said in an angry voice, "You are only deceiving me. Here is the rosary you gave me. Take it back. I don't care for it any more." With these words he threw the rosary at her. "All right," said

the Mother, "Remain for ever the child of Sri Ramakrishna." He left the place at once.

One day, referring to this devotee, I asked the Holy Mother, "Did he also return the Mantram? He threw away his rosary. Can anyone ever return the Mantram?"

Mother: Can that ever be possible? The Word of the Mantram is living. Can anyone who has received it give it back? Can he, once having felt attraction for the Guru, get rid of him? This man, some day in the future, will come to himself again and fall at the feet of those whom he now abuses.

Devotee: Why does such a thing come to pass?

Mother: One sees such things. One Guru may initiate many disciples, but can they all be of the same nature? Spiritual life manifests in a devotee according to his nature. He once said to me, 'Mother, make me mad'. 'Why?' said I, 'Why should you be mad, my child? Can anyone without committing much sin, ever be mad?' He said, 'My younger brother has seen the Master, please let me also have vision of Him.' I said in reply, 'Who can ever see Him with the physical eyes? But one may do so by closing his eyes. Your brother is a child. He may have visualized the Master with his eyes closed; but he thinks that he has seen him with his eyes open.' 'Continue in your spiritual life,' I said, 'practise spiritual disciplines; pray to the Master, and you will also have the vision. Man knows in his own mind how far he has advanced and how much Knowledge and Consciousness of God he has obtained. He knows in his innermost soul how much of God he

has realized. Besides, who has been able to see God with his physical eyes ?

This devotee, after being scolded at the Udbodhan office, used to live on the bank of the Ganges. Sometimes he would sit on the door-sill of the Udbodhan, and would take his meals there. After some time, one day he was brought to the Holy Mother with her permission. She tried to pacify him in various ways and said, "The Master used to say, 'I shall have to stand at the time of death, for those who pray to me.' These are the words of his own mouth. You are my child. What should you be afraid of ? Why should you behave like a madman ? That will disgrace the Master. People will say that this devotee has become mad. Should you conduct yourself in a way that will discredit the name of the Master ? Go home ; live as others do. Eat and live like them. At the time of your death, He will reveal Himself to you and take you to Him. Can you tell me if anyone

has ever got vision of Him with physical eyes ? It was only Naren (Swami Vivekananda) who saw Him thus. That happened in America when he had intense yearning for Him. Naren then used to feel that the Master grasped his arm. That vision lasted only for a few days. Now, go home and live there happily. How miserable are the worldly people ! The other day Rama's son passed away. You can at least sleep with an easy heart." Later on the Mother said to the other devotees, "The other day, while I was performing the worship I saw his face (referring to the above-mentioned devotee); his head had shaggy hair like Gopala. That very day he came here."

The devotee was much pacified by the consolation and words of instruction of the Holy Mother. He took his meals at the Udbodhan and later returned to his native village. He gradually regained his normal state of mind.

NATURALISM

By Prof. James Bissett Pratt, Ph.D.

[Professor Pratt is the well-known author of *Adventures in Philosophy and Religion*, *Personal Realism*, *The Religious Consciousness*, a *Psychological Study* and other works of first-rate importance. In the following pithy article he gives a wise warning not to scorn all Naturalism as a kind of destructive dogma. The distinction between a crude and a critical Naturalism is becoming vivid, and the latter, he suggests, like the highest and truest religion, has truth and truth alone as the goal of its quest, even though the method adopted for the purpose be empirical and purely rational.]

ONE of the most marked and most successful movements of our time is that which goes under the name of Naturalism. Few movements are so loved, so feared, or so hated. The variety of epithets show-

ered upon it is quite bewildering to the outsider whose aim is not to blame or praise but just to understand.

To understand the meaning of Naturalism it will be helpful first to consider some of the schools or ten-

dencies of thought to which it is opposed. One of these is indicated by the phrase "the Will to Believe." Whether one likes Naturalism or not, one must recognise that it honestly wants to know the truth. It does not wish to deceive anyone else and it is determined not to deceive itself. The truth may turn out to be unpleasant, but whatever it may be, Naturalism wants to know it. It is convinced that there is an actual state of things, that Reality is what it is, and our vision of it should not be clouded and colored by our desires.

Another antipathy of your honest "naturalist" is belief from authority. It matters not how sacred the tradition, how holy the Book, how old the Church, how great the writer's prestige, Naturalism would brush all this aside in coming to its conclusion about the Nature which we face, and consider only reason and empirical evidence.

The stress that Naturalism lays upon empirical evidence shows its incompatibility with Rationalism. Not that the two schools need necessarily quarrel, for they may deal with quite different subject-matters. Rationalism is interested chiefly in logic and the processes and outcome of pure *a priori* thought: Naturalism is interested in a physical, spatial, temporal human world. Rationalism investigates the realm of essence, Naturalism the realm of existence. There is, however, a type of Rationalism which claims to furnish an account of existence and Nature by *a priori* methods, scorning appeal to brute fact, and between this school and Naturalism there is war to the knife.

The contrast thus indicated between Naturalism and some of its op-

ponents will now enable us to reach a more definite view of its nature. It is characterized chiefly by three things : by its aim, by its method, and by its resulting system. All three are genuine parts of Naturalism. But the system it builds up is less important to it, less fundamental, less permanent than its method; and its method less permanent and essential than its aim. First of all it wants the truth about the world we live in, whatever that may turn out to be. In order to attain this it makes use of the empirical method. And by use of this method it builds up a picture of the universe. It is plain, therefore, that one cannot define Naturalism by any given picture, by any given theory or system, for its fidelity to its method and to its aim prevents it from being wholly and finally committed to any theory, and keeps it perpetually adding to, subtracting from, and modifying, whatever concept or system it may have built up. It is hardly conceivable that the time will ever come when it will reach an absolutely complete and final system, or cease changing, at least in detail, the best system it shall have constructed.

As thus understood Naturalism is far removed from the dogmatic position often attributed to it. Its aim is not propaganda of some favourite dogma but unbiassed investigation of the real world. Too often in religious and idealistic circles is Naturalism spoken of as a kind of evil conspiracy against all that is spiritual and ideal, a devil's invention with only malevolent aims. Unless we are to define Naturalism from the very start in such a way as to make it untenable, and in such a way as to be unjust to

the great majority of the honest empirical students of Nature, such a picture is pure caricature. Your genuine naturalistic investigator or philosopher has little or nothing in common with the bombastic atheist and materialist of an outgrown age. To the careless and inattentive he may, indeed, seem to resemble the thoughtless iconoclast, because he is brave enough to face and accept unpleasant and even appalling facts, provided they be facts. But the motive which prompts this is not love of destruction but love of truth.

If I have been right in my characterization of Naturalism, it will be necessary to distinguish within the school two sub-divisions. One of these—and I think by far the larger group—is made up of those who honestly put first of all the earnest desire to find out the truth, and who accordingly make unprejudiced use of the empirical method. The other group is characterised by incipient failure to be unscrupulously loyal to this high aim and method. They prize too highly some naturalistic “system” already reached; and consequently, without being aware of the fact, they

have in part gone over to one of the schools of thought which genuine Naturalism means always to attack, such as belief from authority or from the Will-to-Believe.

It is necessary, therefore, carefully to distinguish from each other a crude and a critical Naturalism. The crude Naturalism is not really empirical, is not really naturalistic in the true sense, but is a form of prejudiced defence of some favourite philosophical theory such as Mechanism or Materialism. Your genuine Naturalism, on the other hand, keeps always an open mind, is willing to accept new facts, to weigh new philosophical proposals, and consequently to remodel and expand its conception of what Nature really is. It is plain that with a Naturalism of this sort, it will be quite possible for the idealist and the religiously-minded philosopher heartily and fruitfully to co-operate. And I believe that a careful scrutiny of the signs of the times will indicate that the lines of development which a critical Naturalism and a liberal Religion are taking in our day are steadily converging.

A LETTER OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

[The birth-day anniversary of Swami Shivananda, one of the greatest monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and a real Mahapurusha, falling this month, reminds us of his great saintly qualities. We are glad on this occasion to share with our readers the following autobiographic letter kindly placed at our disposal by an American devotee of the Swami, to whom he had written it, a couple of years before his passing away.]

*Belur Math,
February 17, 1932.*

MY DEAR A—

I am very glad to receive your letter of January 5, 1932. I have received the draft for Rupees Eight-

hundred enclosed therein and the money will be spent as you like it. I received the photographs in time. They were all very beautiful and we all like them very much

Yes, I am writing a short note regarding my personal life as I pro-

mised previously. I am keeping in different health; so I may not tell you everything as I desire to. However, I shall try to narrate the central theme of my life, past and present.

I was born in a middle class Brahmin family of Bengal in a village. My father was a lawyer and a devout worshipper of the Divine Mother. He used to earn much. But as he was most charitably-disposed, for which he was well-known in the locality, he would spend all his earnings month after month, without husbanding anything for the future, to help scores of poor neighbours with money, food and clothing. He believed in education; so more than thirty students lived in our house, my father bearing all their expenses *viz.*, school-fees, food and other incidental charges. So when my father died, the family became poor. My mother whom I lost at an early age was a very pious, hard-working and motherly lady. She alone would do all the works of the family, cooking, feeding, nursing and all. If any help were offered, she would reply: “Am I not the mother?” I feel myself even now fortunate that I got such parents.

From my early boyhood I had a deep longing to know God and to realise Him. That intensity grew with my age. Urged by it I would go to Brahmo Samaj and visit religious men who I thought would be able to throw light on the subject. I would also practise what they advised me. Family life had no charm for me even from my childhood. I had to give up my studies early on the death of my father due to straightened condition of the family. Myself being the only male child with two sisters, one of them still living, I had to come

to Calcutta to seek a job which I secured at a mercantile firm, Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. But this made my heart very heavy and I would often weep in my prayers to God to free me for ever from all these ties. Here where I served for nearly two years I heard the name of Sri Ramakrishna and came in contact with him. The first interview took place in the house of the late Dr. Ram Chandra Dutt one of the most intimate devotees of the Master. Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) had been invited to his house that evening. It was a nice gathering. The place had been surcharged with spirituality. I was struck to find that the conversation turned on Samadhi that evening, just the thing I wanted to know. I was perfectly satisfied with what I saw and heard there. A few days after this, I left for Dakshineswar Kali Temple, about 8 miles north of Calcutta. I reached the place when it was almost dark. Being new to the place, it took me a few minutes to find out his room. In the dim oil light I saw him seated cross-legged calmly on the wooden cot with three or four others sitting silently on the floor in front of him. As I approached, he asked me in a sweet voice who I was. I told him my name and the place of my birth. On this, he mentioned my father's name and asked me if I were his son. I replied in the affirmative. Then he watched me a little and asked me to come again, next morning. That was because I had told in the course of the talk that I would spend the night in the village itself with an acquaintance of mine. Later on, I learnt that he knew my father well, when he had to visit the temple to worship the Mother Kali

in connexion with his professional calls. When we parted he asked me to send a little ice for his use. This was done by Ram Babu and Suresh Babu.

This short audience was enough for me. I felt a deep attachment, and was drawn towards him. As if I knew him for a long time, my heart became full of joy. This was the more so because I saw in him my tender loving mother waiting for me. So with the confidence, faith and certitude of a child, I surrendered myself entirely to his care. I positively also became certain that at last I had found out him whom I was searching all these days. All my longings were satisfied and happiness reigned in its place.

Since then I looked upon him as my mother. By the bye, I may tell you that since the death of my mother I looked upon my father also as my dear mother. That sense deepened when I came in contact with my Master, Sri Ramakrishna. He also treated me the very same way. During my visits later, instead of bowing down I would place my head on his lap in the way of showing respects to him. With his heart full of affection he would hug it in his bosom, pat it, fondle me, caress me, just as a mother would do to her pet child. It was an Elysian favour. He once asked me: 'What do you take me to be?' I replied, 'You are my mother Divine.' A sweet celestial loving smile played on His lips and our relations were re-established through a new testament.

After this momentous visit my life with the family and hours in the office seemed to be a heavy load on me. I would run to him at all possible opportunities to meet him either at

Dakshineswar or at Calcutta where he would at times come to visit the devotees and pious men of all religions and thoughts.

During my second or third visit to Dakshineswar when I was serving him, in an ecstatic mood he suddenly touched my chest with the palm of his soft legs. This magic touch took away all my consciousness. In that state I don't know how long I remained. On getting back my consciousness I saw him rubbing the palm of his hand on my head, most probably to bring me back to consciousness. I have seen him behave like that later in other cases. At that time he will pray, 'Mother, come down! come down!' The result of the touch was that I realised that everything became revealed to me, that I was the Eternal Soul, free, and that Sri Ramakrishna was that Eternal Principle, the Isvara Who had come down in mercy in human form for the good of mankind and also that I was on earth to serve Him. This kindness he once again showered on me at Dakshineswar under the Banyan tree in Panchavati.

Notwithstanding this, he would not allow us to rest on our laurels but would constantly urge us with patience infinite, to taste by our own efforts the fruits of his own realisation. He watched our efforts and directed us with meticulous care to proceed on our own lines through paths suited to our own attitudes. Sincerity only counted with him. Bigotry, orthodoxy, had no place in his teaching and in his life. He would accept all, of all denominations, with equal tolerance, love and sympathy. He spurred us all to reach the ultimate Goal through our own paths. To come

in contact with him was to become spiritual for ever. To live with him was to live in the presence of God.

I had to marry later on—against my conviction. This I had to do to get one of my sisters married with one of the members of the family from which my wife came. I had to agree to it on account of our poor pecuniary condition. This, at first, disheartened me very much. I felt as if a link of Maya's chain had been forged for my bondage. So with a disconsolate mind, soon after the ceremony, I ran up to him and prayed to give me permission to forsake the world before I got enmeshed in it. But he replied with all sympathy, "No, my boy, not now. Do not get dispirited; this marriage will enhance your Vairagya (absence of worldly desires) and make you more fit for the spiritual life." Actually, it happened to be so. My wife with whom I never slept for a night in the same bed and whom I always treated kindly died within a year. That year was to me a year of intense preparation. My determination to renounce the world deepened as I would pray, often a whole night with tears in my eyes, to free me and not to bind me down with the chains of the world. So at the death of my wife, relieved of all bondages, I ran up straight to him at Dakshineswar and prayed to allow me to stay with him. He kindly accepted me. Since then for the next three years he was with us in the body. I lived almost continuously with him....

At Dakshineswar I met Premananda, Brahmananda and Swamiji.¹ They came there before me. Swamiji

¹Swami Vivekananda.

amongst us was loved and trusted most by him. He left with him the command to organise and bring this Order up. About it I need not dilate. You know all from the books published.

After his passing away, I travelled much throughout the length and breadth of India and endeavoured much to know Him in His different aspects. I liked the Himalayas very much and also passed a considerable period in South India and Ceylon. Benares I loved much as that is the Eternal city, the abode of Siva. All my endeavours have ended in realising Him everywhere. Sri Ramakrishna is the centre from where all the radii have travelled towards the circumference. So I write to you that I have not 'realised', but seen, God—not in astral form but in this gross human form. And I declare it to you that Sri Ramakrishna is the fuller and more developed manifestation of Him, for the present, the highest possible manifestation of Him in human form. Follow him in your own way, you will surely reach through his grace to ultimate peace and blessedness. You are fortunate that you have come within his orbit so early. As such I am sure you will not have to be born again.

I am doing tolerably well, though my blood pressure is still very high. That doesn't matter. I depend entirely on Him. I sent you one letter in the first week of this month. I hope you have received it. May this find you well and happy. My blessings and best wishes to you....

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

OPPOSITE APPROACHES TO ABSOLUTISM

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

[The term Absolute has slightly varying shades of meaning in different systems of thought. However, daring thinkers of the East and the West who have pushed their philosophic reasoning to the farthest limit have arrived at one form or other of this doctrine. As the fundamental principle of all reality, the Absolute has been considered by Sankara 'a secure fortress impregnable to logicians' (Com. on Br. Up. II, 1-20). The various subjectivistic schools of the past and the scientific materialism of to-day arrive at an Absolutistic conception from the two opposite poles of experience. A very brief and critical survey of the two tendencies indicated by the history of philosophy forms the theme of Dr. Raju's essay. Dr. Raju, besides being a lecturer in Philosophy, is also the author of a thoughtful volume on Hegelianism and Advaita entitled *Thought and Reality* (Allen Unwin Ltd., 1937).]

THE history of philosophy presents a vast spectacle of diverse stand-points of human thought in its endeavour to understand man and his universe. From every stand-point the attempt is made to offer a consistent interpretation of our experience of the world. Almost all these stand-points can be classed into pairs of opposites, so that each system of philosophy can be found to have a rival contending for recognition. Sometimes the approach to understand the world is made from the side of the epistemological subject, and all systems of philosophy which make the subject their starting-point are styled subjectivisms. The opposite approach is from the side of the object, and treats the subject as one of the many things of the world, if not as a mere effervescence, and we get the various forms of materialism. In this connection the opposition between realism and idealism seems of late to have lost its significance. For idealism does not deny the claims of realism, but points to the necessity of going beyond what we experience immediately. But the opposition may take a different form

namely, the opposition between idealism and what we may call actualism. The former attempts to interpret the world in terms of the ideal or norm, what *is* in terms of what *ought to be*; the latter tries to observe just what is and describe it just as it is. These are two of the most important rival approaches to the interpretation of our experience. But each of them, when taken by itself, has been found wanting. It could not cover the whole of our experience, it can satisfactorily explain only a part. It succeeded where its rival failed; but in its turn it failed where its rival succeeded. This paper attempts to show that it is only in some form of Absolutism that the one-sided of these stand-points can be removed, and the claims of all can be met. The world is so complex, it contains so many things irreducible to one another, that from the side of any single stand-point, an adequate explanation of the world cannot be offered. There are certainly many more stand-points than here considered. But it requires the writing of a book to deal with all of them. We shall therefore limit our discussion

to the two referred to. Even then we can touch only the essentials and cannot enter into details. Taking each into consideration we shall endeavour to show that it is able to cover the whole of our experience when it transcends itself and comprehends its rival; so that the peculiarity of the starting-point is lost in the end. Absolutism results in that in which every one-sided system finds completion and is transcended. This transcending does not imply that the particular claims, to defend which the starting-point has been formulated, are not real claims; it only implies that these claims as well as the counter claims can be satisfied only by rising higher. The opposition between these can be removed only by rising to a position where the opposition is not felt.

I

It is often said that thought originates in conflict or contradiction. If the course of life were to run smooth without impediments and obstacles, thought perhaps would not have evolved. Professor Whitehead tells us that thought begins with negation.¹ The pragmatists tell us that it begins with a problem.² In the history of human thought there is continuous appearance of new problems; and sometimes the re-appearance of the same in a new garb. Every now and then a new conflict is discovered in our experience. Philosophers take sides, construct opposing systems of thought, find themselves exhausted after a particular length,

and reach a position in which their stand-point loses its significance.

It is thus that subjectivism originated. With Descartes began the opposition, in European philosophy, between the subject and the object. He conceived them as different and disparate entities, the one as pure thought without extension, and the other as pure extension. And the problem as to how the subject could know the object which is so different from it, became acute. For, the subject, in order to know the object, had to come into contact with it, but it was inconceivable how two absolutely different entities which had nothing at all in common could come into contact with each other. In Berkeley's philosophy this difficulty seems to have been overcome. For he denied the independent reality of the object from the subject, and said that the former is only an idea of the latter. The subject can know only its ideas. So far he appears to be a thorough-going subjectivist. But yet he could not stop with subjectivism. There are other aspects of our experience which he could not deny and had to explain. If the object is the idea of the subject, how is it that no sane man believes that he can create objects out of his mind, though he believes that he can create ideas out of it? Berkeley, then, had to draw a distinction between ideas of imagination and ideas which are objective. The latter cannot be produced at our will and pleasure, they occur in an order. But then how can they be called ideas? They are not the ideas of any human being; otherwise, they would be private to him. If they are not ideas, they must be objects existing independently of every human

¹ *Process and Reality*, p. 225, "Consciousness is the feeling of negation".

² Dewey: *How we think*, p. 12.

mind. But then Berkeley was loth to give up his subjectivism. But subjectivism, in the sense that the world is an idea of any finite subject did not adequately explain the situation. He had therefore to sublimate that form of subjectivism by identifying the subject of the ideas which are objects with God. The objects of the world are God's ideas, not the ideas of merely the finite minds. Berkeley felt that the objects must somehow be the ideas of a mind; otherwise, the mind cannot know them. And if they are not the ideas of a finite mind, they must be the ideas of an infinite mind, which is God.³ And because we partake of the nature of God, we are able to know His ideas, that is, the objects of the world. But how we partake of the nature of God, and how we know the objects through Him, remain ultimate doubts or problems in Berkeley's philosophy. Call the objects the ideas of God, they still are not *our* ideas. And the original problem, how we can know objects which are different from minds, is only pushed back, not solved. The objects finally remain objects, lose nothing of their objectivity, for they are not this or that mind's ideas. For this reason Berkeley's idealism is called objective idealism. This line of thought influenced a large number of British idealists like Ferrier.⁴ This objective idealism, we can easily see, is subjective idealism sublimated, that is, subjective idealism transcends itself. Thus though Berkeley was obliged to give up the independent existence of objects at

³ Johnston: *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, pp. 184-5.

⁴ Cunningham: *The Idealist Argument*, p. 36.

the beginning in order to solve the epistemological problem, in the end he found the problem raising its head again. But meanwhile he reached a conception akin to that of the Absolute in later idealism, in which the disparity between the natures of the idea and the object disappeared. For the objects are the ideas of God, and so far share the nature of the subject though the subject is the infinite subject. But the stigma that attached to ordinary subjectivism cannot be attached to the subjectivism of God; for so far as the objects are treated as being independent of the finite mind, it is only a question of terminology, from the standpoint of the finite mind, whether we should call them the objects of the finite mind or the ideas of God. If deeper consideration reveals to us that ideas and objects have some common nature, we so far gained an advance in philosophic thought.

II

But this advance it does not seem that we can with justification attribute to Berkeley. The credit ought rather to go to Kant. Berkeley started with pure subjectivism, and within subjectivism itself he wanted to preserve the objectivity of the objects. That ideas and objects have a common nature is not the result of his philosophy, but is asserted at the very beginning by denying the existence of objects outside the knowing minds. But Kant started with the opposition between the subject and the object as handed down to him and as commonly experienced in ordinary consciousness, and pointed out that no experience is possible in which the subject does not contribute something

out of itself to the object. This contribution, Kant says, consists of the Categories of the Understanding like Substance, Casuality, etc. He further postulates three Ideas of Reason, viz., the Self, the World as a Whole and God, the sum-total of all existence, as regulative ideas, that is, as norms according to which we should organise our experience. Thus these enter into the understanding of our experience, though not into the constitution of our experience. And these three Ideas are not left in isolation by Kant. For he writes: "Finally, it is obvious, that there exists among transcendental ideas a certain connection and unity, and that pure reason, by means of them, collects all its cognitions into one system. From the cognition of the self to the cognition of the world, and through these to the supreme being, the progression is so natural, that it seems to resemble the logical march of reason from the premises to the conclusion."⁵ Though Kant started with the subject and object as opposed, he is obliged to postulate an Ideal of Reason which comprehends both and in which their opposition is lost. Thus the result at which Kant arrived seemed to be little different from that at which Berkeley arrived. Berkeley postulated God and His ideas which are our objects in order to give an adequate account of our cognition. Yet this God is not directly perceived by us like the trees and the mountains. God, therefore, is a transcendental ideal just as much in Berkeley as in Kant. In Him the opposition between the subject and the object loses its significance. We may call Him the

⁵ Melklejohn: *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 284.

Object, the sole reality that exists, or the Subject whose ideas constitute the world. But in any way the subject or object in the ordinary sense in which the aspect of opposition is essential, is sublimated, so that it is indifferent whether we call it subject or object. Yet it is continuous with both and includes both. When the continuity with the self is emphasized it is called Self-consciousness. Otherwise, it may be called the Absolute, as it is called by the post-Kantian idealists.

III

Almost the same result is reached by many physicists and other scientists. They naturally start with the object, and interpret the world in terms of the object. And to understand the object they analyse the objects into the simplest constituents possible, and in this attempt most of them have come to the view that the ultimate constituents of the world are spiritual. Thus Eddington says in his *New Pathways of Science*, "As for the external objects, remorselessly dissected by science, they are studied and measured, but they are never known. Our pursuit of them has led from solid matter to molecules, from molecules to sparsely scattered electric charges, from electric charges to waves of probability."⁶ And he maintains that the nature of the world is spiritual.⁷ James Jeans says in his *New Background of Science* that the world and mind are of the same nature. He quotes appreciatively from Russell; "The world presented for our belief by a philosophy based on modern science is in many ways less alien to ourselves than the world

⁶ pp. 322-3.

⁷ p. 319.

of 'matter conceived in the former centuries.'⁸ And in his *Mysterious Universe* he accepts Berkeley's eternal Being in whose mind the objects exist as ideas.⁹ Similarly Whitehead, who approached philosophy from the side of mathematics and the theory of relativity, appreciatively quotes a passage from Schelling: "In the 'Philosophy of Nature' I considered the subject-object called nature in its activity as self-constructing. In order to understand it, we must rise to an intellectual intuition of nature. The empiricist does not rise thereto, and for this reason in all his explanations it is always *he himself* that proves to be constructing the nature. It is no wonder, then, that his construction and that which was constructed coincide. A *Nature-philosophy* raises nature to independence, and makes it construct itself, and he never feels, therefore, the necessity of opposing nature as constructed (*i.e.* as experience) to real nature, or of correcting the one by means of the other."¹⁰ Both for Bradley and Whitehead the primary activity at the basis of experience is feeling.¹¹ This tendency in scientific thought shows that it is not opposed to the spiritualistic conception of the universe. There is the general tendency to remove the opposition between mind and nature and treat both as the manifestations of a unitary principle. And this principle which is to comprehend both can be nothing but the Absolute. Whitehead's organic conception of the world is not far removed from absolutism.

⁸ p. 290,

⁹ p. 126.

¹⁰ *The Concept of Nature*, p. 47.

¹¹ *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 296.

IV

In Indian philosophy we find the same result. There are systems in India as in the West, which refuses to carry their speculations beyond a certain limit. They naturally did not reach the conception of the Absolute. But those systems which did not shrink from pushing their reasonings to their logical extremes certainly reached the conception of the Absolute. The most outstanding and important of these are the Advaita which is a Vedantic system, and the Vijñānavāda and Sunyavāda which are Buddhistic.

Advaita did not originate with the same epistemological problem as that with which the Berkeleyan and the Kantian philosophies started. Hence the difficulty to label Advaita either as subjectivism or as realism. Its attitude in this respect is not as easily apparent as that of Berkeley or Kant. Some called it subjectivism, some realism, and others pseudo-realism. Advaita started as an interpretation of the Upanishads, and the Brahmasūtras, and we may include, the Bhagavadgītā. Its epistemology, religion, metaphysics, etc., are promiscuously mixed up. Sankara, the protagonist of Advaita, did not write separate treatises on these subjects. Later Advaitin writers made attempts to write separate treatises on some of these topics. They had to separate these discussions, and we get from them some definitely formulated theories. Yet all are not unanimous except as regards the non-dualistic nature of the Absolute. Some like Prakāśananda appear to be pure subjectivists, because they start with Sankara's theory that the self and

the Absolute are identical. Even then it is not the problem, 'How can the subject know the object which is different from it' that led them to the postulation of the Absolute. What led them to its postulation is the criterion of truth. Truth is what is *traikalikabādhyā*, that is, what is uncontradicted in the past, present, and the future, and such a truth can be the Absolute only. But where can it be found? Only in the knower. Otherwise, as it cannot be found outside him, how could he have come to apply it as a standard of truth? If the Absolute shines through our self, can it shine as its object? Certainly not. For then it would be as imperfect as any other object. Then it must shine as somehow identical with our self. It is the light by virtue of which everything is known, and to know which no other light is necessary. But then can it be different from the knower? No. Somehow therefore the finite self and the Absolute must be identical. That is, they are the same in essence.

Such is the gist of the progress of the argument of Advaita, if we ignore the frequent references to scriptures. But now can this self, which is the Absolute, be opposed to an object which is a not-self? Can there be a second to this self? If the object is independent of the Absolute, then the latter cannot be a standard for the object's truth or falsity. Every thing must depend upon the Absolute, owe its existence to the Absolute. Then only can the Absolute be the ultimate truth in the light of which every thing is known and judged. If so, the distinction between the subject and the object should be meaningless in the Absolute. Some who are mere stu-

dents of the Sanskrit works on Advaita may wonder whether this is its line of argument. In this article we cannot attempt, for want of space, to demonstrate that it is so. But we can say that, if it is not so, Advaita, as a system of philosophy, can have no rational foundation. And those who do not believe in the infallibility of the scriptures may, without hesitation, put it aside.

V

Most Buddhists protest against regarding Buddhistic idealism as subjectivism. The *alayavijñāna* or the 'storehouse of consciousness' of the Yogachara school is not the same as the epistemological subject. Only in essence are the two identical, as the Jiva and the Brahman are identical in Advaita. "This," says Sir Charles Eliot, "so far as it is super-individual, is an aspect of suchness,"¹² but when it affirms and particularises itself, it becomes *Citta*, that is the human mind."¹³ Hence in many respects *alayavijñāna* occupies the same position in the Vijñānavāda as that which the Brahman occupies in Advaita. It is interesting to note that the universal Dharmakāya of the Tathagatas occupies a similar position. "It transforms and unfolds itself, whenever conditions are favourable, in the form of a Tathagata or some other form, in order that all beings may be induced to bring their store of merit to maturity."¹⁴ According to the Madhyamika school, "God is all and all is God."¹⁵ More-

¹² *Tathata* which corresponds to the Absolute.

¹³ *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. 2, p. 43.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Yamakami Sogen: *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, p. 205.

over, their *sunya* is not void but is perfect reality. When it is said that everything is *sunya*, the statement means that nothing in this world has a nature of its own. It means simply that the world is *nissvabhava*.¹⁶ In fact, one of the *Madhyamika karikas* says that reality is neither *sunya* nor *a-sunya*, neither both nor neither. This *sunya* is again not different from the world.¹⁷ Generally speaking all these statements lead us to the conclusion that all schools of Buddhist idealism are trying to express the truth that in the ultimate reality the distinction between the opposites like existence and non-existence, subject and object, etc., has no place, and that ultimate reality transcends all and is not a many. In a paper like this we cannot go into a detailed discussion of these schools. Even among Buddhists there are realists like the Sarvastivavadins. "But," says Sir Charles Eliot, "many eminent Buddhists began by being Sarvastivavadins and became Mahayanists, their earlier belief being regarded as preliminary rather than erroneous."¹⁸ The philosopher who boldly follows the lead of his logic cannot but end in some form of monism, and in the result reached, the opposites that hold true at the starting point, lose their meaning and significance.

VI

We have thus seen that, whether the philosopher starts from the object or the subject or from both, he is led by his logic to Absolutism, if his position is to be comprehensive and consistent. In discussing this topic we

included Sankara's idealism, though he does not start with the opposition between the subject and the object. He indeed starts with their dualism, though not with their opposition, reaches the conception of the Absolute as the ideal truth, points out that it shines through the subject, and concludes that the Absolute is the sole reality, and the subject and the object and everything in the universe owe their existence to it. Sankara reached the Absolute, not in order to reconcile the rival claims of the subject and the object, but as the ideal truth. But when once the Absolute is postulated, Sankara too is obliged to transcend the distinction between the subject and the object. And to show that this distinction has no significance even for his Absolute we have included him in one of the above sections.

Yet his position leads us to the other opposition, *viz.*, between the actual and the ideal. The opposition between the two has been strongly emphasized by many systems of philosophy and especially by ethics. Kant, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, made a complete separation between what is and what ought to be. Hegel in his *Logic*¹⁹ criticised this separation; for the 'Ought' is not something set over against the 'Is', so that we have both side by side; but the 'Ought' includes the 'Is', is the latter's completion. In truth even in Kant this is so. For the three Ideas of Reason are for Kant necessary for the organisation and understanding of our experience, and what is essential for the understanding of our experience must be implied by it. What is thus implied cannot therefore be

opposed to it. Though Kant regards these Ideas as merely regulative in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he finds that this reason has to be constitutive, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*.²⁰ Yet he compares the Ideas of Reason to Plato's ideas which are archetypes of things, *i.e.*, ideals.²¹ So, that Reason with its ideas which are to constitute our experience in its practical aspect is already implied in the understanding of our experience as a unifying principle. And if our experience cannot be understood without that principle, then that must also constitute it; so that the ideal is already actual as presupposed by our experience. This point has not been noticed by Kant, and he left the 'Ought' and the 'Is' as opposed. This opposition runs throughout his second *Critique*, and gave occasion for the criticism of the later idealists. But as a matter of fact, the actual and the ideal are not opposed; the latter is implied in the former, and we can understand the actual only in terms of the ideal. Apart from Kant's teaching that the ideal should be the regulative principle of our understanding, even in ordinary perception it is the ideal that enables us to understand the actual. This fact was noticed even by Plato. No actual triangle can be a true triangle; for a triangle is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines, and it is impossible to obtain a figure which completely answers to this definition. Besides the old criticism that there is no physical line without breadth and thickness, and no physical line

which is exactly straight, it is now held that space is spherical, and so there can be no plane figure. Hence the true triangle must be an ideal figure, and only in terms of such a figure can any triangle drawn be understood. Similarly, if I make the judgment 'that is a man', I am using a norm here. Even a hideous monster without many organs is called a man, but this is only by courtesy. For what differentiates man from not-man? Hegel is not without justification when he refused to call an imperfect man, man. Any particular is understood in terms of a universal. Apart from the question of its eternity, this universal must be a norm, and not an abstraction from many particulars. Otherwise, if we take all men from the most perfect to the worst monsters, the common characteristic obtained by abstraction can never enable us to understand man. If the universal is therefore a norm or ideal, and every particular is understood through a universal, then it is understood through a norm. Thus a norm or ideal is implied or involved in every bit of our experience. So the ideal and actual can never be separated: there is no inherent opposition between the two.

Even in Sankara's idealism the Absolute is postulated as what is implied or involved in our finite experience. Our experience is relative and imperfect: it is vitiated by contradictions. But what is relative and imperfect and vitiated by contradictions must be based upon, and presupposes, what is absolute, perfect and uncontradicted. Thus though the Absolute is the ideal truth, it is implied by the actual, and so cannot be opposed to the actual. It is because

²⁰ Abbot: *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 144, seq.

²¹ Meiklejohn: *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 221, seq.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. 3, p. 92.

¹⁹ Wallace: *The Logic of Hegel*, pp. 11-12.

the Absolute too has to be treated as real and true that most of the absolutists have been led to regard the world as relatively unreal. Whether we call the world unreal or coin some other word to denote its status with regard to the Absolute, it is a question of terminology. The peculiar point we have arrived at is that the Absolute, though an ideal, is implied by the actual and is at the core of actuality. The Absolute, though at first is seen to be opposed to the actual, is for deeper consideration at the very heart of the opposite. Hence in Absolutism the opposition between idealism and actualism vanishes. Philosophy may start with the actual, and postulate the ideal; but the ideal it later finds to be the truth of the actu-

al. This reconciliation is possible only in Absolutism. For unless our philosophy is comprehensive enough, and pushes its reasonings to their logical extreme, the ideal cannot be found within the actual itself. And such a philosophy can be nothing but Absolutism. As we have shown, there can be no pure actualism; for no actual can be understood unless with reference to the ideal, and any attempt to separate the ideal from the actual must therefore end in failure. But when once the presence of the ideal in the actual is admitted, the question cannot be avoided, 'What is the highest ideal?' Naturally one will be led to the Absolute, as Kant has been led to the Ideal of Reason. And this is the same as the Absolute.

THE PLACE OF PRARABDHA KARMA IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES

By Dr. R. Shama Sastri, Ph. D.

[Dr. Shama Sastri of Artha Sastra fame throws some new light on the conception of Prarabdha Karma, as conceived by Advaitic thinkers. Not past actions alone but knowledge also forms a factor in embodiment; Prarabdha which is confined to the sum total of happiness and misery can be combated—these form the thesis of this article.]

ALMOST all the schools of Indian philosophers are unanimous in ascribing rebirth to past Karma or the sum of actions done in the previous birth. It is called Prarabdha which in its literal sense means that Karma which has begun to operate by bringing a body into existence so as to be a medium for the experience of happiness and misery, as a result of past actions. It is usually defined to be a sum of past actions, which may be either good or bad or a mixture of both and which is

productive of a physical body suitable for the experience of happiness or misery resulting from those past actions. This definition implies that Prarabdha is solely responsible for the success or failure of man in this life and that no attempt on his part can possibly end or mend the effects of his Prarabdha-karma. If this is the meaning of Prarabdha and if there is no limitation to the effects of Prarabdha, it follows that there is no difference between Prarabdha and Fatalism. This

form of fatalistic interpretation has been given to Prarabdha-karma in most of the Puranas of the Brahmins and the Jataka stories of the Buddhists and the Jainas. Even with the common people among the Hindus, the Buddhists, and the Jainas, Prarabdha-karma is a ready word spontaneously uttered by way of offering an explanation of the sudden rise or fall, not only of an individual, but also of a nation. The following oft-quoted verse illustrates the above view:—

“Neither can Vishnu or Siva nor even Brahma obliterate or wipe out the writing on the forehead of man.”¹

The writing on the forehead of man is another name given to Prarabdha-karma.

Taking advantage of the myth that Siva bears on his neck or head a necklace of skulls, a Sanskrit poet sings as follows:—

“Those skulls which were once shining on the neck of Siva are now rolling on the surface of the earth, being turned round and round by vultures with their claws. This is the singular effect of the all-powerful Prarabdha seen in the vicissitudes of men.”²

But this fatalistic interpretation of Prarabdha-karma is unknown to the

Upanishads and the Vedanta philosophers, particularly the Advaitins. Following the teachings of the Upanishads, the Brihadaranyaka in particular, the Advaitins speak of a threefold cause of man's birth and the vicissitudes in his life. The threefold cause consists of (1) knowledge acquired, (2) the sum of actions, good or bad or a mixture of both, done in the previous birth, and (3) the impressions of past knowledge and actions stored in the subconscious mind (Vasana). Of these, knowledge, right or wrong or a mixture of both, acquired in the previous birth, is said to be the cause of a suitable physical body brought about as a medium for experiencing the results of past Karma. Prarabdha or past Karma is said to be the chief cause of only happiness or misery. The impressions of these two is stated to be stored in the subconscious so as to revive them and bring about their results in time. This is clearly stated in Suresvara's Vartikasara on the Brihadaranyaka.

“Knowledge acquired and actions done by him in the previous birth and the impressions of those two—all these three are together the cause of his birth and of his experience of happiness or misery. Knowledge determines a suitable body pointing out, as it were, that “such ought to be the body.” Karma is the cause of a change in the experience of happiness or misery. The bearer of these two to the next birth is the impressions of those two. She (the collection of impressions) is more powerful than those two. For she is able to carry

¹ हरिणापि हरेणापि ब्रह्मणापि कथं च न ।

ललाटलिखिता रेखा परिमार्ष्टुं न शक्यते ॥

² शिवशिरसि शिरसि यानि रेजुः

शिव शिव तानि लुठन्ति गृध्रपादैः ।

अवि खलु । विषमः पुराकृतानां

भवति हि जन्तुषु कर्मणां विपाकः ॥

them forward. Hence she is separately counted."³

The Vartikasara sums up as follows:—

"Impressions, actions, and knowledge,—these three are the causes of rebirth. Importance to Karma among them is what is stated in the Sruti (that is, the Upanishad). The best or the worst form of the physical body depends upon the nature of Karma. Capacity for enjoyment is brought about by knowledge and impressions of knowledge and actions. Hence whoever desires good should undertake only good work, and reject condemnable work with a view to avoid misery. Thus those who attach importance to sacrificial acts taught in the Vedas proper, (that is, the Purvakanda) have given importance to Karma or action. But those who are experts in the Vedanta-sastra give, on the other hand, importance to Karma, desire, instead of to Karma. For unless desire for the results of a work is the ruling passion in the breast of man, he will not undertake that work. Because desire is the cause of action, desire is therefore the important factor. For none is seen to undertake a work, unless he has a desire for the result of that action. Whatever a man

does is at the prompting of his desire."⁴

From this passage it is clear that the ritualists following the teachings of the Vedas proper, attach importance to Karma or action, while the Vedantists following the Upanishads, give importance to desire (Vasana) in the matter of bringing about rebirth. In the passage quoted above Karma does not mean merely the Vedic rites. It also means other kinds of work, prescribed or not prescribed in the Vedas. For they state that the cause of rebirth is on the whole of ninety-six kinds: Knowledge is of twelve kinds, Karma is of twenty-four kinds, and Vasana or impression is of sixty kinds. The twelve forms of knowledge are (1) that which is prescribed; (2) that which is forbidden; (3) that which is similar to what is prescribed or enjoined; (4) that which is similar to what is forbidden; (5-12) each of these four may be of three kinds in that it may be right, wrong, or doubtful. Thus knowledge acquired is of twelve kinds.

The twenty-four forms of Karma are (1) that which is enjoined; (2) that which is forbidden; (3) that which is not enjoined; (4) that which

4 वासना कर्म विद्या च त्रयं जन्मप्रयोजकम् ।

उक्तं तत्र प्रधानत्वं कर्मणः श्रूयते पुनः ॥

उत्तमाधमदेहाख्यवैषम्यं कर्मणा भवेत् ।

देहे विद्यावासनाभ्यां भवेद् भोग्येषु कौशलम् ॥

कर्म साध्वेव कर्तव्यं इच्छताभ्युदयं परम् ।

पापं तु सर्वथा हेयं दुःखेभ्यस्त्रायता भृशम् ॥

पूर्वकाण्डपरा इत्यं कर्मप्राधान्यमूचिरे ।

अयं वेदान्तशास्त्रज्ञः प्राहुः कामप्रधानताम् ॥

पुमानादौ काममय एव भूत्वा तु कर्मकृत् ।

यतोऽयं कर्मणां हेतुः कामोऽतोऽस्य प्रधानता ॥

अकामस्य क्रिया काचिद् दृश्यते नेह कस्य चित् ।

यद्यद्वि कुरुते जन्तुः तत् तत् कामस्य चैष्टितम् ॥

3 जन्मान्तरारम्भहेतुः किं स्यादिति तदुच्यते ।

विद्या संपादिता तेन पुरा कर्म च यत् कृतम् ॥

या वासना च तत् सर्वं जन्मभोग्यादिकारणम् ।

देहं विद्या परिक्रियाद् ईदृशो देह इत्ययम् ॥

विकृत कर्म बोधे तु पूर्वप्रज्ञेह पूर्वयोः ।

समर्था सैव ते यस्मादुद्बोद्धुं जन्मकर्मणी ।

नरस्यायं प्रधानत्वात् ताभ्यां सा गृह्यते पृथक् ॥

is not forbidden; each of these four is of three kinds in that it may be mental, physical or verbal; thus Karma is of twelve kinds. As each of these may be productive of results seen or unseen, Karma on the whole becomes of twenty-four kinds.

Likewise the impressions of knowledge are of twelve kinds, as knowledge itself is shown to be of twelve kinds. Similarly the impressions of Karma are of twenty-four kinds, as Karma itself is shown to be of twenty-four kinds; likewise the impressions of the results of Karma enjoyed are of twenty-four kinds; thus the impressions of Karma and of its results are on the whole of forty-eight kinds.

Thus the impressions of knowledge and Karma put together come to ninety-six.

It follows therefore that in the view of the ancient Hindu philosophers man is bound to enjoy or suffer from the knowledge he had acquired in his previous birth, whether it is right or wrong or of doubtful nature, and that he is similarly bound to enjoy or suffer from the work done by him in his previous birth, whether the work done by him was enjoined or forbidden or whether it was productive of results seen or unseen.

Thus the impressions of past knowledge and of past actions stored in the subconscious are stated to hold the man responsible for their results. But in holding man responsible for his past knowledge and past actions his

present knowledge and his present actions are also taken into consideration. In the fifth chapter of the Yogavasishtha⁵ present good knowledge and good actions are said to counteract the results of past knowledge and past actions, just as the bad effects of yesterday's bad work are counteracted by to-day's good work.

In the eighth chapter the same idea is more clearly stated, as follows:—

"The store of impressions is of two kinds: good or bad. The store of impressions of the previous birth is one or the other of these two kinds. If you are carried on by the store of good impressions, you will gradually attain the happy end. If the store of bad impressions involves you in a calamity, then attempt should be made by you to overcome it by force. The store of good and bad impressions usually flows by straight and narrow courses. Accordingly attempt should be made to direct it in a good and agreeable channel."⁶

In conclusion it may be stated that the charge of fatalistic view levelled against the Hindu on account of the misinterpretation of the theory of Prarabdha-karma by the uninformed among them has no foundation and that the theory of Prarabdha-karma, as explained above, is sure to render them more ethical and progressive than any other scientific theory of man's responsibility for his actions.

5 दोषाः शाम्यत्यसन्देहं प्राक्तनोऽद्यतनैर्गुणैः ।

दृष्टान्तोऽत्र ह्यस्तनस्य दोषस्याद्यतनैर्गुणैः ॥

ह्यस्तनो दुष्ट आचार आचारेणाद्य साधुना ।

ययाशु शुभतां याति प्राक्तनं कुकृतं तथा ॥

6 द्विविधो वासनाव्यूहो शुभश्चैवाशुभश्च सः ।

प्राक्तनो वासनाव्यूहो द्वयोरेकतरोऽयं वा ॥

वासनीयेन शुद्धेन तत्तत्चेदपनीयसे ।

तत् क्रमेण शुभेनैव पदं प्राप्नोषि शाश्वतम् ॥

अथो चेदशुभो भावः त्वां योजयति सांक्रुते ।

प्राक्तनस्तद् आशु यत्नाज् जेतव्यो भवता बलात् ॥

शुभाशुभाभ्यां मार्गाभ्यां वहन्ती वासनासरित् ।

पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन योजनीया शुभे पथि ॥

GOD AND PRAYER IN HINDUISM

By Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Raghavan is a scholar of the Madras University and has made some noteworthy contributions to Sanskrit research. In the present article he refutes effectively, with an array of cogent facts, a few of the common criticisms levelled against Hindu theism by some Western writers.]

WHO does not pray? Some indeed are blessed that they are endowed with a permanent faith in God; live, move and have their being in Him; and success or failure, pray to Him. With these, prayer is a necessity of life like love. The majority generally forget God in the exhilaration of success, self-won as they imagine it to be; but the first blast of adversity lays them low at the feet of God. Adversity is a *yoga* (means) which brings man nearer to God. Death is a great proselytizer. When senses are virile and body iron, man dissipates himself without a thought, but when he finds his body a wreck, he begins to reflect; slowly faith pervades his being like an aroma; and his decrepit heart clutches at the staff of God. Even the most resilient who rely on their own intellectual and physical energy and feel no need for the support of God, have odds to face, and then they strike the depths of their own personality, plunge into themselves, seek from the fountain within fresh inspiration and emerge with renescent energy. These also have prayed to and sought only God, the Strength of the strong (*Balam balavatam chaham; Sa vai balam balinam cha aparesham*), like the philosophers who worship the Brahman which is their own Self and everything. Aesthetes and artists

who adore beauty, scholars who pay homage to knowledge, patriots who glorify sacrifice, humanitarians who esteem service, moralists who bow before the moral order—all these worship only at the shrine of God. For hath not the Lord said, "Whatever possesses grandeur, goodness, beauty and strength, know that as a manifestation of a part of Myself?"

Among no other people of the world is the belief in a Supreme Being, all-powerful and benevolent, master and at the same time friend in need, so strong and widespread as among the Hindus. It is however somewhat unfortunate that accounts of Hindu theism available in English are from the writings of biased Westerners. It is their complaint that the Upanishadic monism or pantheism, the Puranic polytheism, the worship of all sorts of spirits, trees, stones, etc., by the masses,—these have made the emergence of a genuine monotheistic God impossible in Hinduism. It is true that the Rigvedic hymns and the Puranic religion pray to a number of deities, but it must be plain to any student of Hinduism that there is no such thing as polytheism in it; when one deity is praised and prayed to, it is for the time Supreme. God is only one; the several gods are but names and forms of the One. In the Rigvedic hymns themselves, the idea

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dawns that God is one but the wise call Him differently. Whatever path one takes, and whichever cult one professes, he reaches the same goal of the one God. This explains why Hinduism is able to be so remarkably tolerant and free from the unhealthy proselytising zeal and to be so rich in its growth. Indeed, its growth has been rich, for we note that this is the one religion which has the scientific outlook, as it fundamentally recognises that men vary in taste and capacity and that all cannot be forced into one way. To suit the conditions of the candidates, here is available a rich variety of means.

The idea of God has triumphed throughout the history of Hinduism. The philosophy of the attributeless Absolute of the Upanishads is not one that excludes God and prayer. In the striving stage, a personal God is sought after, and who have left us more glorious hymns than Sri Sankara and his followers? There are among worshippers of the Brahman those like the author of the Bhagavata who say: "Neither actionlessness (*Naishkarmya*) nor knowledge (*Jnana*) has any charm, if they are void of devotion to a personal God." Knowledge, like mere morality, hardly forms a substitute for God and devotion to His entrancing personality. Other systems of philosophy which began with sporting their agnosticism or atheism, finished up by developing theistic complexes. Buddhism began to worship the teeth and nails of its founder, created a crowded mythology, and threw up a vast mass of Tantric literature for esoteric worship. The Sankhya and the Mimamsa which ignored and refuted God became 'Sesvara-samkhya' and

'Sesvara-mimamsa'. There is a tradition preserved in a rare commentary available in manuscript in the Madras Government Oriental MSS Library, that the well-known Sivamahimnahstava was written by the great Mimamsa philosopher Kumārila. The Yoga accepted God as a Teacher. And the realists (*i.e.*, logicians: the Vaiseshikas and the Naiyayikas) admitted God from the very beginning; they accepted Him as the grand author of this masterpiece of the Universe. Firm believers in Causation, how could they escape the realisation of an omniscient and omnipotent Architect behind, when they contemplated upon Nature and Man?

It is also the complaint of the critics mentioned above that the doctrine of Karma contradicts the omnipotence of the Lord. The law of Karma does not limit the power of God; it only sets on man the responsibility for his own future. God is not only a King who rules by Law but also a Dictator who can rule by suspending the Law He Himself made. In later Hindu theism will be found a great development of the doctrine of Grace; and many a prayer appeals to God's power to tear up the balance-sheet of Karma and manifest His unlimited compassion and forgiveness. Separate hymns were sung on the Lord's compassion like 'Dayasataka' and on His forgiveness like 'Kshamashodasi'. Nilakanthadikshita asks Goddess Minakshi: "If you have the compassion that I should be saved, save; why weigh the good and the bad in my acts? You who are free to make or end the world, to abide by the law of Karma! Who can be deceived by this?" Balambhatta says: "Lord

your heart is all compassion; still you do not free me who am being kicked up and down like a ball. Do you say that there are past acts which remain to be experienced by me? Of what use is your compassion when I have gone through them?"

God is first conceived as the creator and guardian of the Universe. This gives rise to the conception of the Lord as father and mother. The perfection of affection is in the concept of Mother; and God, the Father, becomes God, the Mother—Matribhuta, Tayum-anavar. The perfection of help is in the concept of Sakhya (friendship), and God thus becomes the Friend. Utmost obedience and service are exemplified by a servant; and this evolved Bhakti on the lines of Dasya. The acme of the feeling of attachment which holds two souls together is found in love, and from this developed the idea of God as the Lover and the aspirant's soul as the beloved—a form of devotion in which mystics of all ages and realms have revelled. The idea is already seen in the Gita when Arjuna asks of the Lord: "Bear with my shortcomings as a lover would, those of his beloved." The South Indian Vaishnava saints and the Bhagavata developed this fully and bequeathed it to later sects like those of Vallabha and Chaitanya. It is not the conception of Krishna

alone which inspired this kind of devotion. Saiva saints of the South and of Kashmir poured forth their equally charming lyrics of God-love on Siva. Love is the most dominant of man's emotions; and what surer path is there for saving him than that which our spiritual psycho-analysts have devised, namely, giving that love an object like God, the source and embodiment of all beauty and love-drawing excellences?

In ecstatic joy, one simply exclaims names; in excruciating pain also, one cries out only names. There are thus prayers which simply call out God in a thousand names. The Name or the Names of the Lord attained a special importance in the history of Devotion in Hinduism. It came to be held that the Name was even greater than the Lord and that it saved even if it was uttered inadvertantly. Devotees like Ayyaval (Sridhara Venkatesa) sang special hymns on God's Name (the Akhyasashti). The repetition of God's Name establishes the devotee's soul in God, and slowly the devotee becomes absorbed in God in silence. Of similar and equal efficacy is the chanting of hymns; it matters not if one does not understand their meaning; the very *Nada*, resounding in his whole being, washes away man's sin and sorrow.

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.]

In the previous Sutra the general principle underlying the negative aspect of spiritual practice was enunciated as renunciation, both external and internal, of the ego and its various expressions in life, as well as everything that has a tendency to exercise and strengthen the lower animal instincts and impulses of man. Here one has only to avoid scrupulously things, thoughts, feeling and actions which are proposed by self-interest and worldly outlook, which, if unchecked and uncontrolled, would perpetuate Samsara. The next Sutra goes one step further. It insists that one should never rest contented by mere avoidance of evil but must follow it up consciously by an active practice of good for its own sake. One should actively try to express in one's life all the divine perfections which one inherently possesses. The Divine is eternally present in the human breast as the Antaryamin, and his divinity and perfection, though temporarily smothered by the ego, is incessantly struggling for self-expression. In positive Sadhana one takes advantage of this natural urge of the human soul for perfection. All possible circumstances and situations are created for its expression. Thus the natural capacity of man to distinguish the true from the false, the right from the wrong, the beautiful from the ugly, and to love and appreciate goodness and beauty for their own sake, and to guide one's life in the light of these, is constantly exercised and strengthened. Only so far as he makes use of this capacity to manifest his divine perfection does he earn the title to be considered a human-being at all. Even the natural instincts and impulses are not bad in themselves. They have their own beneficent purpose to serve in the early stages of the ascent. Those can also be pruned and trimmed, and guided into right channels by what the psychologists call the process of sublimation. Bad habits of thought, feeling and action, have to be counteracted by cultivation of good habits, and such good habits can be formed only by constant and repeated exercises. Such exercises often run counter to the demands of the natural man. It is an uphill task, a swimming against the current of one's own past Samskaras or inherent tendencies, requiring the exercise of a good deal of will power. All training in scientific and philosophical method and outlook and aesthetic appreciation, and a virtuous life of constant selfless service, and love of goodness, beauty and truth, are all thus helpful in spiritual practice. Philosophy and science, art and morality, are all thus requisitioned to serve as hand-

maids to religion, which is the manifestation of the Divinity already inherent in man. It means the culture of Sattva-guna and the Daivi-sampat referred to in the Gita, by means not only of Tyaga but also by Yōga. The next Sutra emphasises this point.

अव्यावृत्तमजनात् ॥ ३६ ॥

By uninterrupted¹ loving service.

Note 1. Uninterrupted—Practice must be regular, punctual and steady. All teachers agree on this point. Thus Patanjali refers to it in Sutra I:14. Practice becomes perfect by long, constant efforts with great love for the end to be attained. The Brahmasutra also refers to it in IV:1. 1. Breaks in spiritual practice are not advisable if one can possibly avoid them. They not only nullify the good effects of previous practice, but often cause positive, permanent injury. It will be opening the gates of the fortress to the enemy who has been once driven out. There are of course noble exceptions like Visvamitra who, in spite of repeated falls, still persisted till the highest was attained. To the wise and courageous (Dhira), every failure is only a stepping-stone to success. But to the craven-minded, one failure is sufficient to unnerve them and induce them to give up the struggle for good. As Bhartrihari says, "The craven-minded do not dare to begin at all for fear of obstacles; the ordinary man retires and gives up the attempt once for all, when he meets with obstacles in the course of his struggle; but the hero is he who persists in the face of innumerable obstacles that repeatedly thwart him from attaining his object." In fact it only adds to his zest if the

hero meets obstacles on the way. He never yields of his own accord. But circumstances may be such as to compel him often to take rest and gather strength for a fresh assault. Break may thus come in spite of one's best efforts, but then one should begin again as soon as the weather clears and circumstances again become favourable. Thus on account of disease or other causes, if it has to be suspended temporarily, he should take up the thread again at the first opportunity. Even if the obstacles come, the struggle itself is not to be given up and the inner fires must still be kept burning. This spirit of struggle itself against odds that stand against him gives a continuity to the Sadhana in spite of the temporary lull. In such cases, the principle of Gita II:40 and VI:40 holds good and saves him. These passages point out that if one practises spiritual Sadhana in the right spirit and by the proper methods, one does not come to grief even if a break appears in the middle due to circumstances beyond one's control. Such breaks are not real breaks at all, as there is continuity of inner aspiration and struggle even in periods of lull. In his commentary on Gita VII:3, while commenting upon the expression *yatatam api siddhanam*, Sankara takes care to note that a man who struggles sincerely for the highest is already as good as a Siddha, meaning thereby that it is this sincere struggle that really constitutes the real practice. Breaks become injurious only if they are caused by wanton negligence or carelessness, or by temptations of the flesh. Any conscious yielding to such temptation and sin makes a man weaker and thus causes more or less perma-

nent injury. It will be like the fate of the man trying to climb up a tree, lets loose his hold in the middle on account of his carelessness or being tempted to catch at some other attractive object such as a beautiful bird flitting nearby. It is this yielding to weakness and temptation that one has to be afraid of.

A doubt may arise here as to the possibility of such continuity in practice. No doubt activity cannot go on continuously for a length of time as it causes fatigue. There must be intervals of rest; and real rest only helps the furtherance of the object in view. Over enthusiasm, sometimes on the other hand, leads to over exercise and this in its turn leads to untoward consequences such as diseases, madness, etc. But rest does not necessarily mean an absence of all activity. As psychologists have pointed out, and educational practice bears out, rest need be only a change of work. Again, it is only when work is undertaken without interest that fatigue often intervenes to cause trouble. If one is really interested in the activity, it ceases to be a task and takes on the form of play. It is well-known how, even if the exercise of muscles involved in play is more strenuous and taxing than ordinary work, the latter often causes fatigue sooner than the former. That is why Patanjali and other Acharyas insist upon the element of interest in, and reverence for, the ideal. One should take interest even in the struggle. "The prize," in the words of Robert Browning, "is in the process." A good way of keeping up interest is to provide sufficient variety, which also provides the necessary rest. Such variety in the nature of the acti-

vity is therefore allowable and should not be mistaken for discontinuity, since the spirit behind the various activities as well as the struggle to express the divine perfections will have their own continuity in spite of the apparent break in the external activity. Thus, meditation and worship, Japam and Sankirtana, study and service of devotees, acts of loving charity and performance of one's own daily duties, pilgrimages and witnessing of drama on noble themes, all may be given their rightful share in the scheme of practice and may be allowed to alternate with one another to provide the necessary rest and interest. That it is possible to have these varieties and yet to have continuity in real Sadhana is illustrated by Sri Ramakrishna in his own life and teachings. Note the various illustrations he gives, such as that of the village maiden carrying water on her head, the wife awaiting her husband's arrival while at the same time cooking his meals with one hand, and nursing her child with the other hand.

2. Loving service—The word Bhajana is a correlative of Bhakti both of which come from the same root Bhaj. Bhajana represents the activity, while Bhakti the essential accompaniment of it. Any act done out of love for God, is therefore Bhajana. Also such acts as are accompaniments of love, as witnessed in the life of real Bhaktas and taught by them, may be undertaken by the Sadhaka to cultivate this love for God. Thus prayer and dancing and social service may all be undertaken, even if they are not in the first instance the result of love, for these will result in such love in the long run.

Psychologists like James and Lange have emphasised this aspect of emotions as accompaniments of certain activities. Only these activities must be undertaken sincerely and consciously for the sake of cultivating this love, as otherwise they may degenerate and become harmful. Prahalada's enumeration of the nine kinds of this Bhajana in Bhagavata VII:5,

23 and 24, not only provides the variety but also the exercises for Bhakti culture. One may also put oneself mentally into all kinds of relationship with God such as friend, servant, husband, parent, etc., to induce this kind of love for the Lord. Everything that cultivates this love is Bhajana or loving service.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Message of the Gita: (As interpreted by Sri Aurobindo). Edited by Anilbaran Roy. Published by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., Museum Street, London. Copies to be had at Gita Prachar Karyalaya. 108/11, Manoharpookur Road. Kalighat P. O. Calcutta. Price 7 sh. 6d. or Rs. 5. Pages 280. Demy Size.

In the vast body of Gita literature, both ancient and modern, the present publication of S. Anilbaran Roy occupies an important place. For it makes accessible to the general public, the substance of the monumental writing of Sri Aurobindo on the Gita published in two bulky volumes under the caption, 'Essays on the Gita'. One who is not a specialist in Gita literature will find the original writing of Sri Aurobindo a bit too difficult due to its voluminousness, its soaring thoughts and language, its want of a regular textual translation, and its being more in the nature of general reflections than exposition of individual verses. S. Roy's edition seeks to obviate all these difficulties. It contains the text and a very lucid translation of the Gita, together with brief but adequate notes on the verses. These notes are adapted from Sri Aurobindo's essays, and are largely in his own words. Thus the present edition comes very near in form to the method of commentary writing developed in this country in the exposition of scriptures.

While commending this book heartily to our readers, it may not perhaps be out

of place here to touch upon two important features of Sri Aurobindo's exposition of the Gita. Among modern interpreters of this great scripture, he is the one who has always kept in view and pointedly insisted that the Gita is not a mere Nitisastra (a book of ethics), but is, as it describes itself, primarily an 'Upanishad' (a book of mystic wisdom) and a 'Yogasastra' (a scripture on Divine Communion), dealing with Brahma-vidya (Knowledge of Brahman). The supreme word of the Gita is not duty but surrender to the Divine. It prescribes duty as disinterested action, not with a view to subordinate man to a purely political or humanitarian ideal, but to educate him to seek fulfilment in the Supreme Lord. Due to his firm grasp of this truth, Sri Aurobindo's 'Essays on the Gita' never comes down to the level of mere scholarship or barren dialectics. It is always fervent and scintillating with devotional spirit, and one may even say, that few commentators, whether ancient or modern, have succeeded so well as Sri Aurobindo in bringing the inspirational quality of the Gita text into the commentary also.

The other striking feature of 'The Essays on the Gita' is the doctrine of Purushottama it propounds. The Gita, it is pointed out, is an attempt to synthesise the duality of Prakriti and Purusha, of the changeful man and the changeless Unity, by discovering behind them the Supreme Lord, the Purushottama, who, though both the one and the many, both change and changelessness, is yet above these

polarities and aloof from Nature and attachments to it. Thus the Supreme Being has a threefold status, the Kshara or the mutable, the Akshara or the immutable, and Uttama or the Supreme Lord. The Uttama is all, both mutability and immutability, and what transcends their oppositions. And it is also pointed out that this Uttama is not a mere unrelated Absolute, but the Supreme Person as well—the Master of the universe, and the Father, Mother, Friend and Lover of the devotee. He touches creation at every point, but is yet unaffected by it.

It is sometimes suggested that this analysis of the Gita doctrine is entirely new. To our mind this novelty is only apparent. Sri Aurobindo has attempted only to analyse the spiritual implications of the Gita, but has not tried to correlate intellectually the various facts thus obtained in a full-fledged philosophical system. As long as this is not done, one is saved from the very troublesome task of explaining the type of relation that exists between Kshara, Akshara and Purushottama. But when this problem is once faced, Sri Aurobindo's interpretation will naturally have to include itself either in some variety of the system of identity-in-difference (Bhedabheda), or in the system of pure spiritual monism with its implication of Mayavada. To us the latter seems to be more satisfactory as an intellectual explanation in so far as it is the only system which gives us some explanation as to how the One Being expresses itself as the many without its unity and purity being in any way impaired thereby. There is nothing in the doctrine of the threefold Purusha and its unique spiritual implications brought out so well in 'The Essays on the Gita', which cannot be brought within the sphere of the Maya theory.

We hope S. Anilbaran Roy's valuable adaptation of these illuminating 'Essays' will have a very wide circulation.

Art and Meditation: By Anagarika B. Govinda. Published by The Allahabad Book Works, Allahabad. Pages 110.

According to Anagarika Govinda no real art is possible without meditation. It is meditation that taps the well of life and

discovers the hidden mysteries of the soul to which art gives expression. "In order to hear he must be silent, in order to see he must close his eyes to external forms, in order to feel the cosmic rhythm he must arrest his breath and master his art—and in order to be carried by the eternal streams he must give up his selfish desires." Saintliness and artistic genius are the different expressions of creativeness. "The creative artist will realise his visions in his works of art, the holy one in his life." Those who remain at the surface are the wise; those who return again to the world in order to distribute the precious elixir are the creative minds; but those who themselves become the vessel and give themselves to the world are the All-compassionate ones, the Deliverers of humanity, the Enlightened Ones."

Art and meditation though seeming to move in opposite directions are essentially creative states of the mind and are phases of the same movement. Art is not imitation. As in meditation art deletes accidentals of form and captures the essential features of an experience. Meditation is the state of conception, art and life its expressions. "Here art and religious life meet in a sphere of consciousness where no such distinction exists. Therefore wherever religion is a living force, it finds its natural expression in art, in fact, it becomes art itself,—just as art in its highest attainments becomes religion. Art is the measure for the living quality of religion." Such are the intimate relations existing between art and meditation.

The author discusses the problem of the subject and object in art and finds art to be essentially subjective and therefore expressive of higher truth than the logical formulations of the objective intellect. But this subjectivity does not exclude objectivity; it goes behind the object by the intuitive process and reveals what intellect fails to see. Thus, "the most perfect individual self-expression is the most perfect objective description of the world." Our author agrees with Goethe that "the highest works of art are those which possess the highest truth, but no trace of (objective) reality."

The book makes an ardent plea for the spiritual training of the Connoisseur of art as much as of the artist, Eastern art, es-

pecially Buddhistic, is the works of Yogis." The followers of Zen aimed at direct communion with the inner nature of things, regarding their outward accessories only as impediments to a clear perception of truth." "But the faculty of responding to the inner meaning of such works of art has to be cultivated in the same measure as the faculty to express their meaning in visible forms." But this is mostly forgotten.

Anagarika B. Govinda distinguishes between abstract and concrete art by the difference of effects produced by them and not by their processes. Abstract art is not the allegorical representation of abstract concepts which are obtained by logical operations of analysis and deduction. Abstract art, on the other hand, is inductive and constructive and proceeds "by emphasising and developing essential features by which all secondary features are suppressed if not entirely eliminated, so that the life which was hidden under the surface becomes intensified and more real to our consciousness." A piece of abstract art represents a certain mental or emotional state in the development of an artist. The best example of abstract art is music.

The book contains twelve paintings of the author. In an introduction to these he explains the fundamental forms and colours symbolical of the cosmic processes of creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe. The pictures are all in black and white sketches. They represent the results of cosmic, ecstatic, and concentric meditations as well as of meditations of Nature. They are unlike the ordinary forms of pictorial art and consist solely of the movements of the three fundamental forms, the cube, the cylinder and the sphere, and in this lies their originality and uniqueness.

Few artists have expounded the science of their art. The analytical temperament is a break on creative genius. An exposition of the deep psychological movements by the artist himself is a rare thing and so much the more valuable. In a few brief, but lucid and brilliant chapters, the author has compressed a world of ideas. Anagarika B. Govinda's study of the subject will be an invaluable aid in understanding

and appreciating not only his own art and the artist in him but all art and artists in general. The book is a rare and valuable addition to the literature on art, while the pictures themselves reveal wonderful mysteries and rhythms of the universe.

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The Human Family and India: By Dr. Gualtherus, H. Mees, M.A., (Cantab), LL.D. (Leyden). To be had of Taraporevala & Sons & Co., Treasure House of Books, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay. Pp. 171. Price: Paper Rs. 1-2, cloth Rs. 1-14.

Dr. Mees is a student of ancient Hindu society and the author of *Dharma & Society*, the review of which has already appeared in our columns. He approaches the subject with a warm heart and tries to interpret in the psychological idioms of modern age. He has a thorough grasp of the social thought of Europe and a sympathetic understanding of Hindu religion. The present book offers a brilliant defence of Hindu social theory as conceived by its originators, but not the modern travesty of it in the crystallised caste-system of modern India. It is based on the lectures he delivered on Hindu Sociological theories and their bearing on contemporary world-problems, in some of the universities during his stay in India to have first-hand acquaintance with the Indian social conditions.

The book is divided into five chapters devoted to a wide variety of interesting topics—Hindu Sociology, nationalism and Internationalism, Revolution and coming world-stage. He begins with a comparative study of different phases of Hindu Society—theoretical, ideal and actual, in the light of modern sociological theories followed by a review of international situation with ingenious reflections on the emergence of dictatorial governments in Italy, Germany and Russia; and then passes on to explain the necessity of a better reconstruction of the world-polity on the basis of the Hindu sociological principle of *Chaturvarnya*. The world is weltering in chaos and suffering from the baneful effects of exaggerated nationalism caught in the iron grip of unbridled capitalism. The object of the author is to show

that social science of ancient India complemented by modern thought provides a key to the solution of various social and political world problems (which are therefore India's problems too).

Much of the indictment of India is connected with her social structure. We find that intelligent and honest opinions are ranged against each other in their appraisal of the value of the institution of caste; it is being maligned by some as a disruptive factor, while others look upon it as the exalted product of the social vision of Hindu thinkers. The learned author has traced this divergence of opinions to the faulty understanding of the meaning of the word, 'caste', which must be differentiated from that of 'Varna.' Original propounders of Hindu social theory took into consideration the principle of '*Chaturvarnya*' by which is meant universal hierarchical division of mankind into four classes, namely, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. This division, variously designated, is a universal social phenomenon which is bound to appear in any form of social integration, ancient or modern. We have this fact amply corroborated by copious references to early scriptures and socio-political treatises. This theory, according to the author, implies further, the organic conception of society as adumbrated in *Purushasukta* and *Vishnupurana*. That each 'Varna' was to function socially in a graduated scale of relations and that the value of each individual comprising it was an end in himself, were thoroughly recognised. Thus the original Varna theory recognises 'the social organic inequality and spiritual equality of men, between vertical picture of society and horizontal picture of humanity.' The ghastly spectre of modern caste-system on hereditary occupational basis is 'against the intention and social vision of ancient social leaders of India.' We must revert back to the principle of *Chaturvarnya*.

The theory of 'Varna Sankara', the confusion of classes, is being wrongly interpreted by some orthodox writers of Dharma Shastras. This danger was pointed out not as a prevention against admixture of castes, but only to keep each individual to his sphere of social contribution as determined by his natural aptitudes

and capabilities. Thus the writer rightly points out that 'this class-confusion theory was applied to caste and instead of serving its purpose as a warning, it then contributed to the crystallisation of caste-system, the very thing they meant to prevent.' Reviewing with sagacity the happenings on the international chessboard the writer opines, "The period we are living in now is the period of manual labour and of the man of commerce, of the Sudras and Vaisyas..... But neither is, in the natural course of things, meant to rule, to take the foremost place. An unbridled commercial capitalism may form a danger to society." Much of the chaos and despair in the modern society of Europe and Asia can be attributed to governmental power being usurped by classes belonging to third or fourth Varna of caste-hierarchy. This is the real phenomena of 'Class-confusion' so much derided by ancient law-givers of India.

The chapter on nationalism and internationalism is very illuminating. In the last chapter of the book the author presents the foreshadowings of the much desired world-state. Signs are visible which lend countenance to such a confident look into future. Enlightened thinkers of all countries are dreaming of such a thing. In the meantime, in order to save world-culture from an impending crash as a result of imperialistic nations being embroiled in world-war, an ideological movement must be set on foot. It should aim at rallying all the good forces of the world and preach socialising and humanitarian doctrines which may influence the national Unconscious. "Men will have to realise much more clearly again that population classes in societies are not natural enemies, but have to be co-operators in the common cause of well being." These ideas, moreover, are to be reinforced by a sort of idealism which will rivet the attention of mankind on the spiritual background of life. In other words individuals and nations must once more conceive the world as one human family, each keeping to a particular sphere of contribution to common welfare for the onward march of humanity towards light, perfection and happiness. The book is neatly got up and deserves to be read by all who take any

its side walls are moderate-sized representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda. These pictures, tastefully framed, the white walls and ceiling, the leaded clear-glass windows, and three crystal chandeliers combine to produce an impression at once simple and elegant. Behind the speaker's platform, in the centre, is the shrine-room, within which are representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, and Holy Mother. To the left of the Shrine-room as one looks from the auditorium, is the organ and library room; to the right, a study.

**Report of the Ramakrishna Mission
Vidyapith, Deoghar, for 1937**

Surrounded by picturesque natural scenery and away from the bustle of town, this Residential High School for young boys is situated in a place which is both a health-resort and a centre of pilgrimage. It is mainly an institution for paying boys, and a good standard is maintained in diet, games, discipline and other matters essential to a high class educational institution of its type. The management and tuition is carried on by the monastic members of the Ramakrishna Mission assisted by a very few lay teachers who have offered their loving service on a small pittance. The institution is keeping up its record of progress from year to year. In the reported year there were in all 139 boys on the roll, of which two were free students, 23 concession-holders and the rest paying. The staff consisted of 13 graduates and 14 under-graduates. The results were brilliant; of the 7 boys sent up 4 were placed in the first division and the rest in the second—all getting some mark of efficiency. Special care was taken for physical development and real sports-man spirit and discipline was fostered through outdoor games, mass drill, band and other devices. Type-writing and gardening are the useful crafts in which the boys received training. A genuine *esprit de corps* was creat-

ed and sustained through Boys' Courts, celebrations of festivals, excursions, congregational *Bhajan*s, debates and other arrangements and activities of the type. In short, the Vidyapith with a staff inspired by a high spiritual ideal, an intelligently planned procedure of work, a man-making educational outlook and a bracing atmosphere of moral and religious vigour, has made a significant contribution qualitatively, though not quantitatively, to the regeneration of the motherland. The management looks forward for funds to ensure its solidarity and further progress by erecting a Prayer-hall, a library and reading-room and a gymnasium at an estimated cost of Rs. 15,000, Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 3,500 respectively and also by endowments for the maintenance of poor students, specially qualified staff and the vocational department.

Ramakrishna Mission's Relief Work

In the week ending 17th November 139 mds. 22 srs. of rice were distributed among 3263 recipients of 80 villages from 6 relief centres of the Mission in Faridpur and Murshidabad Districts in Bengal.

Medical : The Charitable Dispensaries conducted by the Mission Relief camps at Paresnathpur and Kedarchandpur in Murshidabad District with a view to curing malaria and other ailments that appeared in the wake of the floods treated 1570 cases of which 760 were malarial.

Expenditure : We shall have to spend Rs. 1200 more before the work is wound up.

Cyclone Relief in Orissa : The inspection of the cyclone-affected area in Orissa is being continued. Relief work may be begun shortly.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O., Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, (2) The President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.



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