

THE VEDANTHA KESARI

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THE VEDANTA KESARI

JULY 1939

NUMBER 3

181 "नायमात्मा बलहीनिन लभ्यः"

The Self is not reached by the weak.

CHARACTER IN MODERN LIFE
HARMONY OF FAITHS THROUGH WESTERN EYES
INCARNATION
THE NINEFOLD PATH OF DEVOTION
PURITY IS STRENGTH
LOYALTY
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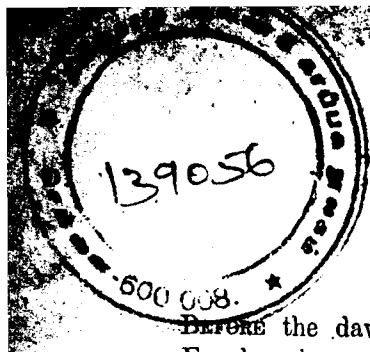
HOSPITALITY

[These stanzas from the National Epic embody the proverbial virtue of our race. The sentiment expressed in them is highly ethical and profoundly spiritual as the last verse discloses. The oft-quoted assurance of protection conveyed by the last couplet not only gives the greatest solace to erring humanity but also demands of them, as illustrated by Sri Ramachandra himself, utmost forgiveness and self-giving hospitality.]

श्रूते हि कपोतेन शत्रुः शरणागतः। अक्षितश्च ययान्यायं स्वैश्च मांसैर्निमन्त्रितः॥
शृणु गायं पुरा गीतां धर्मिष्ठां सत्यवादिना। बद्धाञ्जलिपुटं दीनं याचन्तं शरणागतम्॥
न हन्यादावृशं स्यार्थमपि शत्रुं परन्तप। आर्तो वा यदि वा हतः परेषां शरणागतः॥
अपि प्राणान् परित्यज्य रक्षितव्यः कृतात्मना। तं चेद भयाद् वा मोहाद् वा कामाद् वापि न रक्षति॥
स्वया शक्त्या ययान्यायं तत् पापं लोकगर्हितम्। विनष्टः पश्यतो यस्यारक्षितुः शरणागतः॥
आदाय सुकृतं तस्य सर्वं गच्छेत् रक्षितः। एवं दोषो महान्तः प्रपन्नानामरक्षणे॥
अस्वर्ग्यं चायशस्यं च बलवीर्यविनाशनम्। धर्मिष्ठं च यशस्यं च स्वर्ग्यं स्यात्सुखलोदयम्॥
सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मांति च याचते। अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम॥

We hear of the hospitality done in a fitting manner and with due reverence by a pigeon—a mere bird—to one that came to its abode—that too a foe, none other than the hunter who shot down its mate—and of the repast which that pigeon offered to him out of its own flesh. In this connection listen to the couplets, pregnant with the spirit of righteousness, recited by Mrikandu, the truthful, in days gone by: O valorous one, in the name of mercy, let not the miserable person who has respectfully approached one with folded hands, seeking refuge, receive any harm even though he be a foe and an arrogant one for that matter. It is incumbent upon a sensible and virtuous man to save him, even though it may demand the cost of his own life. And if that refugee is not given proper security, to the best of his powers, either due to terror of his overpowering opponent, or due to some mercenary motive, or being prevented by other pre-occupations, the sin of that omission as well as the censure of all the world, will be upon him. Under his very eyes the forlorn refugee will depart carrying along with him the merits of his good deeds. Thus what a colossal evil would arise by the desertion of one that has trustingly sought the protection of another! Such behaviour can never be conducive to the highest happiness; one's good name is tarnished thereby; and such conduct would annihilate one's power to promote good and put down evil, acquired through religious practices. But if one observes this noble rule, that would bring on the fruits of spiritual merit, a good name and supreme happiness. I am perpetually vowed to this principle: I grant security from all fear to every being, the moment he comes to me and prays 'May I ever remain yours.'

From Valmiki's Ramayana, Book VI Ch. 18.



CHARACTER IN MODERN LIFE

I

Before the dawn of the Industrial Era learning was chiefly sought by people to equip themselves with the virtues of a gentleman or *Sishta*. Education was the cherished privilege of the leisured few, and the toiling masses were not in the daylight of knowledge. A pre-eminently literary or theological bias stood in the way of its being reduced to a formal institution, as it is today, integrated with the political and economical projects of the State. The strong, cheerful Greeks, who were the first to make history in Europe, turned their energies in the channel of self-culture from the view-point of aesthetics. They persistently strove to attain the pink of good taste and elegance, wit and heroism, observation and argument; they were not however noted for any remarkable ethical perception. Plato's reduction of *to agathon*, the principle of goodness, to *to kalon*, the law of beauty, clouded and confused the ethical issues to some extent. The refined suppleness of the Greek mind was far removed from the gifts of their conquerors, the Romans. Self sacrifice is the virtue ascribed to them; but that was largely inspired by greed of enjoying the good things of this world. Modern Europe, mentally and spiritually resurrected at the touch of these two extinct civilizations, proudly holds their legacy; and rightly, all that is grand and animating in the Occident today may be traced to it. The Asiatic influence of a spiritual Christianity, added later on, never supplanted the Greco-roman influence; but on the other

hand in its turn it was largely transformed under Hellenic and Latin influences. European society and polity at the present day seek the fulfilment of the Greek and Roman ideal of citizenship as the very fundamental concept of human welfare.

If in the West the value of the individual was determined by the function he performs in society, in the East, especially in India, the foremost individual, as the Gita states, is the standard for the society to follow. These two starting points give two different outlooks upon life regarding the development of character and personality, in these two different parts of the world. It is worth while to study these two ideals at the present juncture in the interests of both, with a view to arriving at the common ground of both, where the drawbacks of either can be eliminated and a beneficial standard can be discovered.

II

Since in the West self-culture is subordinated to the demands of the State or society, according to Western thinkers, socialization is the essence of character. The function of the State is to help by compulsion or persuasion better social integration and unification. This is rendered somewhat easy by the compactness and complexity introduced into society by the advancing sciences in recent times. The educational outlook and character training have been profoundly affected by these conditions. The whole process has fallen into a chain: science advanced industry, industry promoted trade, trade

made cities, cities invited crowds and crowds unmade men. With due regard to all the brilliant achievements of the present scientific age and the educational ideals presented to us by it, it must be said that an education made subservient to political and economic institutions, although it may be the best to supply the State and society with industrious, alert, efficient, dependable, intelligent specialists to run the machine, renders culture superficial, character fragmentary and knowledge itself dangerous. The social chaos in the so-called peaceful States and the submerged martial excitement in the war-minded States are clear indications of this defect.

The present age in the midst of unprecedented knowledge and power is certainly poor in purpose and uncertain in its values. In spite of grand theories and staggering statistics, economics is the science of wealth rather than the science of welfare. We saw that democracies could not cure war, but war has cured democracies, drastically, by substituting psychotic Dictatorship or institutionalised barbarism. Equality of opportunity is deemed to be the core of democracy; but to the mentally unequipped opportunities are elusive. "Democracy without education," rightly points out a recent writer, "is hypocrisy, without limitation." When intellectual and financial power is unevenly distributed and greed for enjoying the good things of the world is dominating every head, equality in the ballot can hardly prove the 'greatest happiness of the largest number' to be anything more than pious cant. The highest function of the State is to give character by right education and not by profuse legislation. But

education cannot breed noble character without the requisite moral atmosphere created by sound ideals. President Coolidge's words are worthy of being engrained in the memory of the present generation: It is not what men know but what they are disposed to do with what they know that will determine the rise and fall of a civilization.

The way in which an individual or Nation is disposed to make use of its resources is determined by the purpose which governs the individual or group concerned. Although the immediate cause of war may be rivalry or fanaticism, or ammunition makers' and shipowners' profiteering interests or crooked politics, in its last resort it is due to the lack of character in individuals. In every individual there is a master-purpose, dimly or clearly perceived, which determines the quality of his relation to others and to the world at large. A master-purpose which is valued as good endows one with an effective personality; for without character and unity of purpose none can possess a personality. But character and personality do not result from mere controlled response to social environments. The specific habits built up by social interaction cannot explain the whole of character, the roots of which lie far deeper. No doubt, the sociological development of men from animality to rationality lies through inter-subjective interaction and the group consciousness unfolded thereby; but had there not been a deeper spiritual unity and urge behind, such a superficial sense of unity would have remained a delusion. The coincidence of public and private ends brought about by the standardization of everything from motor cars to feelings and

ideas is a very misleading index to the unity of humanity, which can only be on the spiritual plane. Experimental methods and analytical study have given the modern mind a sense of unity in the realms of existence; some thinking men are also ready to accept and define morality as the function of the part against the whole and the future against the present. However in actuality the *whole* is the political unit of a State or a massed bit of humanity shouting over an imaginary racial label. As to the future, who can have a sincere belief beyond the personal financial security, without a genuine faith in a previous state of one's own existence? Political authoritarianism floats on the grandiose delusion of a present without much bothering about the whole or any extended future. Character is a cankered flower where originality and creativity in every realm of spiritual activity is blasted by persistent regimentation. However much States may try to teach people habits and ideals calculated to create the greatest enjoyment for the largest number of their citizens, the whole edifice must smash in the whirl of time because individuals are mere stones in such imposing constructions that have their basement on quicksand.

III

Therefore a fundamental living faith in an abiding Truth, and not an artificial socialization, alone can supply the vertebra for character today. This the modern world sadly lacks in. The integration of a "we-feeling" through fictitious race theories and joint-stock interests called up by the economic and political propaganda adroitly engineered by military

States is a very insubstantial substitute for the spiritual solidarity of mankind which religion has been trying to insist on for the last two or three millenniums. This is the forte of India. In spite of her chequered political history and dreamy lethargy, India still bears in her warm bosom this spark of wisdom the world so badly needs today. It is India, her glorious spiritual wealth, and not a weak, chaotic, undisciplined, deluded populace lickerish after the sensuous luxuries that are inundating Indian cities from a superfluous West, that can supply this light. Genuine India held and still holds that character is an active expression of an inner realization of the perfection and Divinity inherent in man, and that it manifests progressively in man's upward course of unfoldment. India may be poor in economically productive ability. Yet she has stood through centuries to her guns to conserve spiritual values, as she believed that that alone could save the individual and society ultimately. No genuine Indian can lightly endorse Renan who said that 'religion is an indispensable delusion,' or refrain from pitying a Voltair whose faith led him to declare that 'we would have to invent a God if there were none.' Honest atheism is far less repugnant than pious hypocrisy—this is writ large on the pages of the history of philosophy and religion in India. Spirituality is the essence of India as gravity is the essence of water; and therefore to her character education means progressive realisation of the spiritual and ethical values in the individual. A true Indian who is taught to love all living things as his own self—not as a figure of speech, but as a matter

of inborn conviction—cannot but be gravely struck by the Bismackian dictum: There is no morality between Nations. Yet the ideal which the Vedic civilization infused into the arteries of India was not a fanciful construction devoid of a code of instruction and method of training. The Revealed Scriptures, Traditional Codes and social customs in their *real spirit* endeavour to build up an intellectual aristocracy through their pervasive and persuasive influence. The conception of Dharma inculcated by these is the national guardian of Indian character.

IV

What are the characteristic features of the Indian ideal that may be serviceable for humanity today, and especially for India herself, in founding character and personality and thus assuring general welfare? Before everything else, according to the principles of Indian culture, the first thing desiderated is an intelligent respect for the conventions of society and the acquisition of such knowledge as would help in utilising properly the contributions made by the ancestors. The essential part of a truly Indian method of character education consists in appraising the historical and spiritual traditions in a sympathetic and serious spirit and in assimilating them with due toleration for the new knowledge which fresh contact or inventions may bring in the course of time. "To break sharply with the past is to court discontinuity that brings madness, the social amnesia that comes from the shake of sudden blows or mutilations. The sanity of the individual lies in the continuity of his memory. The sanity of the group

consists in the continuity of its traditions; in either case the break in the chain involves a neurotic reaction and a disturbance dangerous to life." India's proverbial reverence for her past, bordering on a passion, is the result of the recognition of this fact. If, as Clifford Barret has pointed out, "true history is that which discloses the ideas, the purposes, and ideals which have constituted men's view of life and their motives of action," the great Epics of India are better histories than the chronicles of courts and camps, and they afford even now a happy hunting ground for character.

Another significant factor in Indian life, which is a potent cause in rearing noble character, is the great reverence for home and motherhood. The disruption of the collective family, and the family unit itself, in mechanised States due to the delegation of the sacred duties of the family to other agencies and the craving for the enjoyment of that magnificent independence in the common slavery of an overshadowing State that inspires the modern piety of national patriotism, throwing to the winds all filial respect and parental loyalty, offers a painful lesson to India; for India has always held that nobility of character is a precious heritage handed on through successive generations in family by subtle personal contact between several members of different ages and vocations who deserved and received due degrees of deference and love from every other member. Achara or good manners and Dharma or national righteousness are born and propagated in and through the family, whose inviolate sanctity is dearer than all other valued possessions to a true

Indian. What a subtle nourishment the growing child receives from the protective care with which the whole clan surrounds it! The boy who was to complete his education in closest proximity with nature at the residence of a venerable teacher—which is but a historical memory today—in hourly contact with knowledge-thirsty youths who are drawn from every part of the land in common labour and aspiration, was unconsciously growing in wisdom from day to day. And the teacher used to be a centre of knowledge and holiness radiating peace and wisdom with every pulsation. If these forgotten ideals are revived with due adjustment to modern needs, India need not despair of character and can be a lamp to others.

The Hindu ideal of character education may appear austere to the modern mind, because at no period of education pleasure is made an end in itself; sincerity is the core of Indian art and even aesthetic pleasure was a sort of sugar-coating to consume wholesome ethical ideals and standards which sense-bound man would turn away from at the outset. Many avoid the mandates of Scriptures; prescriptions of moral codes may again be speciously evaded by others; but they are all caught in the influence of art that persuades like a lover its votary to tread the right path. According to Indian ideals there is no education apart from character training—Vinaya. No education, says the author of Naishadhi-yacharita, is complete unless it passes through the four successive stages of receiving lessons from a teacher, intelligent assimilation of them, putting into practice the wisdom assimilated and imparting it to others. The

foundation for character is laid in the ideal of Brahmacharya, the special word employed to denote student-ship. The term 'brahma' connotes, according to the lexicon, the accumulated holy wisdom of the race, the Divine essence lodged in man and the universe, as the seat of all perfection, and also the concentration that elicits them through proper discipline. The highest value is conserved in God-head, and man, an emanation from Him, lowers his status by behaving in a manner unbecoming of his high state; the energy behind his will is Divine; his blemishes are the result of ignorance. Hence in the sense of shame lies the root that nourishes a beautiful character. Reverence for the higher self is the motive for ethical action. His conscience is not to follow the policeman and justify the doggerel:

I cannot steal. I cannot lie.
Indeed my sins amount to nought.
Though candidly the reason why
Is, I am afraid of being caught.

Man, Nara, is made a hell, Naraka (*ka* means despicable), by wilful blindness. The motive for character training is within and not without. All virtues in the last resort are 'self-regarding.'

V

We have thus seen that character, although it is an effect born of several subtle influences and specific habits resulting from them, receives direction and integration only by an abiding faith in the nobility and potentiality lying in one's own self. India teaches that the basis of all self-development is in the firm faith that man attains his full personality only when he participates in divine life. Self-realization is the goal that

draws out the finest traits that lie dormant in man. To develop character even as an art of living, in which one's conduct is embellished with virtues like honesty, reliability, fairness, gentleness, sweetness, kindness, frankness, forgiveness, truthfulness, generosity, magnanimity, charity, liberality, amiability, geniality, humility, modesty, sobriety, sympathy, co-operation, patience and the like one will find in the modern world acceptance of the above truth helpful and easy. The economic and scientific gains of the modern age are worse than useless if the value of character is not recognized supreme. We may have certified experts in all branches of knowledge from aviation to accountancy; one may rise to the pinnacle of eminence in the State or society by self-salesmanship and perorations; but still in the corners of one's heart may lurk brutality of behaviour and chaotic revel of base desires. To sub-

due the barbarism of excited will is the first step in self-culture. Without a worthy objective and motivating interest worthy of the children of the Divine, none can get over the distracting trivialities of life. Reverence and admiration for an exalted aim can alone supply the drive for higher character. In the exordiums of Hindu Smritis one meets with instruction in the arts of mental and physical cleanliness, Saucha. Life was a prolonged campaign, according to the sages, against ignorance and stupidity. This was achieved by enjoining on all, especially the students, to recognise and nip in the bud all inappropriate stirrings of the mind by vigilance and zeal and by keeping constantly before their eyes lives of great ones, the virtues illumined by their lives being made the object of one's imitative absorption. They supplied the standard for one's progress by constantly applying them to oneself, reverently yet critically.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

BY A DISCIPLE

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

It was then some days Mahapurushji had come from Madras to the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, at the persistent desire of the local devotees. Everybody was delighted at his arrival; and daily holy talks and chanting of God's names and devotional music were going on in the Ashrama. Every one was brimming with joy. Mahapurushji had been to Bombay once before, in 1924. At

that time the Ashrama was housed in a rented building. He had then laid the foundation-stone for the new Ashrama building, invoking the name of the Master. Within three years the Shrine room and other parts of the Ashrama building were constructed. This time Mahapurushji stayed in that Ashrama building.

It was the month of February, and the days were still cold. A little after

sun rise Mahapurushji used to go out for a walk on the beach, towards Juhu and other places. On some days he used to go to the Shiva temple for worship, which was consecrated by the fishermen of the locality. The fishermen were all delighted at the sight of the aged Swamiji. What a devotion they had!

One day morning Mahapurushji was seated in his own room. At that time a Sannyasin of the monastery drew near him with due obeisance and sat by the side. In the course of the conversation which took place between them, Mahapurushji told him, in connection with the remarks that came up regarding some institutions, "My child, it is quite natural that such things happen. Seeing and learning from those examples, men will be able to understand what is genuine. Those who sincerely search after Truth hold fast to it. Truth alone succeeds, never falsehood. Certainly truth alone will be victorious. Lie and hypocrisy will be swept away before the power of truth. Know this for certain that those who long for the attainment of Truth, heart and soul, will certainly be led by the Lord through the right path. There is no fear for them whatsoever." Then, regarding the Master, a certain Sannyasin enquired, "Well Maharaj, when you all met the Master, what was the impression you carried with you?"

Mahapurushji: When we used to visit the Master the thoughts never occurred to us whether he would be an avatar or not. We could not conceive that he would do something so wonderful and extraordinary in this world. Who could comprehend that this plain and simple man so ordinary to all appearance, could stir

the whole world? He loved us. We were drawn to him by that love. How could I express the Master's love? It was simply indescribable. In boyhood we had experienced the love of our parents, and it was completely beyond our comprehension that there can be a love superior to that. But on arriving at the feet of the Master and receiving his love, it was plain to us that the love of our parents was trivial, extremely insignificant. Coming to him, it seemed as if we have come to our own place—as if till now we were exiles wandering in alien places. This is exactly what suggested to me when I came to the Master. How others thought, I do not know. The Master also received me as his own from the first time of our meeting. One day he told me, "Look here, many people come here; but I never enquired of anybody where his house was or what his father was. I was not curious to know those things. Seeing you for the very first time the desire is engendered in my mind to know where your house is and what the name of your father is. Can you tell why it is so? Please tell me where your house is. What is your father's name?" I informed him that my house was at Borasa and that my father's name was Ramakanai Ghosal. On hearing it the Master exclaimed, "Is it so? Are you the son of Ramakanai Ghosal? Oh, that is why the Mother has awakened in me the desire to know your whereabouts. I know your father very well. He was the attorney of Rani Rasmani's family. These people here respected him very much and took special care of him. Whenever he used to come here they used to see to his food and stay, and arranged servants also for him. He

practised religion intensely. Whenever he used to come here he used to go to the Mother's temple dressed in silk cloth. He would then appear as a veritable Bhairava—a man of full stature and orange complexion. His chest was always blood-shot. Seated in the Mother's temple, he used to meditate long. A musician used to accompany him. Seated behind him that musician used to sing various songs about the Mother and the philosophy of embodied condition. And your father would plunge himself in contemplation, tears trickling down from his eyes. After the period of meditation when he used to come out of the temple, his whole face appeared crimson; people dreaded to come before him.

"In those days I was experiencing an unbearable burning sensation all over my body. One day when I came across him I told him, 'Hallo, you call upon the Mother, and I too do the same. In addition we do a little meditation also. But how is this that I suffer this scorching sensation so much all over my body? Can you find the reason for it? Don't you see (pointing to his body) my hairs are burnt owing to that sensation?' At times it became intolerable and then your father advised me to wear a talisman which he gave. To my great astonishment, as soon as I wore it the burning sensation totally disappeared. Would you request him to meet me once?"¹ In those days I stopped at Calcutta and now and then used to go home. On intimating to my father the Master's wish, he was very much pleased and once paid a visit to him. One day the Master told me, 'Your father's spiritual practices were prompted by desires. It was by the power of those

practices that he was able to acquire so much wealth and spend them on good causes'."

Continuing the trend of the talk about his early days Mahapurushji said, "At that time I was of very tender age. I could hardly recall anything special regarding those days. However, I could very well remember this, namely, that my father fed a number of people. My mother would do all cooking with her own hands and would feed all. She was fond of feeding other people. At that time my father could appoint two or three Brahmin cooks without any difficulty whatsoever; yet my mother would not allow it. Almost every work she did by herself. My mother was a very noble woman; and she always loved a plain life. Seeing her drudgery my father would always feel sad over it. Noticing it my mother would say, 'To feed all these people is certainly a great good fortune for me. They are all my own children.' When I was nine years old my mother passed away. She used to wear a broad bordered *sari*.

¹ When Ramkanai Ghosal visited the Master on another occasion the Master was very glad, and in a state of trance placed his feet on his shoulders. At that time also Mr. Ghosal prayed for his pecuniary welfare as before. The response came from the Master, "It will be so, if the Mother wishes." Mr. Ghosal spent his earnings laudably by serving holy men, by helping freely people who were in sad plight and, above all, by arranging for the education and maintenance of a group of poor boys. At times he used to give shelter and food for 20 or 25 school boys. He being appointed as a deputy Collector, later on, his income diminished. He therefore was not able to do charity as freely as before or devote more time for contemplation. He was very much pained for this. Latterly he became one of the ministers of Cooch Behar State.

I do not remember anything particular except these. My uncle used to say: She never desired anything for herself, not even her own clothes.

"As time went on my visits to the Master, which were becoming more and more frequent, brought into my mind a determination to give up all connection with worldly life, and I went to my father to take final leave of him. When I divulged my intention to my father, he began to weep bitterly. There was a special room in our house set apart, where God was worshipped, and my father directing me there asked to prostrate to the Deity. Afterwards, placing his hand on my head, he blessed me saying, 'May you realise the Divine, I have striven so much for it; I also tried to renounce home, but I failed. That is why I bestow upon you my blessings so that you may at least realise God.' I told this incident to the Master on my returning to Him. He was extremely glad to hear it, and exclaimed, 'very well done'."

Sannyasin: Now-a-days such parents are very rare. It won't be an exaggeration even if we say such do not exist.

Mahapurushji: Yes, that is true. We should remember the fact that my father was doing religious practices. That is why he behaved so. Moreover, in spite of his endeavours he was not able to realise God. He had also the longing to attain God, the essential Truth that ever is. Enough of the experiences of the worldly life also he possessed. That is why he was capable of granting my wish so easily.

Mahapurushji sat for his night meals. The talk coming up regarding the Master's diet, one Sannyasi enquired, "Maharaj, is it a fact that

the Master's palms were so delicate that it would get cut while breaking a piece of *luchi*?

Mahapurushji: Yes. The palms of his hands were extremely soft. Why, the whole body was very delicate. You might have noticed a variety of hard *luchi*. One day while breaking such a piece of *luchi*, his palm was cut.

On questioning as to the quantity of food the Master used to take at night, Mahapurushji said (pointing to the *Prasad luchi* in his own plate), "Such a piece or at the most two small pieces of *luchis* made up his night meal. Along with that, he would take a little milk boiled with semolina. He could not digest pure milk. So he used to take a preparation like *payas* which was made by boiling a quantity of semolina in milk mixed with water. He used to take a small quantity of that kind of *payas*; but if he would get hungry in the interval between meals, he would generally eat a bit of something. He used to keep *sandesh* in his room. When he was hungry he would take a piece and eat. Sometimes if anybody was in his presence, after eating a part of it, he would share the rest with him. In every respect the Master was exactly like a boy."

After meals Mahapurushji was smoking from his Hooka in his room. Then a certain Sannyasin questioned him: "Maharaj, while the Master was ill, yourself, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda had been to Buddha Gaya without the knowledge of the Master. While returning from there did he speak anything?"

Mahapurushji: Certainly, would he not notice it? Motioning his fingers and shaking his thumb, he said,

"There is nothing anywhere." And may go anywhere else. You will not afterwards, pointing to his own body, get anything. Here all doors are said, "Now every thing is here. You open."

HARMONY OF FAITHS THROUGH WESTERN EYES

BY MONSIEUR MARIO MEUNIER

[The following interesting and thoughtful discourse was given by Mon. Meunier, a distinguished literator of Paris, on the occasion of the 104th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna celebrated there. Translation: by Mr. P. Seshadry Iyer, B.A., M.L. —The Editors.]

A FAMOUS Pythagorean, Aristoscenede Tarente, narrates the following anecdote:

Socrates, while walking one day in the tangled streets of Athens, met an Indian traveller.

"Which philosophy do you follow?" asked the stranger. "All my researches," replied Socrates, "bear on human life and the quest of human wisdom."

"Is not a person liable to err" answered this missionary of Buddha, "if he philosophises on human wisdom and life, ignoring divine wisdom?"

We commemorate today the 104th Anniversary of the birth of one, the most inspired by this divine wisdom in recent times,—Ramakrishna. He was born in the East, in that sacred India, which was regarded in ancient times as the habitation of the most religious people in the world. Clement of Alexandria writes: "From the Orient has indeed come the light which illuminated the darkness for the first time. From the Orient has risen the flame of Truth on the head of those who were immersed in ignorance, like the sun (on the sensible world). That is why we turn towards the east when we pray. That is also the reason why the temples of remote antiquity faced the west so that those who offered

sacrifices standing with their faces turned towards the images of the Gods could fix their eyes on the Orient."

Our enthusiasm and attention are fixed not merely on the star which stopped on the manger of the Saviour of the Occident; our march to the light is to those very places where the star which conducted the Magis rose. It was risen in the Orient, in the very Orient where the holy and pious voice of the great Ramakrishna was heard recently, for the spiritual salvation of the people of the world. In proclaiming salvation by fervour and faith, by love and union with God, his mission was to re-awaken in all souls the gleam of the Divine sun who gives form and life, (intelligence and measure) harmony and proportion, nobility and goodness, to all those who shine by Its eternal splendour. This sun links us to itself in giving us its light and flame, this supreme and transcendent Principle, this one inexpressible by any name. All beings are attracted to It. Clement of Alexandria says: "Everywhere, at all times, and in all places, there is no nomad tribe, nation or city, that could live and maintain itself without an instinctive faith in a Superior Being. Travel east or west, north or south, everywhere you will

find the one and the same institution of the Supreme monarch, because the universal results of that creative power equally embrace all places and times."

While preserving Its indescribable unity, this Supreme Principle, the Primordial one, does not cease from singing the multiple and manifesting its grandeur and glory. So the sages tell us; meanwhile, human beings, frequently by routine, and always by excess of pride and egoism, end very often by becoming insensible to this revelation. Nature has incessantly varied the theme of its plays and glories; but their eyes are without lustre and their hearts without love. The soul that is materially ripe can no more see or hear. In intercepting the celestial rays, it has lost the sense of contemplation, and knows not to link the invisible to the visible. For lifting us out of the mire of ignorance and despair, great and inspired men come from time to time, to light the shining serene flame which unites in the same brightness, the sun of the world and the sun hidden in all hearts and souls.

Such was the mission of Ramakrishna. His soul was so profoundly and so ardently religious that he hoped, as Proclus, to be the hierophant of all the mysteries and the initiate of all the religions. I believe that he would have willingly subscribed to the following words of Plutarch. "God is. He is not like the things measured by time, but according to an unchangeable eternity. There is no before or after for Him. He is the eternal present. He fills always." At the same time does not Plutarch voice forth the following incessant thought of Ramakrishna?

"There are not," says this great priest of the Delphian Apollo, "different Gods for different peoples. The Greeks have not their Gods and the Barbarians theirs. There are no separate Gods for the inhabitants of the north, or the south. Just as the sun, the earth and the ocean are the same for all the mortals, though they may be called by different names, so the one spirit which (governs) this universe receives different names and epithets from different peoples." Since, then, the Gods of the nations are only the phases of one and the same God, religions are like a divine prairie, where diverse flowers of different shades grow. All these flowers proceed from the same sun, shine in life with the beauty of the same luminary and rise up to unite in death with the flames of the same planet which caused their growth. So also, for the illumined soul, religions come near and meet though they may seem opposed, because all have the same goal. Their fundamental unity allows each follower to become ripe for liberation in the fixed bosom of his own particular faith. To change one's religion is to stray into an unknown desert; to surpass one's destiny is to expose oneself to the risk of losing the genius of one's race and its traditions. The wise man does not change his faith, he is content in understanding all and raising himself, to a comprehension of their diversity and a contemplation of their secret and perennial unity. If the world were wise, we would feel ourselves to be the children of the same father; we would, despite the diversities which are necessary to the harmony of the world, unite and bind ourselves by the bonds of divine relationship and would live confident, tranquil and

peaceful. Religious peace, the healthiest of all kinds of peace, would be assured, because we would know that force and violence can never prevail against liberty and that the thoughts and feelings of men grow in spite of all the tyrannies. The great pagan, Themistius, writing to the Emperor Constantine, formulated the principle in the following manner. "You have made a law full of wisdom by giving every one the right of embracing the faith he chooses and thus assured to all the calm and peace of the soul. But that law does not date from you; it is contemporary with humanity. It is the eternal decree of God. It lays down the idea of the Divinity in all

souls, even in those of the barbarian and the savage; and this idea is so sovereign in us that force cannot prevail against it. As to the manner of expressing it, it is left to the will of each. To invoke force against conscience is to enter into a war with God, because it is trying to violently deprive men of the right they hold from God Himself."

May Ramakrishna give to the modern world, which expiates by all sorts of evil, its forgetfulness of the Divine, the peace, the goodness, the sweetness, the intelligence and the love which are the characteristics of the free children of God.

INCARNATION

BY ADHAR CHANDRA DAS, M.A., P.R.S.

[Mr. Adhar Chandra Das is Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University. In the ensuing essay he studies the conception of Avatara philosophically and points out *inter alia* that there is nothing to boggle about in admitting such a profoundly rational principle of theology into speculative philosophy.—The Editors.]

THE question of Incarnation is relevant only from the point of view of a philosophy according to which the universe in which we find ourselves is rooted in a supreme Being Who is not only conscious of Himself, but also cares for His creation; for the word 'Incarnation,' taken broadly, signifies divine descent. It is possible, however, to fix on a still wider import of the term. It has come to be a usage of language to emphasise attribution of a quality to an individual by representing him as an incarnation of the quality, and this indicates that an incarnation is a concrete embodiment of something abstract. Though this is nothing more than a figurative sense of the word, which consists not so much in

literal signification as in the artistic quality of rousing the appropriate feeling, yet we can well extend the figurative meaning to the representation of the relation between a universal and the particular items comprised in it. Thus we can say that every particular is an incarnation of its universal. But the fact is perhaps that the term, incarnation, was first used in a strictly philosophico-religious sense, and that later it was adopted as an element of the language of our everyday experience. It is very difficult, though not impossible, to ascertain the time when it was coined and the person who came to make use of it for the first time. So leaving aside the problem of the origin and first use of the word, interesting as it is,

let us proceed to analyse the different ways in which it can be taken.

Merely positing a supreme Being at the back of the universe does not necessarily entail the notion of Incarnation; for it is quite possible to conceive Him after the manner of the Deists to be ever transcending the world of creation. The monotheistic religions glory in the unity of the Deity, but the unity of God, which is made the platform upon which is reared the structure of universal brotherhood, is found on inspection to be exclusive of the universe. So God is conceived as jumping down at times over the gulf to regulate the course of His creation, or as occasionally sending messengers to mankind to help them towards proper adjustment to their environments. Hence the conception of a prophet or nabi. Some have gone so far as to assert that every tribal religion has its prophets or nabis. Whatever be the value of this conception of a prophet in the practices of religious life, there is manifestly a long stage from the conception of a prophet to that of an Incarnation, though there is no denying that an Incarnation in the full sense of the term bears about it a sense of message or mission.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the illusionists the question of an Incarnation of God does not arise at all, or if there be any, it is pointed out that an Incarnation of God must be an element within the major illusion, *viz.*, this world. Here we need not bring in the problem of the ultimate nature of Reality and its actual relation to the world. We may, on the contrary, take an Incarnation as a phenomenon in the religious, or rather spiritual world, and see what possible view of the nature of Reality

we can obtain therefrom. We shall, however, do well to ascertain the import of the word, Incarnation, as used in the religious world, and in this attempt we shall do no better than draw upon the usage and some aspect of the spiritual tradition of the world.

To begin with, an Incarnation is to be distinguished from a saint or a religiously-inspired person; for a saint represents more an ascent to God than a descent of the Divine. Strictly, however, one cannot be separated from the other. If God is not, like an absentee landlord, a transcendent Being, but is immanent in the universe, in the sense that every thing is real only in the reality of His being, spiritual progress or lack of it is not a question of less or more of physical distance between God and the human person concerned. Spiritual life and development then turns out to be a matter of unfoldment of the innermost essence of our being. So the ascent of the finite spirit, potentially infinite, and the descent of the Divine are, in the ultimate analysis, two sides of the same process, or rather the same process looked at from two different points of view; for the finite spirit is elevated in so far as its infinite potential nature unfolds itself. This ascent of the finite, and, for that matter, the descent of the Divine manifested on the spiritual plane is the fundamental principle in its broad features, which is working through the whole course of evolution.

We can then distinguish between three distinct stages of the descent of the Divine. First, Creation, which is not to be conceived as a temporal act, but as a manifestation, can be conceived as the descent of the Divine under the veil of ignorance or nescience. But that descent does not in

any way impair the spiritual essence of God as infinite. On the contrary, it is because of the divine essence being deposited, so to speak, in the descent itself that the ascent of the empirical or the human to the Divine is being effected; otherwise the Creator would end in annihilating altogether the divine essence just as an egg reduces itself to a broken shell by evolving a chick out of it. So the whole course of evolution from matter to consciousness represents progressive penetration of the veil of nescience, and revelation of the fundamental Reality in which this world of ours is grounded.

This progressive unfoldment of the Spirit through Nature is made articulate in the emergence of the religious consciousness in the human beings. A finite spirit or a human soul in its spiritual practices disciplines itself with a view to consciously grasp what it in its ordinary course of experience only vaguely imagines, and its progress or development is proportionate to the descent of the Divine. But this descent or ascent is, as has already been indicated, nothing peculiar in itself, but is continuous with the general principle working in the evolutionary course.

There is yet another sense in which the descent of the Divine can be conceived. So far we have dealt with the descent of the Divine as a philosophical or metaphysical category. God has been conceived as going out of Himself, yet remaining within Himself for the purpose of creation. He is also conceived as coming down to the level of the finite spirit, assuming human shape, and unlike His creatures, with full knowledge or consciousness of Himself, and that He does out of His love for His devotees,

and ultimately to direct the courses of civilization towards its proper goal. Thus we are told by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita: "Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to help mankind". When in the march of human civilization a need for a new adjustment arises owing to some circumstances, "a wave of power" comes down. As man is not merely a material body, but is spirit with a material basis in his empirical existence, the directing force must come from the spiritual plane which is the invisible topmost plane of the universe of which this world of ours is a visible fragment. But this is not to say that there can be no crisis on the physical plane. The course of evolution at its different stages points to adjustments of the evolutes to their environments. With the emergence of the human beings on earth that adjustment took on a new significance. Mankind were confronted with an environment threatening in many ways, but they were endowed with enough of intellectual power to grapple with it. Men struggled and have eventually succeeded in gaining a large measure of control over Nature, and a vast scientific culture can now be credited to this control. But the history of man is not merely the history of his struggle with his surroundings, but also of the manner and methods of his self-expression. So we can say that from the very beginning Nature was the basis upon which he sought realization of his self. Adaptation or adjustment varied along with the progressive conception of the self, and in and through this progressive adjustment there came to be developed ethico-spiritual culture, wherethrough by stages human beings are marching

towards the goal, the supreme source of their being. When nescience prevails and makes men forgetful of their divine destiny, when vain intellectualism fills their minds with arrogance and materialistic ideas and creates a screen between their empirical being and potential spiritual essence, the Divine, in spite of His transcendental directing of the evolutionary course, descends in human form and moves about in the midst of mankind to give them guidance and light. "The teacher is God Himself descended into humanity." The Divine being is infinite and eternal, nothing can fall beyond Him. All existence is after all a manifestation of God, so every conscious being can be conceived as a descent of God. But this descent is effected under the veil of ignorance. But when God incarnates Himself in human body and mind with human modes of activities and speech, He does that out of His infinite knowledge. In the words of Aurobindo, "It is the conscious descent of the God-head; it is the Avatara."

Now this doctrine of Incarnation, which is firmly rooted in the Hindu culture, is more a matter that relates to religious or spiritual experience than a tenet formulated on a speculative basis. Strictly, however, the doctrine of Avatara is an enigma to speculative philosophy which is all an intellectual search. Philosophy can cast out its net of categories, but how much of Reality can it cover? Only a fragment of it. If that is large enough to bring within its sweep the whole range of facts from matter to Consciousness, it cannot still be said that the full reality is gathered up thereby; for Reality being infinite and eternal, defies all attempts at an

exhaustive enumeration of the actualities and possibilities that issue out of It. The truth, however, is that speculative philosophy often proceeds with over-simplification which involves omission through ignorance. Thus, we are told by materialists that Reality is all matter, and that the phenomena like life and consciousness, as something quite different from matter, are fictions. Spiritualists, on the other hand, contend that Reality is all spirit in which there can be no accommodation for matter, and this led, as is well known, to the theories of equalism and illusionism. None can, of course, deny that speculative philosophy has shown its power of a synthetic view and searching analysis; but the fact, all the same, remains that Reality always slips through the fingers, in spite of the supposed grasp of it through categories. A philosophical attempt to reach Reality is like a jump from the basement of a house to the top of it. If philosophy can at all be represented as such an intellectual jump, the jumper will first take his stand at the foot of the pyramid of creation gazing at the height, and then throw himself up along the exterior convenient to him, knowing nothing of the vast wealth of Being spread out in the inner parts of the edifice of Nature, visible and invisible to the mortal eyes. The fact perhaps is that a speculative philosopher who does not feel giddy at the height of Being is more a gazer than a jumper, and he is more engrossed in the sublimity than in the beauties of the Supreme Being. Thus we are told that spiritual experiences are abnormalities and God-visions are all frauds; all these influences are pernicious; and all the more so is the doctrine of Incarnation, which is no-

thing short of deification of a human being with all human frailties—a deification which is outrageous to a speculative mind. Indeed it may appear to be so, and it is, as has been already said, due to over-simplification, and, for that reason, to omission of relevant facts.

We may as well compare the speculative philosopher to one who, standing on the beach, staggers at the billows that surge on the surface of the vast sea, and knows nothing of the treasures that lie in the depth of it, while the religious or spiritual aspirant, like a diver, not content with a view from a distance, throws himself into the sea of Being, swims on the surface and then sinks into the depth to emerge with the jewel of spiritual light which radiates and illumines the darker corners of his fellowmen's minds. It is, however, oftentimes the case that the philosopher obsessed with his exterior view of Being unreasonably suspects the inner experiences of the spiritualist.

Indeed, it is very difficult for modern men to grasp the inner significance of Avatarhood. To some it appears as an enigma, and to others a superstition. To still others, on the contrary, it appears as nothing more than a cult of hero-worship. To the rationalist it is a foolishness and to the Deist it is all meaningless. If God is extra-cosmic and external to His creation, assumption of human shape through a human birth is altogether absurd. If God chose to come down at all to this earth of ours, he might have come in His own original form and shape. Further there is an unbridgeable gulf between the Divine and the human; for God is wholly transcend-

ent. So to talk of the Divine in the human is just a blasphemy.

The materialist, on the other hand, will summarily reject the notion; for to him God is not anything more than a mere word. The rationalist will, if he at all believes in God, conceive him as pure spirit, and to him the conception of Avatar—the Infinite or Absolute assuming a human body, a finite nature—will appear fantastic. He will find extremely hard to reconcile it with the omnipotence of God.

These objections may at first sight appear to be unanswerable. But a way out of the difficulty is indicated in an assertion of Sri Krishna, which is: "Though the Divine is unborn, imperishable in His self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet He assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of His Nature and by the force of His self-maya or Yoga-maya." The statement may, on the face of it, seem to be a bundle of contradictions, but if we look into the word self-maya or Yoga-maya upon which particular stress is laid, and ponder over its inner meaning and implication, we may get light and understanding. Strictly, the doctrine of Avatarhood is no dogma. It has a rational basis and justification. It is, in fact, a sequel to a philosophical view of things, according to which everything is in God and God is in everything; Nature is the medium of the manifestation of the Supreme Being. As Aurobindo puts it, "Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothingelse but that; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form

of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection. All is in God and in Him moves and has its being; in all He is, acts and displays His being, every creature is the disguised Narayana. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe."

All this raises the possibility of Avatara, and this possibility furnishes the rational foundation, and a rational explanation of the phenomena like Avataras that have hitherto happened on this planet. "An Avatar is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below; it is the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb".

THE NINEFOLD PATH OF DEVOTION

BY G. A. CHANDAVARKAR, M.A., M.R.A.S.

[The following paragraphs describe Bhakti or God-love under a ninefold classification, which, besides being comprehensive, is at the same time gradated into progressive disciplines. Careful and sincere practice of these steps takes an aspirant without any difficulty to the highest Beatitude or that vastness of perfect God-consciousness which is the end of all spiritual endeavour.—The Editors.]

THE history of man's spiritual struggle contains but one main chapter. That chapter deals with his endeavours to become one with the Infinite. It is but the attempts made by the finite being trying to become the Infinite. What a glorious attempt should it be! For this final merge into the Infinite various methods are advocated from time to time. While some suggest the method of Karma or self-less activity and surrendering the fruits of such activities to the Lord, others emphasise the need of Jnana or the contemplation on the True. For the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter, or the deliverance from ignorance, another alternative path is also suggested. That is the path of Bhakti.

During the medieval period of Indian History a mighty wave representing the revival of the Bhakti cult passed over the country, as a result of the preachings of saints like

Chaitanya, Kabir and Nanak. It should not be supposed that that was a new cult in India. For even in the distant past we note the dazzling examples of devotees like Prahlada and Arjuna who are considered even to-day the first and foremost among Bhaktas. The work of the saints of the medieval period was merely a revival of that age-long devotional spirit. In the Maratha country this cult received the emphasis in its ninefold aspect which, by the way, is practically common to almost all the Saints. The mass awakening which was the result of the activities of these great devotees of God and their innumerable followers led to a great revival both in the political and social circles. Simplicity was the refrain of that new gospel. Sublimity was its burden.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to frame an answer for the question: What then were the nine

aspects of this Bhakti which assumed the form of a movement in the Maratha country? In the following Sloka of the *Bhagavata* it is explained clearly. They represent various stages in the devotional ascent. The relations between the steps are very rationally maintained in that verse. The Sloka runs as follows:

श्रवणं क्रीर्तनं विष्णोः—
स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं
सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

Here the first place is given to Sravanam or hearing. It implies that every aspirant should hear or learn from others who are better qualified or experienced. Hearing of the good and great qualities of God should precede the acquisition of spiritual joy. That again suggests the need of a Guru who should initiate the disciple into the secrets of righteousness. He gives the Mantra, a holy text, the contemplation on which makes us realise the significance of Love and Harmony. Secondly comes Kirtanam—chanting the hymns in praise of God. In the Maratha country, as also in some other parts of India, even to this day these Kirtanas are very common. Hundreds of people gather together to hear them recited in chorus. The person conducting it raises to the highest pitch the emotions of the audience and the whole atmosphere rings with the echoes of either Ramana-nama or Krishna-nama. Thirdly reference is made to Vishnoh-smaranam or continuous remembrance of Vishnu, the all-pervading God. From Sravanam and Kirtanam this step becomes easy. Instinctively one begins to think of the qualities of God; and Mananam starts. The

fourth place is given to Pada-sevanam—humble service rendered to God through man. Seva needs humility, a virtue essential for all the aspirants after Truth. It needs the destruction of the love of power or pride. All the devotees of God have been first and foremost the humble servants of God and man. They have one and all sought the kingdom of God through humility. All the happiness in the world has resulted through the paid or unpaid service of human beings to one another. Likewise spiritual happiness or bliss results from service or Seva, highest type of which is Nishkama-karma or disinterested service. Fifth place here is taken up by Archanam, worship. It may be Saguna or Nirguna form of worship. Both the forms train up the mind and exercise a steadying influence upon the wavering tendencies in man. Mental peace is the result of such exercises. Sixthly comes Vandanam—salutation—a form of respect paid to God or deserving men such as teachers and saints. It implies the recognition of the greatness in him to whom Vandanam or salutation is made. One soul greets another soul and recognises the unity of the Parama-purusha pervading the universe. Stand before a great man and salute him; you would witness a thrill of joy running through your body. The response is at once miraculous. *Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya. Namah Shivaya cha Shankaraya cha. Gurubhyo Namah.* Who has not uttered these and felt himself elevated above the sensuous plane? Charming indeed is Vandanam. Dasyam takes the seventh place. Service of one greater than us is really ennobling. The time spent or any labour undertaken that

way has its own reward. It is this Seva that purifies the soul, rubs its angularities and elevates it. Those of us who have lived in any Asrama even for a short time know what its value is. It should be experienced and felt. The giver of alms, clothes and food to the needy alone can realise what the blessings of charity are. So, one who lived the life of doing some kind of Seva in any well-conducted institution can realise the beauty of Dasyam. Some have enjoyed it even in the mere sweeping of a temple or the house of a Guru. We are told on good authority that even bodily ailments have been cured of those that dedicated themselves to the service or Dasatva of Gurus. If so, what doubt can there be as to the fact that service done in the cause of God will give to the doer real bliss? Sakhyam or friendship takes the eighth place. Fellowship of men and love of God, as illustrated in the case of Arjuna and Krishna, are really grand. Said Lord Krishna, "All will be able to reach me as you have done through Love, O Arjuna." What wonders genuine friendship has not worked in the world? The very idea

of a Sangha or a Mission means the ideal of brotherhood for a good cause. How many lives have been saved by such institutions? This Sakhya means love for all. When God is all or All is God, Sakhya becomes indispensable. The ninth place is taken up by Atmanivedana or self-introspection and surrender to His Will. This indeed is the crowning glory of Bhakti. All the benefactors of humanity have exhibited this aspect in a remarkable degree and to that extent they have become great and good. In all the saints one or many or all these aspects were found. These aspects are all illustrated by citing the examples of Parikshit, Vaiyasiki, Prahlada and others.

It is also noteworthy that all these are the aspects of one and the same path of Bhakti. The lustre of the different jewels may appear different, their colour may vary; but the Kanti or charm found in all is the same. It was left to the option of the aspirants to select any one aspect which suited to their temperament most. The final result would be the same.

PURITY IS STRENGTH

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA.

[These are the notes on the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

I

You can never divide the world into East and West as far as the essentials of life are concerned. All problems are cosmic problems. You cannot say: Here the East begins; here the West begins. This is a very,

very erroneous and misleading idea and has been the cause of many fatal mistakes in the history of humanity. There is no eastern truth or western truth, but only Truth as such, which is neither eastern nor western, nor anything else but the one and only

Truth. All problems of the human mind are the same problems. There is no such thing as East or West in this respect. There is no eastern and western mind in so far as the essentials are concerned, but only the human mind. There are differences in customs, in the non-essentials of life; but the human mind always remains the same and its problems are always those of the human mind, not eastern or western problems.

II

There is this first and a very essential point to be remembered in the course of one's spiritual striving. We should all have a short break after dinner, i.e. in the middle of the day, say at two o'clock or so. This is very useful, but very difficult for many people to practise. For many it is so difficult to have just a little break of consciousness, or just a little break in the hectic and feverish activities of one's mind, to fill it again with the holy name and the harmonising vibrations of the holy sound. We should also make it a point never to read anything worldly—no novels, no fiction, no stories—before going to bed or before falling asleep. At that time we ought to have some holy thought and some holy sound to dwell on. It may be that we are going to sleep in the lap of God, or some other such idea. It would fill our whole mind before falling asleep—the Divine idea and the feeling of the Divine. If we permit ourselves to read something worldly, this goes on working in our subconscious mind during the hours of our sleep and has very bad effects. In the evening we should be very careful as to what we allow our minds to busy itself with, or as to how to get

our mind absorbed. There should be concentrated and peaceful dwelling on the Divine—either the Divine form, or the Divine name, or the Divine sound, or on all three combined, which is the most efficacious way. Only thus can we in time succeed in transforming the contents of our subconscious mind. It is very, very harmful to read worldly books before falling asleep; but we generally do not realize the extent of the harm we do to ourselves by being careless in this respect. The workings of the subconscious mind during the time of our sleep are very important and should not be lost sight of.

There is one more point which should be mentioned: If you awake at night, at once begin doing your Japam in a quiet, peaceful way, without any unnecessary strain. But during the time of your practices Japam and sleep should never become connected. This is very bad. Before going to bed, do 100 to 1,000 times Japam; fill yourself with the holy sound; and make it a point never to stop doing Japam before having reached the number you intended to do.

Habits are to be formed and strengthened. Then spiritual life becomes easier and loses much of its initial strain. Strictly preserve your fixed hours. Then meditation slowly becomes possible even when the mind is very restless. There should be perfect regularity in the hours of your spiritual practice, because only thus does the mind grow accustomed to them. And under all circumstances a certain minimum is to be kept up in one's daily practices. The time of the practices should be slowly and steadily increased in the case of the

beginner. In the case of the advanced student, there will be an undercurrent of devotion in the mind which enables him to keep part of the mind busy with the devotional practices at all times, whatever one may happen to do outwardly. Before that state is reached the greatest regularity concerning the hours and the fixed round of spiritual exercises are to be observed by all aspirants most scrupulously.

III

Fellow-travellers can help each other. That is why holy company is of such great importance. There should be mutual help, mutual sympathy; because these help us in sustaining our energy and our striving. We should never try to be teachers; but only students amongst fellow-students, giving others a helping hand if we can, but never assuming the role of the teacher. This is always safe if we know how to remain within reasonable limits. Then we do not become dangerous to ourselves and to others. Then the teachers' mentality cannot sprout up in us and harm us and others.

"Thou art the mechanic, and I am the machine." This is the attitude we should adopt, and never that of superiority. Before you lead others, learn to serve with dedication and self-surrender. Very often we want to lead without proper training. We want to have the fruits without paying the proper price.

The advantage of a small group of devotees is that in a small group all these direct instructions are applicable. It is easier to have a true spirit of sympathy and no backbiting in a small group, even if they be beginners. It is always better to

have first intensive work and then, later on, extensive work.

IV

We should always act in such a way that we may equip ourselves fully to be able to meet death with a smile. Death should be our greatest happiness. It should be the gateway to Immortality, to be welcomed, never to be feared. This life is nothing but a passing shadow, a phase, a life in a world of unrealities and shadows. Our future depends on what we think in this life, on what we are, never on what we appear or pretend to be.

Whatever be the Truth, follow it. An unpleasant truth is always infinitely better than a pleasant falsehood. Even if this Truth breaks our hearts, even if it shatters once for all our fondest hopes and illusions, let us face it undauntedly. Vedanta is not for cowards or emotional weaklings. No use clinging to falsehood. No use covering the decaying carcase with beautiful fragrant flowers and doting over it! Let the light come under all circumstances, no matter whether the heart breaks or not. Do not care so much for breaking of hearts and shattering of hopes as for Truth and Light. Sometimes necessary operations are very painful; but if the surgeon should refuse to operate on the patient, the patient would die. Nothing is truer than the fact that some day the body will fall off. And we should so conduct ourselves that we have no occasion to repent for having wasted our precious time and our precious human birth.

Our great poet-saint Tulsidas sings: "When I was born, I cried and others laughed. Act in such a way that when you die, you laugh and

others cry." This is the real task of our life. So we have a proverb in Bengal that says, "Do whatever spiritual practices you may be doing; but you must know how to die."

Death is always of the body, never of the Spirit or the Self. So why fear death? Death should neither be courted nor be feared, neither should life be so. The bier is always quite as real as the cradle, the burning-ghat as real as the nursery; but we rejoice at the one and recoil from the other. Why? Why this desperate clinging to physical enjoyment and physical relationships? I neither want life nor do I want death, because life is something infinitely greater than this shadow of life, the phenomenal life. We cling to our bodies and to those of others, to our own minds and to those of others and think we have got hold of life. We have not. We have got hold of the mirage, the reflection of the reflection of the reflection, and nothing more than that, and go on hugging it to our breast. What terrible fools we are! What an inordinate attachment to all that is *not* Life! The true aspirant, he who has true spiritual yearning, neither clings to life, nor does he ever yearn for death, because, to him, neither of them has any reality. We must learn to be wholly indifferent to our life and wholly indifferent to our death; but act in the right way to make spiritual progress, so that we may be able to make the very best use of the short span of life given to us. We need not be afraid of death, neither of our own nor of anybody else, if we just minimise the attachments of life and our personal relationships with the phantoms of others, with the men-phantoms and

women-phantoms of which none has any ultimate reality. Relationships based on the mirage always prove to be nothing but a mirage in the end. You cannot have real relationship with what is unreal and which has no ultimate being.

The deaths of our Great Ones have taught us grand lessons. How wonderful was the passing away of Swami Ramakrishnananda, Premananda, Turiyananda, Brahmananda! The worldly-minded and those who cling to their personal attachments alone should be afraid of death. The spiritual ones do not lose anything. It is just like passing from one room to another. One day, after the Master's death, Holy Mother wanted to put on the widow's dress. But the Master appeared to her and said, "What are you doing? Am I dead? Death is just like passing from one room to another." So she gave up her intention. It is the body that dies, not the Self. We must be prepared to die for a righteous cause without any hesitation; and we must be fully prepared to see others die for it. So our motto is: "To work for our own salvation as well as for the salvation of others." This is what Swamiji wanted us to do, and this is the guiding motto of the Order.

So Swami Vivekananda said, "This body that we nourish with food, let it be sacrificed for the good of humanity, God in man. This mind of ours that we nourish or develop through studies, let it be made use of also in the service of the God in man. The soul, too, let it be utilized for the service of the Lord in man." Thus alone our mortal death leads us to our spiritual birthday.

V

Follow the higher Law. Care neither for optimism nor for pessimism. Develop this attitude of indifference to everything except to the ideal; learn to be perfectly indifferent to all other concerns, especially those of material life and all personal attachments and affections—to all things that bind us, that stand in the way of our spiritual progress. We must be able to maintain a perfect mental balance without allowing ourselves to be ruffled by anything. We must always hold our mind fixed on the one duty, our heart always set on the Lord, our hands ever busy in His service alone.

The glorious lives of many sages and saints are before us; they show us how to live and how to die. We have only to mould ourselves according to the pattern they have given us again and again. Even if we fall in this battle of life, through newer and newer lives we shall work with renewed vigour. Step by step we shall rise until we attain to our lives' only goal.

The conception of the Self is the peculiarity of the true Aryan. It is not to be found among Semitic religions. This is why Sri Krishna upbraids Arjuna for his "un-Aryan" attitude. No Semitic religion has ever risen to the true Aryan conception of the Self and the higher life.

Generally we ourselves create all the obstacles that stand in the way of our spiritual progress or self-realisation. We think of ourselves in terms of the body and of the mind and do the same with reference to others. Then we go and take up direct relations with them as men or women, and then all the rest naturally follows in due course. On what does this

whole life of the body and of the mind depend? On consciousness and not on man-form or woman-form or child-form. The moment the Self leaves the body, it becomes lifeless. All its charm vanishes. Nobody feels attracted by a dead form, be it ever so beautiful; but what really attracts us in the man-form or in the woman-form is consciousness which we mistakenly identify with that particular body or mind. There is such a lot of blind infatuation in the world owing to this super-imposition on the Reality; and without undermining all these wrong notions and conceptions, all these body and mind-bound likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions, we shall never be able to make any progress. If I love the life of the body so greatly, why do I not look to that on which it depends? I should learn to love the life of the Self, because only owing to Its presence is there any life in the body and in the mind at all. The cause is greater than the effect; and the cause of the life of my body and my mind and that of all others is the Self alone, not my man-form or woman-form or child-form. If I want life and love permanent and unchanging. I must look to the Self and never to any of the Upadhis (limitating adjuncts). But it takes people many, many lives to see this and realize their Himalayan mistake. Swami Brahmananda once told me, "My boy, if you give yourself to the world, your youth, beauty, health, everything will be gone. If you give yourself to the Lord, you will retain them all."

VI

Sri Ramakrishna always used to say to the women who came to him for instruction, "Beware of the snares

of man, even if he is a very near relative." One cannot attain anything in spiritual life without perfect chastity in thought, word and deed. The amount of real chastity attained determines the whole progress of the aspirant. Everyone should be on his guard with every person of the other sex, be he a man or a woman. Real chastity is infinitely more than the mere avoidance of sexual intercourse.

There is a nice story of Tan Sen, one of India's greatest musicians. One day when he was singing all alone in the forest, the emperor Akbar happened to pass by and heard him. The emperor was enchanted, because he had never heard him singing in such a perfect way and in such a beautiful strain at his court. He felt a little displeased and said, "How is it that you never sing to me so beautifully?" Tan Sen answered, "Sire, how could I? Just now I was singing for someone who is infinitely greater than you, and who is my Beloved." "Greater than me? Who can he be?" answered Akbar. Tan Sen answered, "The Lord, my Beloved. When I sing to you, I just sing to order and am paid for it. But I cannot open my heart. When I sing to Him who is the Author of the universe, I give my whole heart to my song." You see, good music plays a great part in the life of the aspirant and devotee.

Immorality does not mean impurity acquired by extra-martial relations only. Even if one is married, carnal relation with one's wife is really immoral. One can be as immoral with one's own wife as with any outsider. If one leads a sexually impure life with one's own wife, wherefrom is he to get the energy and intensity so absolutely necessary for all real spiritual striving? We should clearly and

dispassionately recognise this fact. We need tremendous energy for leading a higher life; and this energy of ours, which is really one, cannot be wasted through sexual channels, if we want to progress and to really attain something. Spiritual life is not to be had as cheaply as the Protestants think. It is something more than mere morals and ordinary moral life, although morals are the very basis on which it must rest. No, whoever desires to lead the higher life must pay the price fully. There can be no bartering in this.

Sri Ramakrishna was always able to tell the character of those brought into his presence. Once a young man was brought to him while he was in ecstasy. He said, "If this young man touches a woman in a weak moment, he is done for this life, as far as his spirituality goes." Unfortunately, this very thing happened a short time afterwards. All beginners, no matter who they are, have to avoid the company of persons of the other sex (men or women) and always consciously to think thoughts which are opposed to the ideas of sex and their own and others' man- or woman-form. Especially in the beginning the sex-instinct grows in strength in many people. When you water and manure the soil nicely, the weeds will grow nicely too, along with the plants you really wish to grow. So we have to uproot these weeds afterwards. And this we can do only if we are very, very careful as to the company we allow ourselves to be in for the first few years of our striving. Never believe yourself to be too strong to be above listening to such advice. Avoid spending time in the company of persons of the other sex, no matter how pure they may be; for before you

have attained real sublimation, culminating in the transformation of your whole being, concentration influences your sexual imagination also and makes even such pictures more vivid and living as soon as you allow your sexual instinct to be stimulated in any way. This need not be in any gross way at all. Subtle attractions, subtle forms of stimulation, are even worse than grosser forms, because the latter are more easily recognised by the beginner than the subtler ones. Many, many times I have found great carelessness in aspirants as to these points, and many have come to grief because of that.

When you feel any temptation, always say, "Mother, come up. Why stay in the lower centres?" Always try to persuade your mind. Never use violence. Speak to your mind in a cajoling way, "My mind, what a fool you are to run after enjoyment and sex! Aren't you ashamed to do it? You really should know better," etc. This is very efficacious and lessens the strain. Try to address your own mind as a witness, not identifying yourself with it in any way but always trying to stand apart and survey all its movements and desires.

There is a funny story which very aptly illustrates the effects of our carelessness regarding company etc. Once a camel just pushed its nose through the door of somebody's house. The owner first objected to this, but it said, "O I only put my nose in your room, just for a moment. Nothing more." But in fact, it slowly pushed its whole body through the door and then said when the owner objected to its presence in his room, "If you do not like my presence in your house you get out. I do not!" Lust sometimes comes in a very noble dress, in

the form of 'duty', in the form of 'compassion', in the form of 'self-abnegation', as our mind is always out to deceive us as to its true motive. Without chastity in thought, word and deed nothing can be achieved in spiritual life. The mind, as I said, always wants to do harm to us, but it patiently waits for an opportunity to do so effectively. So you should give your mind a good scolding now and then and curb it nicely. After all it is you who is the master, not the mind. Do not allow the camel to come in. If you do you will have great difficulty in making it go again.

"O my mind, thou dost not know how to cultivate the land, and such a fine plot is lying fallow. Thou couldst raise crops of gold on it if thou wouldst but till it." Always say "Why remain down, Mother, (Cosmic Energy) do come up." There should be a deliberate shifting of Consciousness. The Cosmic Energy usually lies 'coiled-up' at the lowest Chakra or Yogic centre, so near the sexual parts. So it should be made to move up higher. Sometimes it is very helpful if the aspirant just touches the higher centres of Consciousness (head, heart, etc.) with his Rudraksha-beads while doing Japam. Feeling the centre physically makes it easier for him to fix his consciousness there.

If the thought of any woman comes, associate it at once with the form of the Holy Mother or with that of your own mother. Kill the sexual thought at once. Do not permit yourself to be in the company of women. In Tantra there is an instruction which says that all woman-form should be associated with Uma and all man-forms with Shiva. And this is of great value in spiritual life. But the beginner cannot do it effec-

tively; so he should be careful about moving in the company of persons of the other sex and talking to them.

There is another effective means of counteracting the influence of some sexual thought. Just think of some woman who never knew what sex-life was; or of some man who never knew what sex-life was. This is most important. Think of some Great One, man or woman, who from his or her very birth was a personification of sexual purity in all its aspects. Dwell on that thought daily, making it form a part of your spiritual practices.

VII

Our object in life should be to transcend the male-principle as well as the female-principle and to go where there is absolutely no sex. On lower planes of life we see male and female, on higher planes, no sex and no form at all. So there is a verse which says, "Parvati is my mother. The Great Lord Shiva is my father. All devotees are my friends and relations, the whole world is my native-land."

Sankaracharya says, "O Shiva, Thou art my Atman. The Divine Mother is my mind. My Pranas are Thy attendants, and this my body is Thy abode. All these sense-contacts are part of Thy worship. My sleep is like remaining in Samadhi in Thee."

And elsewhere he says, "wherever I go, I am just going round Thee. All the words that I speak are like hymns to Thee. And all forms of ac-

tivities I engage myself in, O Lord, are Thy worship."

Another instruction says, "Keep the eye distant when you see a woman." The same holds good in the case of a woman naturally when she sees a man.

Girish Babu once said, "Naren became so vast that he could not be caught in Maya's net, and Nag Mahashaya became so very small that he dropped through the meshes of Maya." So our task is somehow or other to get out of this, to transcend, to go beyond this Maya, this whole phenomenal world, and reach the Reality. And this can never be done without chastity in thought, word and deed. Unity, ultimate oneness, cannot be reached, so long as one remains physically and mentally tied to duality. There are some who say, "Lord I am Thine." Others again say, "Lord I am thyself." There is a difference in expression, but the ultimate goal is one and the same, when one clearly understands the standpoint from which both are said. In both cases only the Lord remains as the sole actor and agent. The ego disappears. And this should be our aim and should be attained by us all.

Re-incarnation is in no way the most vital point. What is of great importance is to try to get full illumination in this very life. None is forced to follow the spiritual path, but all those who have decided to do so. We should learn to be tremendously sincere and one-pointed and not allow ourselves to be swayed by indecision and doubt.

LOYALTY

BY PROF. K. S. SRIKANTAN, M.A.

[Mr. Srikantan writes on loyalty as idealised in ancient Indian literature and practised by the subjects of Indian States throughout the ages. While the Sanskrit extract printed at the opening of the June issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* stresses the high ethical standard which the ruler was expected to keep for himself, these paragraphs give us an account of the sense of loyalty which such an exalted ideal of kingship evoked in the minds of the subjects of the State.]

I

"The King is the foremost among men as Agnihotra is the foremost among the Vedic sacrifices, as the Gayatri is the foremost among the metres and the ocean the foremost among the waters."

(Mahabharata, Santi Parva).

THE one outstanding message of Indian history to the world is the message of loyalty. The Hindus as a nation are proverbial for their profound sense of loyalty. It is the peculiar pride of the Hindus to have successfully kept up to this ideal from the days of the Rigveda up to the present moment. The revolutionary slogans like "Down with the King" and "Down with Authority" are foreign to India's tradition and genius. In fact, if there is one outstanding lesson that forces itself upon the student of Indian culture, it is her unique sense of loyalty. In spite of the fact that she has had numerous ruling dynasties of foreign origin it can never be said of her people that they ever organised any revolution to overthrow the power of the king. Revolutions like that of the Mauryas or the Sungas or the Kanvas were the creation of a few wily persons. The people themselves never dared to interfere with royal authority. To whichever community a man belonged, the moment he was made King, he could surely count on the loyalty

of his subjects. Says the Sukraniti, "It is the office rather than the personal sovereign that is sacred." The welfare of the monarch and his family was a matter of grave concern to the people. In the Ramayana we have several incidents indicating the extraordinary feelings of the people at the Royal fortunes and misfortunes. In fact the banishment of Rama upsets the people more than his own parents. Thousands of his subjects who were determined to follow Rama to Dandakaranya were persuaded to return home with great difficulty. Anasuya was only echoing the voice of the people when she asked Dushyanta: "What country has been made such as has its people pining through separation from you?" Occasions like the birth of a prince, his coronation and marriage were taken advantage of by the people to give expression to their maximum sense of regard and love.

To a careful student of Indian Dharma-Shastras and Smritis, this loyalty on the part of the Hindu causes no wonder. Though in other countries there was a vague feeling that the king was of Divine origin, in India it was considered a fact.

Says Valmiki: "The very Gods enter into the person of the king, and so the king becomes a great Deity."

This idea that the king is a representative of God on earth is current even to-day. To the people the king is an aspect of Maha Vishnu. On the occasion of the procession of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, during the Dasara celebrations, one can easily see thousands prostrating before the royal elephant and sending forth their prayers for his blessings. "The very Gods," says the Mahabharata, "do not disregard a righteous king who is truly an eternal God."

To understand clearly this extraordinary sense of loyalty one has to go back to the origin of kingship in India. According to the Mahabharata there existed a sort of 'golden age' wherein existed neither sovereignty nor kings; neither chastisement nor chastiser. All men lived righteous lives, but in course of time greed and avarice set in. Men became corrupt. The Gods were alarmed. The extinction of pious rites and sacrifices on earth threatened them with distress and fall. They therefore approached Maha Vishnu and said: "Indicate O God, that one among mortals who deserves to have superiority over the rest."

Vishnu, finding the mortals unfit, produced out of his own energy a son named Virajas. But the dynasty founded by Virajas came to grief when Vena, one of his descendants, became a slave of his passions. The higher powers intervened once again. The sceptre was entrusted to the son of Vena. The Gods and the Rishis charged him to discipline himself, to maintain and enforce the Vedic religion and precepts, to persevere in righteousness, to look at all creatures with an equal eye and never to act

from caprice. Thus the king according to the Hindu Sastras is no ordinary mortal. He is a celestial being.

"He is Indra; he is Yama; he is Dharma. He sustains and supports everything. He assumes different forms. He becomes Agni, Aditya, Mrityu, Vaisravana and Yama on different occasions. Like Agni or fire he burns sinful offenders with his fierce energy. Like Aditya or the sun, he observes the doings of all and promotes the general good. Like Mrityu or Death he destroys in his wrath hundreds of wicked men with their kinsmen. Like Yama or the God of Destiny he restrains the wicked by severe punishment and favours the righteous with reward. Again, like Vaisravana he rewards valuable services, and fines offenders."

The Sutra and Smriti literature insist upon everyone offering his due share of homage to the king. A mortal who slights a king loses the fruit of all his gifts, libations and offerings to the Manes. Everyone who desires prosperity should worship the king as he himself would worship Indra. Loyalty to the king promised happiness in this world and salvation in the next. "He who thinks of injuring the king comes to grief here and is consigned to Hell hereafter". The king was looked upon as the very heart of the people. Says the Kural:—"Just as all creatures live by their confidence in rain, so also the subjects live by their confidence in the just rule of the king. Even the very seasons were supposed to follow the dictates of the king." The same book lays down in another place: "The king's property is sacrosanct. He who appropriates it meets the des-

truction like a deer touching upon poison and sinks senseless into a deep hell of eternal gloom and infamy."

Obedience to the king was felt more as a privilege rather as an obligation. "The tree that bends easily has to suffer no torture; the wood that bends is not heated." So men should bend before the powerful. Says Gautama: "The spiritual life, the moral order of the world and the existence of all beings depend on the king." The king had to be approached with great respect. Like men who warm themselves before a fire, let those who stand before the king be not too near and not too far. These citations from the Smritis and Srutis are amply supported by the foreign chroniclers. Magasthenes, Fahien and Hieun-Tsang refer to the regard that people had to their sovereigns. Even today we have the custom of giving Rajadakshina in our marriages as token of loyalty. The message of Indian history to the world at the present moment is the message of loyalty.

II

This deep sense of loyalty was never taken advantage of by kings. On the other hand this supreme confidence the subjects reposed on the king made his position more responsible and therefore more onerous. If the people looked upon the king as God, the king looked upon the country as his God. "The king protects the world: if he protects the world justly, then justice will protect him." Soon after his accession the following significant words were addressed to the king: "To thee this State is given; thou art the director and regulator. To thee this State is given

for agriculture, for well-being, for prosperity and for development." If the monarch was looked upon as God, he also looked after his subjects as God Himself.

The King was expected to look after not only the material but also the moral welfare of the people. Asvapati, King of Kekaya, says with legitimate pride: "In my kingdom there is no thief, no coward, no drunkard, no man without the sacrificial fire set up in his house, no one uneducated, no adulterer, much less an adulteress."

The monarchs of ancient India used the theory of 'divine right' more to serve the people than to rule over them. They realised that there was no 'divine right' to rule wrongly. The chief duty of the king was to please the people; for the very word 'Raja' means 'one who pleases.' In the Hathigumpha inscription of king Kharavela of Kalinga we are told that Kharavela pleased his thirty-five hundred thousand subjects. Asoka seems to have looked upon his subjects as his own children. Just as children have the privilege of approaching the father wherever he be, so also the subjects of Asoka had the privilege of seeing Asoka wherever he was.

Kalidasa makes Dushyanta accept his obligation as a king to protect the weak, the widow and the orphan. He was a veritable father to the fatherless. Somadeva rightly asks: "How can he be a king who does not protect his subjects?" The greatest sacrifice a king could perform was guarding the welfare of his subjects. The welfare of his subjects was his own welfare. The Kings left

the people so contented that a revolution like that of the French or the Russian Revolution was almost an impossibility. If the history of India is replete with instances of profound loyalty, it has also to be admitted

that the kings richly deserved it. Of India it can truly be said:

The kings are by God appointed.
And damned are those that dare resist
Or touched the "Lord's Anointed."

THE REFUGE

BY S. V. SRINIVASAN. B.A., B.L.

[Sri Ramanuja, the great philosopher saint of South India, has composed three devotional prose lyrics in Sanskrit which are an unfailing source of inspiration to all devout Sri Vaishnavas. The following is an adaptation of one of those lyrics, known as Saranagati Gadya. The great Acharya's original composition, replete with transcendental imagery, majestic long-drawn cadence and exquisite literary embellishment, so consummately suited to express the numinous, defies a rendering into any other tongue. The following tentative adaptation of it by Mr. Srinivasan is offered to our readers who have no knowledge of Sanskrit. It may be also noted incidentally that the aspirations of the superb devotional heart, ardently uttered in this lyric, is so universal in its tone that one notes echoes of it in the words of almost all prominent saints and sages of both the East and West.—The Editors.]

I

O my mother ! The Mother of the universe ! I humbly prostrate at Thy holy lotus feet, resplendent with the brilliant splendour and ineffable beauty of the lotuses in the garden, which is Thy sacred temple. Thy beautiful neck is adorned with the lotus garland.

Thou art full of the benign holy virtues which are associated with the holy name of Sri Bhagavan Narayana, Thy Divine Consort, with whom Thou art in eternal unity participating in His Divine nature and essence. O Queen of Devas ! May Thou graciously be pleased to lift me up to Thy Divine bosom, the sole and secure Refuge of such as those are forlorn and helpless like me.

May I be imbued, through Thy Grace and intercession, with the fervent spirit of consecrating my whole being to the sacred service of our Lord, at His holy lotus feet, and to seek therein my sole and secure Ref-

uge. May that spirit, with His infinite Grace, be for ever and ever strengthened by the unbounded faith, intense devotion and love, and by the true knowledge and wisdom of His eternal Truth. Gathering the experience of that Love, infinite, amazing and divine, may the zeal in His service continue in me unabated, without respite, in all His manifold manifested forms, under all vicissitudes of my life, and may I be enabled to realise that the Divine service is the only aim worth living for, the goal of all desire and my salvation; may I also seek Thee heart and soul, vowed unto Thee, drinking the Amrita of Thy sacred Presence.

The Lord says : So be it—and Thou, shalt, verily, be blessed by that Love.

O Lord, Thy nature is the supreme abode of all the perfections and excellences and the infinite benign virtues and attributes. Thou art free from all blemish or taint. Thou remainest unaffected by the finite limi-

tations of beings. Thou art the absolute Reality. Thou art wisdom supreme and bliss. Thy form is wonderful, pure, holy, perfect in glory and majesty and unaffected by Prakriti (Nature). Thy Divine person is the supreme treasure store of all inspiring, ennobling and exalted virtues such as supreme goodness, supreme beauty, brilliant splendour, and perpetual youthfulness. Thou art the vast ocean whence flow the living streams of all holiness, virtue, wisdom, strength, might, power, lustre, freedom, sweetness, tenderness, love, friendship, sincerity, equanimity, mercy, dignity, generosity, dexterity, steadfastness, forbearance, gratitude, hospitality, majesty, valour, heroism, and other pure attributes. Thy will is Truth. Thy will is supreme and it will be done.

In sweet harmony with the wonderful, ineffable beauty of Thy Form, Thou art bedecked with wondrous ornaments of untold beauty and brilliance, and Thy sweet and calm countenance is fragrant with divine aroma. Thou art adorned with splendid ornaments of amazing, wondrous beauty such as diadem crested with jewels and gems, with *makaras* and *kundalas* (on Thy well-shaped ears), with necklaces of pearls and sapphires, with bejewelled anklets, bracelets, and waist-chains, with the *Srivatsa* mark and *Kaustubha* on Thy chest. Thou art dressed in costly Pitambara. Thou wieldest in Thy arms mighty weapons of untold power, the conchshell, the club, and the sword and the *Sarnga* (a special bow of Vishnu so called) and the discus, with Sri Lakshmi, Thy Divine Spouse, in eternal union with thee and participating in Thy Divine Essence and nature

with all the holy benign excellences of Thy attributes. Thou art Lord of Nila Devi and mother Earth, of similar nature and essence.

O Lord! The galaxy of Thy innumerable celestial attendants headed by *Adishesha*, *Vishvakshena* and *Garuda*, holy exemplars of Thy Divine virtues, are ever waiting at Thy holy lotus feet in blissful worship, finding their souls' delight in nothing but the willing fulfilment of Thy Laws and commandments in controlling guiding and sustaining the destinies and activities of the cosmos, according to Thy will and their appointed sacred duties. Thou art the sovereign Overlord of Sri Vaikunta, Thy Heavenly Kingdom, vast in extent, boundless and abounding in unlimited joy, peace and bliss—the Eternal Region where Thy glory and majesty are ever manifest.

Thy Form is beyond the ken of sight and mind of even the greatest of Yogins. Thou art the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all beings, living and lifeless; to Thee Thy works are as if child's play. Thou art the supreme Para-Brahman (the Over-soul), the omnipotent. Thy will is truth; Thy will is supreme and it will be done. Thy desire is truth. O Purushottama! Foremost of men! Lord of men and Devas! O Narayana! Lord of Sri Lakshmi!

Thou art the ocean of infinite mercy, supreme glory and majesty; the august repose of all who seek Thee, without distinction or difference; the supreme comfort and consolation of the afflicted; the hope of the faithful; the sole and eternal witness of the doings of the multitude of living beings, animate and inanimate; the vivifying spirit; and the "unchanging

principle of the changing universe," the Primordial source and support of the worlds; the Supreme Master; the supreme abode of all excellences and perfections which mark Thee off from everything else; the eternal Truth; the supreme will and desire; the incomparable; the *Kalpaka* of the needy; the true companion in tribulation! Lord of Sri, O Narayana! My Master! The surest and safest Refuge of the helpless and the forlorn, I in all reverence and humility prostrate at Thy holy lotus feet and pray, "Make me Thine, my life, my all, my God!"

Father, mother, wife, sons and daughters,

Friends and relatives, Gurus gold and silver,

Riches and charms of the world—
Holy Writ and duties—renouncing these, even, O Lord!

I seek my uttermost repose at Thy holy lotus

Feet which measured the three worlds at one stretch.

Thou art my mother; Thou, my father,

Thou art my kith and kin; Thou my Teacher.

Thou art wisdom; Thou art my wealth

Thou art my All; O God of Gods! "Guru of Gurus; more

To reverence and adore.

Than all which is adorable and high;

How, in the wide worlds, there Should any others share Thy majesty?

Therefore, with body bent

And reverent intent

I praise and serve and seek Thee

Asking grace

As father to a son

As friend to friend, as one

Who loveth to his lover (Turn Thy Face)"

Forgive me, O Lord! my sins of commission and omission by thought, word or deed—the sins of blasphemy and sacrilege against Thee and Thy Holy Saints, and all other grievous and venial sins I am guilty of in the past and the present, O Lord! from all the sins and evil temptations thereto now and for ever.

Forgive me for my age-long abysmal ignorance which veils the bright rays of Thy Wisdom's Lamp and distorts my correct vision of Thy Form and true knowledge and understanding of Thy Divine Nature and the unreal nature of the things of the earth and flesh to which I am bound.

Deliver me, O Lord! from the thralldom of Thy Maya, Thy Inscrutable maid, who with her threefold qualities (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) subtly acts, dragging me down the course of Immemorial Time, along the mighty current of the beginningless and unrelenting Karma, throwing her veil of mystery on the resplendent effulgence of Thy Form, enslaving me in the desires of the flesh, entangling me in the sense passions and desires which beguile and blind me to the bright rays of Thy Divine Light. I pray to Thee, O God! "Make me Thine, my life, my all."

"Of these four

O Prince of Ind! highest, nearest and best

That last (Jnani) is, the devout soul, wise

Upon the 'one'; dear above all am I To Him; and he is dearest to me!

All four are good and seek Me; but Thine own

The true of heart, the faithful—
stayed on Me.

Taking me as their uttermost blessedness

They are not 'mine' but I, even I myself;

At the end of many births, to Me they come,

Yet hard is the wise Mahatma to find,

That man who sayeth "All is Vasudeva."

Make me one of such devoted souls, as thou hast declared above.

Hast Thou not said, "O Partha! only by single-hearted devotion and love the Supreme Para Purusha be known".

Again, "Only by fullest service, perfect faith and uttermost surrender, am I known."

"By Supreme faith Thou comest to Me."

Pray, grant me the spirit of faith, wisdom and love divine which Thou declarest above,—Grant me the strength of will to pass my days in the experience of that Love.

Pray, I beseech Thee, kindle in my heart the undying flames of the fires of unbounded faith, true knowledge, intense devotion and love to Thee.

May the spirit rise higher and higher to the attainment of that faith, knowledge and love, seeking nought else but the realisation of Thy Truth, the unfoldment of Thy mystery, and to find in Thee my soul's delight, in ministering to Thy sacred service—'a service worthy to be embraced and always to be wished for, which leadeth to joy everlasting and the supreme good—and to serve Thee for Love's sole end.'

II

Endowed with the fervent spirit and desire of seeking my sacred service, devoid of it though ye be, a prey to the

temptations of sin and evil, distracting Thy mind from the path of virtue, though ye hast sinned against Me, though ye hast offended against My Holy Saints, though ye be guilty of the most venial of sins, though ye be beguiled and deceived by all the causes and effects of Thy ego (*ahankara*) which blind Thee to the rays of My light, though ye be distracted by the manifold causes and effects and actions prompted by the natural tendencies which make thee cleave with inordinate affection to the things of the earth and flesh, though ye be passion-bound and entangled in the meshes of sense-desires, their causes and effects, though ye be enmeshed in the folds of Prakriti, though ye be fettered in thy endeavours to cultivate the spirit of love and devotion to Me, and to seek My Service, by all the pleasures and pains due to causes threefold, *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic* and *adhidaivic*,—causes which tempt thee with vain hopes, inducing thee to do vain deeds, to tread the evil way, cheating thy mind with the vain and various shows of the world—the unresting foe of faith, wisdom and love of My way, My Truth and My Life—whatsoever may be thy other troubles and impediments in Thy march in My Way, if thou wilt be in spirit fervent, in will constant and in prayer insistent, surrender thyself to Me. By My grace and mercy, the mists of thy difficulties shall melt away, and thou shalt verily be blessed with the strength of will, confirmed in faith, knowledge and love to come into My Presence, and to serve at My holy lotus feet—then, indeed, shalt thou, with sense divine, see the glory of My Form, face to face, and the vast supreme glory and majesty shall be revealed to thee.

By My grace and mercy, and My infinite Love for the devout souls, thou shalt be enabled to pass in glad peace to My Heaven, walking in the way of utmost blessedness and love, accepted by Me as one of my devoted faithful servants, to come into My being, to cleave to me, to serve My will, loving ceaselessly My Supreme Self for love's sole end, thinking nought else but my sacred service as the only aim worth living for as the goal of all Desire—thy salvation.

If thou shalt so become drawn to Me and seek Me, thou shalt be freed from all troubles and obstacles, *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic* and *adhidaivic*, and adoring Me, ceaselessly seeking to minister My service, and understanding the spirit of absolute surrender of thy self to Me, thou shalt be saved and thou shalt find thy soul's delight in My Love as the sole end, perfected in faithful service; and by true knowledge, inspired by My Love above all things, thou shalt come to the Refuge supreme of thy soul—and realise in full My Glory, My Mystery in all eternity.

Thou shalt be freed from all the troubles and pains, *adhyatmic*, *adhibhautic*, and *adhidaivic*—ever adoring Me, ceaselessly seeking to minister to My sacred Service, ever praying to find thy uttermost repose in Me.

Go and reside in sacred Srirangam in peace and happiness till thy eyelids close in death. At the hour of thy death, with eyes and heart fixed on Me, with sense divine, keeping to the vows of sanctity and the sacraments, not swerving an inch from the way of My Truth, meditating upon Me, worshipping Me, 'cast aside lightly thy grab of flesh as thy worn-out robes,' its gross and subtle elements, in joy and peace.

Let not thy doubting mind waver.

My words are infallible Truth.

Never hath Ram spoken twice.

I never decline to grant the prayer of the devout heart which cries, "Lord! make me thine."

I shall dispel the fear of all beings, promise true.

"Let go those—rules and writ duties. Fly to me. Make Me thy single Refuge. I will free thee from all sins. Be of good cheer."

Take these my words. Rest in peace untossed by doubts, strong in the wisdom and faith of My Truth.

III

Grant me O Lord! the grace of Thy Sacred Service and make me even now what Thou promiseth at the end of my life.

Om Tat Sat.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture: By D. T. Suzuki. Published by the Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani Buddhist College, Shōwa XIII. Kyoto, Japan. Pages, 288.

The writings of Dr. Suzuki have been mainly responsible for making the English reading public interested in the life and ideals inculcated by Mahayana Buddhism,

especially in the form it took in China and Japan under the new familiar name of Zen Buddhism. While the previous volumes of Dr. Suzuki are mainly concerned with the religious, philosophical and mystical aspects of this school, and are as such specially addressed to students of comparative religion, his present work is concerned with the life of the Japanese people and their

culture, and therefore appealing to a much wider public.

The essential religious content of Zen is the same as of all forms of Mahayana Buddhism. It proposes to take man to the true spirit of Buddha, which consists in Prajna ('transcendental wisdom') and Karma (love). Prajna gives one insight into the reality of things beyond their phenomenality. When one attains to that, one understands the fundamental significance of life and of the world, and ceases from worrying about merely individual interests and sufferings. And then Karuna or love, which in Buddhism extends even to inanimate objects, is able to spread over all things, as the mind is now unobstructed by its selfish encumbrances.

Zen is, however, somewhat peculiar in its methods of expression and discipline. It has a distrust of the intellect, as it holds that ignorance and Karuna arise from our unconditioned surrender to the intellect. Hence Zen disdains the intellectual mediums of expression, namely, logic and words, and remains speechless when asked to express itself. Its method of discipline, too, is not through lectures and closely reasoned out philosophies. It is entirely practical and intuitional. Often the method may appear even crude and absurd. When a Zen master is questioned on some fundamental problems of life, he may sometimes keep quiet, or utter two or three irrelevant and absurd words, or strike the questioner, or do something else that looks apparently nonsensical and crude. But if the master and disciple are of the true quality, it will have the effect of illumining the disciple's mind.

From this spiritual outlook, then arises a certain general atmosphere, in Zen, having the following characteristic trends of thought and feelings towards things of the world: (1) Its concentration on the spirit leads to the neglect of form; (2) it detects in form of any description the presence of the spirit; (3) it holds negligence of attention to form as more experience of the spirit, as perfection of form is likely to attract one's attention to form and not to the inner truth itself; (4) the deprecation of formalism tends to make the spirit stand in all its nakedness or aloneness or solitariness; (5) this transcendental aloofness or aloneness of the absolute is the spirit of

asceticism, which means the doing away with every possible trace of non-essentials; (6) aloneness translated in terms of the worldly life in non-attachment; (7) when aloneness is absolute in the Buddhist sense of the word, it deposits itself in all things from the meanest weeds of the field to the highest form of nature.

Dr. Suzuki shows with the help of ample illustrations how these ideals have given its characteristic features to Japanese art, both poetic and pictorial. Japanese poetry is characterised by intense love of Nature and delight in its beauties. But this love of Nature, being elevated by Zen influences, is permeated by a sense of simplicity, frugality, straight-forwardness, virility, and unselfishness. Objective Nature and human nature are recognised as one, not in a mathematical sense, but in the sense that Nature lives in us and we in Nature. The representative poet-artists of Japan feel no opposition between nature and man or between 'the restless movement on the surface of life' and 'the eternal tranquillity seen through and behind change.' The real flower is enjoyed only when one lives with it, in it—when even a sense of identity is no more there. This feature of Japanese poetry is largely due to a momentaristic tendency, a characteristic native to Japanese psychology reinforced in a large measure by the Buddhist *Welt-anschauung*. Beauty is something momentary and even fleeting, and if it is not appreciated while it is fully charged with life, it becomes a memory, and its liveliness is entirely lost. Thus beauty has no past, no future, but only the present. You hesitate, turn your head, and there is no more beauty. The morning glory must be admired at its first awakening as the sun rises: so it is with the lotus. Thus the Japanese people have learnt from Zen teaching how to love Nature, how to be in touch with the life running through all objects, including human beings.

In the field of painting too Zen has led the Japanese artists to concentrate more on the spirit than on the form, and to develop a technique appropriate to this end. "He who deliberates and moves his brush intent on making a picture misses...the art of painting." Draw a bamboo for ten years, become a bamboo, then forget all about bamboo when you are drawing. Thus an artist must place himself at the mercy

of inspiration, more with a rhythmic movement of the spirit which resides in the object as well as himself, and have a firm hold of the spirit and yet be not conscious of the fact. This is a direct result of the Zen insistence on intuition and its disregard of logic and words in spiritual discipline.

'One of the characteristic features of Japanese art is the one-corner style,' which is psychologically associated with the Japanese painter's 'thrifty brush tradition' of retaining the barest possible number of lines or strokes which go to represent forms on silk or paper. By painting a simple fishing boat in the midst of the rippling waters, the artist awakens the sense of vastness together with those of peace and contentment—the Zen sense of the Alone. With the figure of a solitary bird on a dead branch, he helps one to withdraw oneself into the inner life and spread out all its rich treasures ungrudgingly before the eyes.

A symmetry, which means going against the conventional or rather geometrical rules, is another feature of Japanese art. This is the result of the Zen way of looking at things—that is to view the individual as perfect in itself and at the same time embodying in itself the nature of totality which belongs to the One.

The tea-cult is another peculiar feature of Japanese cultural life when the influence of the Zen ideal of aestheticism and asceticism is visible. Tea keeps the mind fresh and vigilant, but does not intoxicate, and it plays an important part in the life of Buddhist scholars and monks. The tea-cult centers round a group of people sipping tea in a small unostentatious hut furnished with austere simplicity. The hut may be in a bamboo grove or under a tree, with rocks, plants, bushes and streams outside. Inside the room flowers are arranged, the necessary tea-utensils spread, and water in a kettle allowed to boil on a hearth of charcoal and produce that whistling sound similar to what pine trees produce when the wind passes through them. Inside the room there is only subdued light, while the fragrance of burning incense helps to soothe the nerves. In such a setting of austere simplicity men of all positions in life gather free from all conventionalities, for the time forget all worldly cares and accidental distinctions of life, and sip tea.

talking of art or philosophy. To the Japanese mind this simple ceremony is full of mystical significance associated with Zen. It stands for the Zen ideal of poverty without indigence, and aestheticism without being divorced from asceticism. The various elements that meet one's senses in the tea room go to purify the senses, and when these are cleansed, the mind itself is cleansed. "The tea-cult," says a tea-master, "is after all a spiritual discipline, and my aspiration for every hour of the day is not to depart from the spirit of the tea-cult, which is by no means a matter of mere entertainment."

But by far the most remarkable part of Zen influence on Japanese culture is seen in the leavening effect it had on the Samurai, the Japanese warriors, and their ideal of swordsmanship. At first it may look strange that Buddhism, a religion that insists so much on love and non-violence, should at all have an appeal to a warrior caste like the Japanese Samurai, so noted for their love of fighting and bloodshed. In the first place, the simplicity, directness, practicality, the ascetic spirit, and freedom from the tendency to philosophising rendered Zen congenial to the nature of the unsophisticated, stoical, and practically-minded Samurai. There was a time in Japanese history when the flower of its youth either went to priesthood or to soldiery, and it was the spiritual co-operation of these two, under the common inspiration of Zen, that created what is known to the Japanese as *Bushido*, 'the way of the warrior.' This concept represents the dignity of the Samurai, which is constituted of loyalty, filial piety, and benevolent spirit. To fulfil these duties two things are required. These are moral asceticism and readiness to face death, and it is here that Zen co-operates with the Samurai's bloody profession. The Samurai must have the idea of death vividly before his mind, and consider every day as his last. "In *Bushido* honour comes first," says a text. "Therefore every morning and every evening, have the idea of death vividly impressed in your mind. When your determination to die at any moment is thoroughly established, you attain to perfect mastery of *Bushido*, your life will be faultless, and your duties are fully discharged." Another text says:

"When you are to measure swords with your enemy, be ready at once to lay down your life before him. As long as you are the least concerned with your escaping safely, you are doomed." The notion of death, on the one hand, makes one's thought extend beyond the limitations of this finite life, and, on the other hand, screws it up so as to take daily life seriously. It was therefore natural for every sober-minded Samurai to approach Zen, which helped him to master death, without appealing to learning, moral training or philosophy. Hence Zen, with its ideal of acting effectively without looking backward, became the religion of the Samurai warrior.

The same elevating influence of Zen is seen in the Samurai warrior's attitude towards the sword and swordsmanship. The sword was not so much a weapon of murder as an instrument of spiritual self-discipline. The swordsmiths made swords with a religious attitude of mind, and dressed them in ceremonial suits. For the Samurai, the sword was his soul. To his mind it represented on the one hand, the force that destroyed anything that opposed the will of the owner, and on the other, the spirit of sacrificing all the impulses that arose from the instinct of self-preservation. In fulfilling the first function it represented the spirit of patriotism and militarism, and might mean destruction pure and simple. It had therefore to be controlled and consecrated by the second function which represented annihilating things that lie in the way of peace, justice, progress, and humanity. The Samurai warrior therefore carried two swords—the longer one for attack and defence, and the shorter one for self-destruction when necessary.

The Samurai was to train himself with utmost zeal in the art of swordsmanship. This training consisted not only in becoming skilled in the use of the sword but in acquiring a certain moral and spiritual equipment. And this equipment consisted in attaining to the Buddhist ideal of men-

tal control, known as *Mushin* or 'no-mindness.' It is the capacity to keep the mind awake without leaving it abide anywhere. The mind is not then concentrated on any object, nor is it watched. It attains to the state of Immovable Intelligence or the state of remaining for ever tranquil and yet mobile all the time. This ideal is applied to swordsmanship. The utmost degree of perfection is gained when your mind is no more troubled with how to strike the opponent and yet knows how to use the sword in the most effective way when you stand before him. You just strike him down, forgetting that you have a sword in your hand and that somebody is standing against you. No idea of personality is there—all is empty: the opponent, yourself, the striking sword, the sword-holding arms; not only that, even the idea of emptiness is also done away with. From this absolute emptiness there is the most wonderful display of activities. Accordingly the final certificate given to a sword-master contains nothing but a circle representing a mirror which alludes to the Buddhist philosophy of 'great-perfect-mirror-wisdom' or the Immovable wisdom mentioned before.

We have given above a brief resume of some of the principal ideas within the book, so as to make our readers interested in Dr. Suzuki's delightful book. We generally know of the Japanese people as clever imitators, as producers of cheap and shoddy goods, and as soldiers of unimpeachable bravery. Their conduct in China for the last few years has also won for them world-wide unpopularity as blood-thirsty imperialists. But we know very little of the deep spiritual springs of Japanese character and national genius. Dr. Suzuki's book, so informative and delightful to read, gives us a peep into this unknown region of Japanese culture. It will be a corrective to the black picture of the Japanese, which their own statesmen and militarists have helped to create in the minds of people all the world over.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, Report for 1938.

The Report of the above Institution is a record of the sincere and persistent efforts made by the management towards imparting a right type of education, to the present generation of students, through different departments of its activities, viz., (1) The Home proper, (2) The Residential High School, (3) The Industrial School, and (4) Ramakrishna Mission High School, Tyagarayanagar, Madras. The aim kept in view in all its educational activities is the happy blending of scientific culture, discipline and power of organisation on the one hand and the spirit of renunciation and service and introspective habit on the other.

The following is the brief report of the different branches of its activities:—

Home Proper: It provides facilities for the boarding of poor deserving students. At the beginning of the year there were 176 students. During the year, 64 students withdrew and 70 students were newly admitted. Thus the total strength at the end of the year was 182. Sixteen students passed S.S.L.C., three passed Intermediate, two B.A., and B.Sc., (Pass), four B.A., and B.Sc., (Hons) and three Licentiate automobile engineering examination.

The important aspects of Home-training such as Tutorial guidance by resident wardens, including a Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission, physical training and games, garden work, hobbies, regular music classes by an expert teacher, moral and religious instruction and celebration of religious festivals, were stressed properly with a view to build up the character of the boys. Mention may be made of the novel experiment by way of transferring to a committee of 15 representatives of the students the task of supervising the domestic work of the Home, such as care of property, keeping the building neat and clean, part of annual white-washing and painting and minor repairs. This association of captains under the name of Sevapravina Samiti worked well and it was conducive to the manifestation of some best traits of character in the boys.

Residential High School: The school is run within the precincts of the Home. It has certain admirable features besides its residential character—small classes, simplicity in furniture and dress, laboratory plan of teaching in several subjects, compulsory course of Sanskrit up to Form IV and manual training as an integral part of education up to Form VI. Extra-curricular activities, such as, Seva Sangham, Literary Union, conducting a manuscript Magazine, and excursions, are a few of the notable features of its educational programme.

Industrial School: The automobile Engineering course is the objective of this section and it trains students for the L.A.E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering) Diploma. The course extends for five years, of which first four years are devoted to obtaining a sound theoretical and intensive training in all branches of automobile Engineering, and the fifth year is spent exclusively in practical work in the Jubilee workshop. The annual examinations were conducted as usual by an outside body, approved by the Industries Department of the Govt. of Madras. The workshop is fully equipped with appliances and the practical training given in the fifth year equips a student to specialise in any branch of Automobile Engineering, after one leaves the Home.

The Ramakrishna Mission High School, Tyagarayanagar: The High school at Mambalam which had its beginning in June 1932, continued to prosper, reaching in rapid strides with a strength of 1838 in three of its branches. The boys' Hostel attached to the school continued to be located in a rented house. It is under the direction of a Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission.

General Finance: The total receipts of the Home, apart from that of the school at Mambalam, during the year was Rs. 51,573-14-9 and the total expenditure on all the sections amounted to Rs. 51,946-6-9, resulting in a deficit of Rs. 373-8-0.

In addition to the Government grant and interests form endowments, the Home has yet to find annually Rs. 20,000 by way of subscriptions and donations to keep it running on the present lines with its hostels and schools. The management fervently

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SYNTHESIS IN RELIGION

I

Just as there is on the physical side of every living being the biological urge to assimilate nutritive substances drawn from Nature and to develop the co-ordinated self-initiating entity which we call the organism, so also there is on the mental side of an advanced organism like man a psychological urge to arrange, co-ordinate and assimilate continually the knowledge gained from the historical and environmental setting. In advanced stages of thought in man this impulse expresses itself as deliberation, comparison, selection, discrimination and valuation of the data presented to the mind. Here is the genesis of culture. The unquenchable curiosity of man to understand his own reality and that of the phenomena that encompass him goads him on to find answers for his long and wistful enquiries. He therefore scrutinizes and analyses the objects presented to him and founds various sciences. But, dissatisfied by the inadequacy of this process to understand and harmonise the entire field of experience, man turns to philosophies, which are substantially based on the sciences. The progress of knowledge is thus carried onward by the synthetic and analytic workings of the mind. Advanced thought and culture at these higher stages endeavour to interpret the knowledge gained in various fields by instituting generalizations that are capable of explaining the partial knowledge and experience of man by co-ordinating them into a self-elucidating scheme. This is the function of philosophy, which thus becomes a fulfilment of science.

Since, however, the tendency of philosophy as well as of science is to base their findings on the data supplied by the senses alone, the synthesis of these departments of knowledge cannot be clean of the defect of incompleteness. Religion, although it is almost choked by the hard shell of centuries of accretions, in so far as it rests upon a super-sensuous knowledge, corroborated by the experience of certain specialised minds, affords a more comprehensive synthesis that may have better claims for interpreting every other fragmentary experience. Experience includes presentation, feeling and action. Ordinarily under presentation we consider only sensuous knowledge and the memory excited by it. But the possibility of super-sensuous experience, in which a reality of another order is appraised, is the very start of religious assumptions. A cultural and spiritual synthesis of experience which takes into consideration both the empirical and transcendental realms of knowledge presented by religion has, in that way, a peculiarly important value of its own. How far such a synthesis meets the intellectual and spiritual needs of man is in itself an absorbing study which we shall engage ourselves in by taking here for consideration one of those attempts, namely, the one made by Vedanta in the non-dualistic setting, as set forth in the *Sariraka-bhas-hya* of Sri Sankaracharya, which is one of the greatest attempts to interpret dialectically, supported by first-hand experience, the spiritual and philosophical implications of the principles of Vedanta adumbrated in

the Upanishads. Vedanta is religion rather than philosophy; for philosophy, according to the scientific interpretation, is a pursuit after reality in so far as it is rationally and logically apprehensible. Even value, it only discusses objectively. Vedanta is, on the other hand, a search after, and conquest of, a final value, which turns to be none other than the Reality. It therefore partakes of the character of the former more than that of the latter; religion is above all, by universal admission, the conservation of value.

II

One may have noticed in the hands of well-dressed, picturesque churchgoers, on Sunday mornings, the shining superbly bound Holy Book of Christianity. Similarly other religions too have their bibles, whether bound in a single volume or in many volumes. And all these Holy Books, —although there is a class of bibliolaters playing the role of scientific students in anatomising the Sacred Books of other religions with much critical ado and giving the suggestion to the ignorant that their Holy Book alone is, as if it were, dropped from heaven, a finished product, perfect in composition, well-constructed and arranged in chapters and verses, with unassailable unity of authorship, theme and execution as the single volume edition might proclaim,—each one of them can be dissected historically, linguistically, chronologically and even psychologically, whether they are one-volumed or multi-volumed, because each scripture forms in itself a library of information ranging very widely, and often thrown together in a higgledy-piggledy fashion, without the least

suggestion of a unity in authorship time or geography, if we are to appraise them with modern standards of historical criticism. Yet all these great books have been very potent unifying forces, which is seldom the case with any other literary survivals or monuments; for no other books have ever succeeded so much in inculcating the quality of reverence and righteousness in the minds of man and heralded into his heart light from regions inaccessible through the usual channels of knowledge. To this great power of the Scriptures the mental destiny of mankind has been committed for untold centuries. Culture and knowledge have advanced all along centering round these great Scriptures in all parts of the world; and even to-day they command authority and reverence as the veritable repositories of spiritual, ecclesiastical and civil laws and facts.

For the Hindus this great synthesizing power is invested in the Veda for several centuries. A Hindu is a Hindu, in the religious sense, only because he considers the Vedic lore as the sheet-anchor of his life; either knowingly or unknowingly, he allows his thought and action to be governed by the Vedic scheme of duties and views, on the implicit faith that that Scripture forms an irrefragable authority by its own right, and an unflickering lamp of wisdom to illumine his dark path. Even secular thoughts and duties are intelligently subordinated to the central purpose of the Veda, namely, to illuminate the ends of human life. Veda is rendered superfluous, and even void, if the knowledge revealed by it is come by through any other channel —through reason or logic, even

though they may be highly serviceable in elucidating the meaning thereof. The same principle of jurisprudence, which renders null a legal enactment if any part of it is invalidated by some defect, is applicable in the case of the Holy Writ also, according to accepted canons of criticism; they too have a purpose in every part which gives them an inherent unity despite the multiplicity and variety of their content and composition. The Veda to the Hindu is thus a vehicle of culture round which rally everything else like a cluster of satellites shining in borrowed light.

It is interesting to study how the Veda integrates the whole domain of human thought and activity by affiliating every activity and knowledge to a main purpose. Every conscious action, according to the Vedic conception, must serve some end of man positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, immediately or in the long run. This central purpose is the avoidance of pain and acquisition of happiness, as it is natural for every creature to exert in that direction. The quest of happiness in this earthly existence or in the sublimated extension of it in the heavenly regions on the one hand, and the realisation of a distinct end to be achieved out of temporariness, constitute the main idea to which the whole of Scriptural, and even secular ideals, in harmony with its spirit, address themselves. The conception of the welfare of man as an individual being, called *Abhyudaya* and an ultimate beatitude attainable by him at the stake of the cramping individuality in favour of infinity and eternity, called *Nissreyasa*, sum up the main purpose emphasised in the

Scripture. If any part of the Veda is ineffectual in shedding light over these ends—*Purusharthas*—the whole Veda is rendered invalid; but it has been pointed out by a brilliant galaxy of divine personalities and sages like Vyasa and Sri Sankara that every part of the Veda is incidentally or directly related to these ends. Every code and every good custom in India is framed into this scheme, *ex post facto*.

But in regard to facts and events lying within the province of direct sensuous knowledge, there is no need of calling in the authority or sanction from a region outside it. The Vedas are therefore principally a means and a guarantor of valid knowledge in reference to facts lying beyond the realms of empirical knowledge. Such a testimony can be authoritative, again, only by being a permanent source and not a chance composition of some casual author. Naturally, therefore, the unseen cause and course of good acts and bad acts, works prescribed and forbidden in their light, the nature of soul, worship, duty, emancipation, Reality and the like, which are invested with an unseen being, form the subject-matter of Veda, because there is no other means of throwing light upon these. The cultural capital of the Hindu race centres upon *Karmavidya* and *Brahmavidya*, the one based upon certain acts and observances or creation of specific habits in life and the other upon a supersensuous realisation of another level of knowledge—the former leading to the latter remotely and incidentally. Experience and reason may reinforce the Vedic testimony; they cannot have independent validity in illuminating the central truths taught in the Veda,

because one type of reasoning may be supplanted by another better type of reasoning; and one person's experience, being a private affair, cannot have any special claim for universal acceptance—although both may be contributory to a conviction mainly carried home by the Veda. The principles of Vedanta are entirely guaranteed by the Vedas and Vedanta is therefore called the *Aupanishada Darsana*; if anyone invokes reason and experience, it is only to corroborate the shaky faith in the Scriptures. In the last section we shall advert to the central facts of this *Aupanishada Darsana*, as it presents a synthesis in religion *par excellence*.

III

The ends of human life hinted previously are conceived variously according to situations and views engendered by them. Sacrifice, worship and knowledge constitute the main trends of thought considered in the Scriptures in order of importance from a temporal view-point. Of these the large majority of mankind are fit only for the first two, as they only seek prosperity; and hence the literature covering them forms the largest part. The desire for fulfilling creaturely needs and cravings is the motive which impels the largest number; they are very dimly aware of a soul or individual self; they belong to the class of the 'animal,' blissfully self-complacent in their ordinary round of alimentation and reproduction, and forget pain and suffering no sooner they happen to them. To them pain is no stimulus to thinking. The pinch of suffering and cramping conditions of existence knock at the door of only the highly susceptible

and vigilant few. As the mind evolves to higher and higher levels and the refined mind seeks a transcendental means of securing its ethical and spiritual ends, such as that of the unseen merit of a sacrifice, an effective technique of prayer and supplication is introduced to practice, in which an inter-dependence between the worshipper and the worshipped, i.e., the various gods is established. At this stage, arisen little higher from the animal level, man prays to the 'other' powers for wealth, progeny, power of speech, lustrous personality and all that contribute to success and the warding off of evils. The bulk of the Veda is taken up with this chapter of man's ascent. From experience gained at this stage one can easily find that in acts of propitiating and winning over gods for securing happiness here and hereafter man binds the gods by his sacrifice—sacrifice, at their altar, or his feelings and thought, labour and possessions, through the intricate process of self-discipline evoked by the *Yaga* or sacred rite. This stage is characterised by a strong faith in an outside divine Agency, as it is testified by his readiness to give-up, though that faith is engendered by a reflex self-regard and an unshaken faith in a transmigrating soul, the architect of *Dharma* and *Adharma*. Without any reference to other stages of existence, where one's good and bad acts unfructified on earth must fructify and whereby one may avoid what one has not merited and reap what one has sown, the very concept of *Dharma*, upon which the Scripture has descanted so much, would become devoid of significance. This is the Kinder Garten of religion and the large majority of men being in that

state this portion is far elaborate than others.

Sacrifice soon leads man to the other great idea so closely connected with it, namely, that of love; and in virtue of that quality he enters into a personal relation with the 'Other' whom he had been placating hitherto as an instrument of fulfilling his wishes; that attitude wears out slowly, as the new relation of love becomes more and more established. This is the stage of Upasana or adoring service in the form of worship, whereby man becomes a god. His Object of adoration reveals to him that the various deities to whom he has been praying are but His own configurations. Here, worship and adoration become an active expression of love first inspired by awe and next induced by reverence and intimacy and understanding. What the devotee is now counts more than what he *does*; and he participates in the divine being surrendering himself to his Lord. Here man has left far behind grosser forms of sacrifice and propitiation. However the self-regard which is at the basis of individuality itself is still there, though in an attenuated form; and the readiness to sacrifice is not fully developed into an adoring love, the first condition of which is complete self-annihilation. It is under this upsurge of a new power of love and worship that man is able to make great discoveries in the realm of the spirit and regarding the ultimate questions of his soul and the universe. The votary who has been praying for prosperity now opens up a new vision of happiness in a long-lasting form associated with the Divine which alone can be permanent. At this stage, we find in the Veda, the worshipper is advised to

practise various forms of meditation with a view to fulfill an expanding longing for bliss and freedom. As a result of the various meditations and acts the aspirant becomes a Deva or a denizen of a long-lasting region for aeons, which is as good as eternity when compared with the extent or intensity of the happiness of an ordinary man or god. So even very highly sensible men are satisfied with this bliss and freedom available eternally in time. This is the fruit of worship. Man becomes a god to worship the Divine—the highest rung of evolution is reached by the soul. But there are a precious few who after long self-investigation and unrelenting scrutiny come to the conclusion that even this enduring participation in the divine bliss, the highest goal an individual can ever aspire to, has in it the touch of the destructible and limited; and so they strain for something beyond time and causality, and wreck their egoity totally to embrace that Infinity. This in short is the romance of the soul—the main plot of the drama enacted in the sentient world and delineated in symbols in the Scriptures. In the union of the Soul with God is the grand *denouement* of this gorgeous play.

Although the governing purpose of the Vedic lore is as hinted above, this meaning does not lie at the surface. Questioned as to the subject-matter of the Veda the unlearned Hindu would answer: God; at which the historian may frown. But he is more right, because the whole Scripture aims at knowing One by knowing which everything else will be made plain. Just as the logic of language tells us that a sentence is a sentence by virtue of its power of expressing

a central idea which may be elaborated or shown up by subordinate clauses and phrases that have no independent significance devoid of the first, so also the One is the core of Vedic wisdom. That is the premiss on which all else follow. The enquiries found in the Vedanta are not the result of intellectual curiosity or speculative adventure; and therefore the Veda is not committed to the 'carnal logic.' A divine commiseration to show a path to man, wandering in a world which is but a picture of suffering, sorrow and death,—a world infested with catastrophes and accidents, overspread with cruelty, stupidity, insincerity and insanity —, is the only motive of the Scripture, and if a system of thought can be constructed out of it it is only accidental. Thus perfect emancipation or realization of the Divine or Moksha is the alpha and omega of the Veda, of which the elaborate practice of Dharma form the vestibule.

IV

If Moksha is the heart doctrine of Vedanta, it implies a set of axiomatic truths regarding man and the universe. We shall briefly recount them in the light of Sri Sankara's beautiful, synthetic exposition of *Brahma Sutras* which again forms a beautiful synthesis of Vedanta. The whole of Vedanta is an answer to the question, "By knowing which everything is known?" propounded and answered in the Upanishads. It is repeatedly stated in various contexts that that One is Brahman, beyond word and thought—Avang-manasa-gochara. Yet It is described as attributeless, changeless, distinctionless, indivisible,

eternal Witness—the negation of all multiplicity and phenomenality. He is Consciousness or Intelligence itself—the self-luminous light that illumines all. Na cha rupavatvam yuktam Paramesvarasya — says Sankara; i.e. He is Spirit—the very opposite of materiality, and hence formless. He is leagues away from the least touch of Sam-sara, — Sarva-samsara-dharma-atita. He is the Alone, ever free and ever pure—the holiest of the holy, the same and unsurpassable, Anadheyatisaya. He is Reality, Consciousness, Infinitude—limitless, boundless, Supreme Being, the goal of the liberated and in reality the immutable, permanent Seer in all—Kutastha-nitya-drik-svarupa. This is all the kind of brief hints we get regarding the unconditioned, absolute Divine; and the Jiva (individual soul) wandering in the interminable phenomenal world, due to his parochial isolation, or as Sankara puts it, Samastatva-anava-bodha, buffeted by the vicissitudes of virtue and vice and seeking a permanent, blissful, fearless, immortal haven finds in It his final 'end.' Brahma-jnanad hi amritatva-praptih. Na hi anyatra paramatma-jnanat hitatama praptir asti. Man should find his uttermost weal in Self-realization alone, and nowhere else.

But if Jiva is other than Brahman it can never become That; hence follows the next cardinal doctrine that Jiva in essence is Brahman. Says Sankara: Atma hi nama svarupam. Atma cha Brahma. Brahma-bhavas cha Mokshah—Atman is the central essence of all, and that is Brahman; and being Brahman is liberation. Brahma-darsana ("seeing God") Sarvatma-bhava (realising oneself to be the Self of all) and

Moksha or freedom, according to Advaita, are synchronous; by this realization nescience or 'error' is uprooted and suffering and Samsara cease. This, the great teacher phrases as Atmai-katva-samyag-darśana—right perception of the Self alone as the only existence—and Nirapavada-vijnana or perfect experience. The utter absence of self-regard or Asariratva is the mark of this realization. It is not a conceptual understanding, because it is the realization of a supreme value—Phalāparyantatvat. It is not the negative bliss enjoyed in deep slumber, for in a famous passage Sankara says that Moksha is eternal, all-pervading like the sky, ever-contented, partless, self-luminous and unrelated to time. Again he adduces from certain glaring texts that Samprasada or delightful calmness of deep sleep, where Prana alone is awake and the Jiva is, as it were, in union with the Supreme Self is transcended by Bhuma or realization of the Infinite Self, which is the acme of spiritual experience. The fact that the 'sheath of bliss' is also a sheath of Brahman is another hint of this fact. The union with the Atman in deep sleep is only a resemblance which is indicated by the use of 'iva' in his Bhashya on Brahma Sutra I: 1.9. Realization is a continuous experience of Bliss. The Knower of Brahman is perfection incarnate and because he sees the Self alone, greed, hatred and the like evils find no room in him; and Sankara is emphatic that if a realized man is still a worldling as before, he is a sham—Yasya tu yatha purvam samsaritam na asau avagata-brahma-atma-bhavaḥ. In III: 1.8-11 it is suggested that competence in the performance of spiritual duties

is invariably conditioned by moral conduct. It follows therefore that morality, Work and Illumination form in a way a causal chain, the absence of the first barring the succeeding ones.

The above conception of Reality and freedom and the identity of Brahman and Atman fall into a congruous system giving a marvellous synthesis. But the hitch comes only when the phenomena call for an explanation. Brahman is the abode of heaven, earth and all. He is the cause of the universe, declares the Sruti. The multiplicity and change is not apart from him; he crystallizes into the Self of living beings and reigns as the master of all. He is the Paramesvara or the Supreme Lord. Eka eva tu para atma isvarah—says Sankara. In fact Sankara uses Brahma and Paramesvara as synonymous in innumerable places, never suggesting that the second is lower than the first in any sense. In I: 4.14 the suggestion can be read that the term Brahman is employed to suggest the substance of the universe and Paramesvara to suggest the uncaused cause and ruler of it. The one is free from all conditioning by adjuncts, the other is as related to the universe. The universe is the index of the inaffable Brahman. We posit all-knowingness of Brahman, because the universe is infinite; we call Him omnipotent, because that is premised by a vast multiple universe which is a germination of immense potentiality. He is the Supreme Master because the whole universe is a harmony, and not a chaos, in virtue of the operation of His laws at every bit of it—Samasta-loka-pari-spanditasya isvara-adhishtanatvat. Sankara's Absolute and God are not

two entities as some hastily think—the one an intellectual abstraction and the other an inferential concession as they would put. In one place he suggests that the one is Jneya or the object of knowledge, or self-identity, as his epistemology demands, and the other is Upasya or object of worship; because no worship is possible without the feeling of the 'other' to start with. In a related consciousness an unrelated freedom is impossible, so to him Jnana alone leads to Moksha though he never understates or underrates Upasana—Mahate hi phalaya Brahmo-pasanam ishyate. In II: 3.41 of his explanation of Brahma Sutras he unequivocally states that emancipation is the result of a direct knowledge which is got *only* by the grace of Isvara. Some MSS. of the text omit 'eva', but the context shows it is wrong. The absoluteness of Jnana is conditioned by the Sadharan-karanatva, general causality, of Isvara in regard to everything that happens to the Jiva. In III: 2.5 he again states that the Jiva or individual soul, through the grace of Isvara, by devout continuous contemplation upon Him, attains Divinity, when the enveloping ignorance is dispelled by that grace.

But the question of questions is how the impure mutable world is compatible with pure, same, Brahman? It seems, like Sri Ramakrishna, who said that the concern of man is to eat mangoes and not to count the trees and leaves, Sankara also was contented with the guarantee of the Veda, although he was pulled out by the reactionary tendencies of the time to launch on argumentation with the speculative adventurers of the age. He is never for any enquiry

to which no Purushartha is attached. This is amply evidenced in his work. Samsara or empirical existence is accepted as co-eternal with Avidya or 'error'. Man is born shrouded in the mist of Avidya and he sees through it the Immortal Reality distorted into a mortal multiplicity, himself being part and parcel of it. The purpose of the Scripture is to dispel the 'error' and subsequent duality—Avidya-kalpita-bheda-nivritti-paratvat satsasya. The Scripture does not enter into any argument with man; it is a sign-post; you argue and disobey it to go astray. But the subjective nescience is not an adequate explanation for an objective universe, a public fact. To this the great Acharya replies: In the rational analysis the universe is only name, form and activity; its existential and intelligent content is Spirit or Brahman which suffers no rival. In a homogeneous Unity which has no 'other', activity and change are unpredicable, because they are related and possible only in plurality. But Brahman as cause of such a vast universe must have infinite knowledge and infinite powers. From the view-point of the soul destined for realization of the One as its own essence, Avidya is the cause of activity, name and form. From the view-point of a flowing universe it is nothing but the will of the Paramesvara to become many;—His will, His power, His knowledge, His sport, produce the universe; He is Sarvajna, Sarvasakti and Mahamaya. It is interesting to note that Sankara states Power and capacity to produce illusion separately, the former he calls as Avyakta. It is revealing that he refers to Brahman as masculine and neuter and also in the feminine

partake of it; later on that food is brought to me. I hesitate to offer that food to God.

Mother: That is inevitable in the case of householders. We also have to face similar² situations. Take an instance; there may be a sick person in the family. Part of the food may be kept aside for him, but when food is placed on a plate remember the Master, think that he himself has given this food and then eat it. That will not injure your devotion.

Surendra: Mother, how shall I describe to you my mental condition? You are the inner guide. You understand everything. I have been undergoing all these sufferings for the last few years: but for your blessings, perhaps I would have been dead by this time.

Mother: Yes, my child, you do not have to tell me of the suffering in the

²At Jayarambati, when the children asked for food before the offering was made, the Holy Mother would scold them saying, "To eat now! The food has not yet been offered at the Shrine." One day her brother had to leave home early in the morning on some business. The Holy Mother cooked for him separately. She did not allow him to eat the food that would be offered later on at the Shrine. One child, Maku, asked for a fruit. The Holy Mother offered it first. She was ill; after great persuasion, she was made to take her meal before the offering was made at the Shrine. Of course, she offered her own food to the Master before she partook of it.

life of the world. There is no limit to it. In your case it is inevitable. Look at me, my child, what sort of life I am leading!—by the will of the Master. How much I am suffering on account of this girl (referring to Radhu).

Surendra: Yes, Mother, your condition gives us consolation and hope. You yourself know the suffering of the world, therefore we can expect your compassion.

Mother: Don't be afraid, my child. The Master is there. He alone will protect you, both here and hereafter.

Surendra: Mother, we are living so far away. Are dreams real?

Mother: Yes, they are. Dreams regarding the Master are real. But he forbade his disciples to narrate, even to him, dreams regarding himself.

Surendra: Mother, we do not know what the Master was like. We have not seen him. But in our case, the Master or anyone else, you are everything.

Mother: Don't be afraid, my child, the Master will look after you. We will watch over you here and hereafter. He will protect you always.

After the meal the two devotees took leave. Uncle Baroda accompanied them. He was going to Calcutta. The Holy Mother walked part of the way with them and looked on until they disappeared.

THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT: HIS DIVINE NAMES AND FORMS

BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA, M.A.

[One of the grounds for rating Hinduism low often put forward by some of the adherents and admirers of Islam and Christianity, mainly based on their dangerous little knowledge, is that, while those two religions clearly and simply present one God, one law, one theology and one church, the Hindu Faith offers a tangle of cults, creeds, sects, Gods and customs, to the utter confusion of its followers, who are to grope in a wilderness of pathless polytheism, without the light of saving faith in the one God and the one church. The unwary victims of missionary proselytization are attracted by this plausible argument, soon to find for themselves the existence of most of these 'defects' in the new fold also. The writer of the following article lucidly interprets the *raison d'être* and value of the various forms and practices and their relation to the One Spirit, which no denominationalist can afford to forget, without knocking the bottom out of the particular form of faith which, as a religious aspirant, he adopts for his spiritual progress.—The Editors.]

ONE of the most magnificent achievements of the Hindu spiritual genius is the realisation that the same infinite and eternal Absolute Spirit is conceived and worshipped by men in diverse names and forms and that different religious systems are only different ways of approach to the same ultimate goal. So long as men cannot transcend their finitude, their conceptions about the Absolute Reality must necessarily be relative and in the polymorphous human society, there must always be psychological and rational grounds for the growth of a variety of such relative conceptions, which again must find expressions in a variety of significant names and forms. On account of inevitable temperamental, environmental and educational differences among men, the forms of physical, intellectual and emotional self-discipline necessary for the realisation of the Absolute Truth must also vary. All these differences continue so long as the Supreme Truth, which is identical with the Supreme Good and Beauty, is not perfectly realised by

the human soul and it has not thereby transcended its finitude. When the Truth is fully realised, all differences vanish, all sources of disharmony and discord disappear, and Absolute Unity reigns in the consciousness.

When after the realisation of the Absolute Truth, the human mind comes down again to the planes of our normal sensuous experience, all the diverse objects of internal and external experiences appear as the manifestations or appearances of the same non-dual Reality, as existing from, by, in and for, the same Absolute Spirit. All forms of knowledge, emotion and action also appear as the diversified expressions of the same Spirit's self-consciousness, self-enjoyment and self-realisation. The same God appears to such a truth-seeing mind as one and many, as eternally nameless and formless and eternally manifesting Himself in various names and forms, as above all distinctions of good and evil and at the same time embodying Himself in the diverse forms of good and evil. Such a mind can enjoy the companionship

of God everywhere, in all the fields of its phenomenal experience, in all the human relations, in all the affairs of the human society and the events of nature. It brings down the Supreme Spirit to all the phenomena of the world and sees Him playing in this world in various garbs and under various conditions. These experiences of the truth-seeing mind are described in various forms of poetic imagery and presented to the people of the world for the purpose of attracting their world-intoxicated minds towards the Supreme Player and putting them in the path of the realisation of His transcendent nature. The sentiments of awe, wonder, admiration, reverence and love are roused by these descriptions in the popular minds, and they seek for direct communion with Him, Who is smiling behind and playing with all these diverse kinds of phenomena in and around them. The *Leela* of God in the world, as experienced and enjoyed by the truth-realising minds, thus constitutes a bridge between God the Absolute and the popular minds.

The Hindu religious teachers and the books embodying their experiences proclaim that the eternal and infinite Supreme Spirit, who is one without a second, who is above time and space, who is untouched by any change or modification, appears in His *leela* in diverse names and forms in relation to diverse circumstances and thereby makes Himself easily accessible to the self-forgetful world-bound finite spirits suffering under the domination of these circumstances and attracts them towards His essentially transcendent blissful nature. Hence the apparent diversities of the duties, the sensuous forms attributed to them, the stories related about them,—all these have

their deeper spiritual significance and they are all based upon the spiritual experiences of different truth-seeing minds.

In the Hindu society the Supreme Spirit is worshipped in various names and forms, such as Siva, Kali, Krishna, Rama, Surya, Ganesa, and so on. However different these divine names and forms may be and however different may be the anecdotes and parables that have grown round them, no enlightened mind thinks that they refer to essentially different Beings. None but those whose minds are wholly under the domination of the sensuous experiences of the lowest planes cherish the idea that the audible names and the visible forms and the phenomenal activities associated with them pertain to the ultimate character of the Supreme object of this worship. The Scriptures upon which they rely for their guidance do not by any means encourage such an idea.

All differences lie in the names and forms, with the help of which the different religious sects think of and meditate on the Absolute Ground and Self of the universe, and in the allegorical descriptions by means of which the relations of that Supreme Spirit to the diverse orders of human beings and worldly phenomena are sought to be represented by them. When we dive deep into the inner meanings of these divine names and forms and the spiritual and philosophical significance of these descriptions, we find that they all refer to the same Being, Who is the source of the universe, the Self of all selves, the Power behind all powers. All the Scriptures also distinctly point out this truth and proclaim that these holy names and forms and descriptions are intended

to release the human mind from the lower sensuous planes and to advance it progressively towards the highest spiritual plane of consciousness, in which the true noumenal nature of the Supreme Spirit would be perfectly realised and the names, forms and descriptions would be wholly transcended. The mind, being disciplined in the habit of realising Divinity in particular significant names and forms and seeing the Divine hand in particular kinds of phenomena in the human society and the physical nature, learns step by step to spiritualise and divinise all names and forms and phenomena, to see God in all, and all in God.

It is to be carefully noted that in order to form a true conception of the ultimate significance of any Divine Name and Form, *i.e.*, any Deity, chosen by any particular religious sects for spiritual culture and advancement towards the Absolute Truth, a thoughtful and earnest study of the best spiritual literature of that sect is essentially necessary. The spiritual significance of the name and form of Krishna and the activities through which His spiritual nature is exhibited ought to be sought after in the Vaishnava literature and may not be discovered from the study of the references to Krishna in the literature of other sects. Similarly Siva has to be known and conceived in the light of the Saiva scriptures, Rama has to be known and conceived in the light of Ramayat scriptures, Sakti has to be known and conceived in the light of the Sakta scriptures, and so on. Krishna, as conceived by the sectarian Saivas or Saktas or others, may not indicate the same Spiritual Personality, for whom Krishna of the Vaishnavas stands. The name of

'Krishna' may not have the same spiritual significance to others as to those who adopt it for their spiritual self-realisation. Similarly the Supreme spiritual idea roused in the mind of a Siva or a Sakta by the name of Siva or Kali may not be roused by these names in the mind of a Vaishnava or a Soura or a Ganapatya, who may be inspired with the same idea by the name of Krishna or Surya or Ganesha. But an impartial inquirer will find that the Krishna of Vaishnavas, the Siva of the Saivas, the Kali of the Saktas, the Surya of the Sauras, etc., are the different names and forms indicating the same Absolute Spirit, the same ultimate ground of the universe, the same Supreme Self of all living beings, only differently named and sometimes differently conceived. This is also true of the God of the Christians, the Allah of the Mahomedans, the Buddha of the Buddha worshippers and so on. The different religious sects may differ in their philosophical conceptions about the Absolute Reality, in the names by which they indicate that Reality, in the forms by which they try to picture it before their eyes, in the modes of their self-discipline and approach to the same Supreme Ideal. But the ultimate object of their worship and the ultimate goal of their life are always the same.

It is the infatuation of the sectarian worshippers for particular names and forms and modes of expression and their comparative inattention to or forgetfulness of the true spiritual nature of the Supreme Reality whom they seek or ought to seek to realise with the help of the names and forms and modes of expression, that is in most cases the cause of their narrow outlook and of the quarrels among the

different religious sects. Even many sincere Sadhakas often forget that they enter into particular sects or churches, adopt particular names and forms as the embodiments of the Supreme Spirit and resort to particular systems of religious discipline, not for the purpose of creating fresh bondages for the mind and the soul and being confined to them throughout life, but for the purpose of being emancipated from all bondages and limitations, for the purpose of transcending the diversities of names and forms and the varieties of thoughts and affections, for the purpose of rising above all narrow sectarianism and churchiness and entering into the blissful realm of the Infinite Eternal Absolute Reality. The sects and churches, the Divine names and forms, the particular modes of religious culture, are intended to be paths to the nameless and formless, changeless and differenceless, absolute and universal blissful Reality; but they not unoften become additional barriers in the way of the realisation of this Supreme Spirit; the Sadhakas, under the influence of Avidya and egoism and attachment, mistake the particular paths for the goal, become addicted to them and cherish the anti-spiritual feelings of hatred and hostility towards other paths. The organisations which are founded by the illustrious world-teachers with a view to bring God nearer to the human mind and to establish the kingdom of Heaven on earth, are in many cases taken possession of by the powerful Evil one, the worldly Ego, who converts them into suitable instruments for carrying on his anti-God movements in the human society in the names of God Himself. Whenever there is the absence of spiritually enlightened

Acharyas in any church or sect, it is in danger of being converted into an organisation in which Satan can move more freely than even in the political and the economic worlds.

In order to ward off the Satanic influences which undue attachment to particular names and forms is likely to exert upon the religious systems and to keep them free from bigotry and fanaticism and mutual hatred, all the authoritative Hindu scriptures and their enlightened interpreters have specially emphasised the point that so long as any devotee fails to recognise the living presence of the Supreme Object of his worship in every name and form, he ought to know that his Deity has not yet unveiled Himself to him and he has not yet attained that spiritual insight which alone can liberate him from all worldly bondage and sorrow. The sectarian scriptures have no doubt attached special importance to particular names and forms which have been allotted the central position in them and round which the particular systems of religious discipline have been evolved. But their intention is not to create differences and to lower down other sacred names and forms, but to intensify the devotion of the worshippers to those special names and forms, which they adopt for the realisation of the Supreme Spirit. It is however pointed out that any disregard of other names and forms of the same Supreme Spirit and any idea of real separateness among the apparently different deities would stand in the way of spiritual advancement. The more a devotee realises the glory and the true nature of the object of his worship, the more he finds that He is the one non-dual spiritual Self not only of all gods and goddesses, but

of all names and forms which constitute the phenomenal universe—of all actual and possible objects of his experience. The essential unity of all gods and goddesses and the ultimate spiritual unity of all beings in the universe ought to be kept in view,—this truth ought always to be remembered in the background of conscious-

ness at every stage of religious culture, whatever may be the names and forms adopted for the cultivation of the religious sentiments and the concentration of the mind upon the one. The fulfilment of this culture consists in the perfect realisation of this unity.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF SPANISH MYSTICISM

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 and is intensely interested in the spiritual and practical side of religious mysticism. His short studies on the saints and mystics of Europe, which we had the pleasure of publishing some time ago, reveal another side of European Christianity scarcely represented by the various churches about which we know much in India. The ensuing essay forms an introduction to the life of Saint Teresa of Jesus, her precursors, and her writings.—The Editors.]

WHAT makes Spanish mystics more living and more important in our day than most of their brothers and sisters of other countries and earlier times in the West, is not so much the greatness of their realisations but their essentially modern and practical outlook and their primary stress on knowledge and experience. This brings them closer to the mental attitude of modern times, and in many ways resembles the attitude of the Indian Sages. Although containing the same lines of thought found in the German and the Netherlandish mysticism of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, Spanish mysticism forms part of that marvellous Iberian culture, which reached its highest development in the 16th century, having its own distinctive traits in the West.

This Golden Age of Spanish Culture, in spite of its being deeply rooted in, and drawing its nourishment from,

the rich soil of the Middle Ages, belongs essentially to modern times in all its characteristics. As opposed to the universalising tendencies of German and Netherlandish mystics, Spanish mysticism followed the general trend of its times and country. And this led away from the universal to the particular, from the impersonal ideal to the personal, from some super-world of metaphysics and metaphysical constructions to the naked facts of physics and this everyday world of ours. At the same time, it never lost sight of the ultimate aim of human life: at-one-ment with God. So it is interesting to note that in the question regarding the working of Divine Grace in the human soul, as to whether Divine Grace opens the doors of the human heart and removes the obstacles barring the path to the higher life without any co-operation on the part of man, or whether it is,

on the contrary, man himself, who, by continued self-effort, chooses to open it and give it to the Divine. Molina and his followers, all of them true representatives of Spanish thought and feeling, took the side of self-effort and the free choice of man, thus giving full weight to individualism in the matter of spiritual striving. The importance of this point can scarcely be realised by Indian readers, as in India spiritual instruction and Sadhana have ever been a matter of individual development, to be settled between the teacher and the pupil according to the latter's stage of spiritual evolution.

In the 15th century Spanish culture in all its temporal, intellectual and spiritual activities, took a decisive turn away from the universal and generalising outlook of the Middle Ages towards individual experience and to science—to a very marked individualism, averse to all that is authoritarian or merely speculative. These—experience and science, or knowledge—are the most characteristic features of full-fledged Spanish mysticism, finding their greatest and most undaunted exponents in St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. And this is what gives so great and abiding a value to the spiritual teaching of Spanish mystics, when studied as a whole, for our own day—a value which cannot be found in that of the speculative and emotional writings of their German precursors in a chronological sense, however beautiful and elevating they might have been in their poetic haziness and lack of precision.

So we find in Spanish mystics a cautious self-analysis and self-examination and much courageous criticism of visionary states based on a

certain diffidence in believing what has not been tested again and again by oneself and others—which is very different from the childlike and, as it were, blind confidence and from the touching surrender to what their brothers and sisters of other countries happened to take for the call of the heart and from the indiscriminate faith in the power of the mystical, which we come across in the German and Netherlandish monks and spiritual teachers of the 14th and 15th centuries.

The philosopher will find very little of interest in the writings of the great Spanish mystics. On the other hand, the psychologist and the sincere spiritual aspirant, looking for practical advice and guidance to follow in the steep and perilous ascent, will find very much, no matter to what time and to what country he belongs.

The lofty flights and speculations of an Eckhart cannot really help the ordinary aspirant with limited faculties, however sincere he may be, who tries to take the first insecure and vacillating steps in the spiritual path. The wealth of love and tenderness and the poetic beauty of a Ruysbroeck are not always safe guides among the precipices and deep ravines of personal clinging and untutored emotions, in spite of his repeated warnings. But the Spanish mystic never loses sight of the beginner and of his needs, and rather freely comes down from the heights of beauty and knowledge he himself has attained in order to be a help and a friend to him, who, as yet, cannot grasp the highest truths of spiritual life and spiritual experience.

There is a certain similarity between the Vaishnavite reform movements, the teachings of Ramananda,

Kabir and Guru Nanak, of Mediaeval India, and the sudden flowering of mystic knowledge and yearning on Spanish soil in the 16th century. In spite of that, to many Indian readers this shifting of the general mental attitude from the universal to the particular may seem a step backwards. And only when compared with the haziness and lack of practical advice of the Germanic speculative mystics must it be considered as an advance—a decisive step forward. The highest speculative flights and spiritual experiences of man regarding the ultimate nature of

the Divine cannot help another sincere seeker in finding his bearings when the latter, with his limited capacities, wishes to take the very first steps in the path that is to lead him to similar experiences. In their great stress on the purgative way, however, the Spanish mystics fully agree with the East, so that their teachings might almost be summed up in the words of the Bhagavad-Gita: "Triple is the gate of hell, destructive of the Self—lust, anger and greed; therefore one should forsake these three."

SUCCESS IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talk given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

I

Success in spiritual life depends on our firmly and steadily holding on to the Divine Ideal. Every one of us must have a central seat of consciousness, a central name to dwell on, and a Holy Form to visualise. In the midst of all the confusion and darkness of the relative plane we must find out a definite course of action, of thinking and of willing, without which no spiritual life is possible. And the person who has no ground to stand on, who has no central point of consciousness, can never have any real faith in himself, and never have any real strength. Always believe firmly: I am a being that can achieve something in the world of the spirit.

Strength is what we want first of all. We are meant for something great, for something nobler and

higher. What is needed is not negative humility, but positive humility, born of real inner strength. People think they are nothing, and nothing they become. People think they are miserable sinners, and sinners they become. People think they are weak, and weak they become. Filth can never be cleaned with filth.

First of all the body must be strong and healthy. A certain amount of physical strength is necessary. There must be some regular physical exercise in the life of every aspirant. Do not take a negative attitude regarding your body. This body of ours is something noble, a temple of the Divine. It is able to achieve something great. Even such physical faith is needed.

This body of ours is like a raft, like a boat, with which one may cross the ocean of relative life. See that it

does not spring a leak, otherwise you are drowned. Make it a point to have regular physical exercise to keep your body in a healthy condition. "May all my limbs, may all my senses, be strong and controlled." "With strong and controlled bodies, with strong and controlled minds, let us pray to the gods." Mental faith is only possible when the mind is strong. Strengthen your mind, strengthen your will. Strength of the mind has to be increased. We need the firm faith that this body of ours is a temple of the Divine, that we are spiritual entities. The weakling has no place at all in spiritual life—neither physically, mentally, nor morally; he has no place in the world of the spirit. "This Atman cannot be realized by the weak," says the Upanishad. If we have strength, then only can we get rid of fear. Drop all fear of others: What will others say of me? If I think this is right, what does it matter what others say or think of me and my doings? Never give in on the vital point. Never lose ground on the vital point. Let us devote every drop of our blood, every heart-beat of our lives, to this cause in some form or other. Live ideal and irreproachable lives as examples to others, not only for your own salvation.

II

He in whose name we come is always judged according to the standard of our life. Hence we have tremendous responsibility, hence we have to conform to a certain standard. We cannot do what we like. We cannot allow ourselves every freedom. Our responsibility is very great; and we all should be fully conscious of this tremendous responsibility. Let us all

pray for greater strength and greater purity, knowing that our responsibility is so great, and let us walk on with steady steps, having firm faith in ourselves. The conduct and attitude of all aspirants has to be one of reserve, of dignity, and dignified in everything. People must be made to feel once for all with whom they have to deal when they come in touch with you.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "So long as you have this false shame and hatred and fear of society, you cannot make any spiritual progress." And in the Upanishads we find, "We want to attain to that which will make us fearless."

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is a passage that says, "Now, Janaka, you have attained to fearlessness." And that fearlessness which is characteristic of the true Sadhaka can come only when we realize the Divine, and the more we approach Him, the more we become fearless. So our whole attitude should be one of responsibility, of dignity, of fearlessness and faith in ourselves as spiritual entities. We are fully responsible for the impression we make on people with our words and actions. That is why we all have to act in such a way that none can reproach us with anything undignified or unworthy of an aspirant. Here the greatest discrimination and discretion must be used by you all.

There is a passage that says, "In enjoyment there is fear, in wealth there is the risk of losing it, in honour that of being dishonoured, in true renunciation alone there is fearlessness." And really speaking, without true renunciation and true dispassion for all things worldly and a worldly

life, as such, no spiritual life is ever possible.

"One who has not desisted from evil, one who has not calmed his mind, one who is not concentrated, can never know the truth, even if he gets knowledge." This is the general rule of the Upanishads. Swami Vivekananda very rightly says, "Luther drove a nail into the coffin of Christianity. He took away religion and gave Christianity morality instead."

We should be pure, because He is pure. We should be clean, because He is clean. And if you really were impure by nature this would never be possible. What is the necessity of our being pure at all? We should be pure, because purity is of the very nature of our soul. This purity is not anything that is adventitious or superimposed on our nature. And unless we become pure, it is not possible for us to see God. Purity must find its physical and its mental expression in and through our whole life. Morals without God have to stop half-way. They can never really go to the extreme, can never really reach the goal.

Purity is part of our nature, therefore we should be moral. What we usually call impurity is only something superimposed, something adventitious, never an integral part of us. Herein lies the whole secret of spiritual life and of salvation.

We want to make that the centre of our consciousness, which is the eternal centre of all. Herein lies the explanation of purity and of being able to lead a perfectly pure and spotless life.

Give the lie to all the Churches, give the lie to the sinner-attitude! "Oh, I, such a miserable sinner, what can I do? I am a sinner!" Give the lie

to that by living an ideal, pure life, a life that is purer and more spotless than that of these sinners clinging to the pillar of their institutional religion, but never doing anything, except crying, "Oh, I am a sinner, I am so weak, what can I do?"

The utilitarian stressing morals for some purely utilitarian reason will never go to the point of leading a perfectly pure, irreproachable life. That is why we have to have morals; but along with morals the foundation of morals, which is wholly lacking in all utilitarian schemes.

III

The ideals of non-attachment and purity are associated with the Spiritual Being, and thus man comes to realize Divine Consciousness, which is beyond all multiplicity, in fact, beyond any form of being and non-being, Sat and Asat. In all Scriptures we find the conception of freedom associated with the Divine, and freedom can never exist where there is no absolute purity and no absolute non-attachment. Freedom is beyond personal affection and beyond hatred, beyond attraction and beyond aversion. A person who has become free cannot be touched by any of the pairs of opposites, but always rests calmly in his own true being. We all associate Divinity with the ideas of purity, freedom, knowledge, fearlessness, etc. Man aspires to freedom, to fearlessness, to independence, to a state of security and stability. But first we must try to realize this ideal of purity, of sexlessness, of freedom, of fearlessness, in our own life. Only through our own realization of the ideal can we rise to our true human stature. Only thus can the ideal ever become the real. The person who has

no definite idea of the spiritual entity has no foundations for his morals, and if he at all possesses morals, they are, as it were, hanging in the air. There is no rhyme or reason for them in his life. How wonderfully free are the Great Ones! Free from passion, free from attachment, free from fear! We, too, must become free from lust, from sex-consciousness, from anger, greed, jealousy, and all forms of covetousness, subtle and gross. We must rise above the cravings of the flesh, above our man-form or woman-form, to the pure heights of Divine Consciousness. And spiritual life is not merely moral life. It is something more. The great mistake Protestantism in its different forms committed was to put moral life in the place of spiritual life and thus to kill all spirituality. A merely moral or ethical code is insufficient for giving fearlessness and peace to the soul, for lifting it up beyond all temptations and insecurities.

In the lives of the saints the ideals of morals and of spirituality are wonderfully blended, but Protestantism was not prepared to understand and recognise the example of such saintly lives, because it had lost the key to their meaning. A moral man is no spiritual man; but all spiritual men are always moral. This is a great point to note if one really wishes to understand spiritual life. We find in all true saints a wide sympathy that we miss in the utilitarian or the merely moral man.

IV

Buddha attained to Nirvana; but he wished to share Nirvana with all others. So his prayer was, "Let all misery come to me. Let all evil, let all troubles of the world come to

me; but let others be free from them!" How he was prepared to save even poor animals with his life! How he saved the sheep which were to be sacrificed by offering his own body to the king! Buddha's heart melted at the sight of the suffering of our dumb brothers. He was one from whom all worldly attachment had passed away, who no longer had any worldly love or any worldly desire, who had given up his wife and child for the sake of the world. This dynamic charity we find in all our saints. When Buddha went to the king to save the sheep, the king was very much astonished at his courage and love for all living beings, was at once converted and he stopped the sacrifice. Buddha's dynamic charity saved the life of all these poor animals. Even before becoming a Buddha, he was fully conscious of his great message. "I want to attain to Immortality and this Immortality I want to share with others."

Such people are never alone, in however great a solitude they may happen to live. One day somebody saw that Mahommed was quite alone. He went and asked him, "Are you alone?" "No, I am not," was the answer. "I am in the company of God."

Once a Bedouin attacked Mahommed while he was alone. "Who is going to save thee now, tell me?" he cried. "God," came quietly the reply. Then the Bedouin's sword fell down from his hand. Mahommed took it up and said, "And who is going to save thee now?" "None!" "Well, then learn the lesson of love and mercy from me."

In all these great souls we witness the expression of a love that is not personal and that we find missing in all others. And this ideal of love is

closely connected with Divine Love.

Sri Chaitanya had a great disciple whom he used to call his brother. His name was Nityananda. He used to go about singing the name of the Lord to the people. Now, in the city of Nadia, where they were working at that time, there were two brothers, great ruffians, who had become dangerous to the householders. In fact, they were rogues of the worst type. They got angry at the singing of the holy name and said, "Why do these fellows come making all this unpleasant noise? We shall teach them a lesson, we shall!" And the ruffians began throwing stones at them. Very soon the blood came trickling down, but Nityananda cried, "Brother, O Brother, it does not matter whether you have hurt me or not. Just take the name of the Lord, do!" Seeing this deep love for all beings the ruffians were fully converted and began to lead saintly lives.

You find this spirit of love and sacrifice in all the Great Ones. Sri Ramakrishna imparted some instructions even on his last day, when he was suffering agonizing pain. A young man had come from some distance to see him and to receive instruction from him, and when Sri Ramakrishna's attendants wanted to prevent him from seeing the Master, Sri Ramakrishna ordered them to let him come in and then gave him the desired instructions in spite of the tremendous suffering this meant to him.

In the Bhagavatam there is a story of a poisonous snake that lived in a pond and which Sri Krishna wanted to punish. He said to it, "Why art thou poisoning the water of this pond with thy venom?" The snake replied

humbly, "Lord, what else can I do? It is Thou who hast endowed me with venom, so I must secrete it. It is not my fault, but Thine."

V

The spiritual ideal is the surest support and the mainspring of all true morals, ethics, culture, etc. But we should see that we become wide-awake and fully conscious of all our motives and the motive-forces that stand at the back of our thoughts and actions.

I do not know whether you have heard the story of a great Christian monk. It is very instructive. One day one of his brothers had been accused of having shaken hands with a woman, and he was brought before the chapter. He pleaded that she had been a person of good reputation and great purity and devotion. But this great monk who was presiding answered curtly, "Rain, no doubt, is good, and earth is good, yet mingled they form mud, which is not good. Similarly, though the hands of men and women are both good, yet great evil may arise in thought and affection if they are carelessly brought together." This story can teach the aspirant a great lesson. Always learn to go to the very root of a matter and never stop at the first superficial impression an action or a thought gives you. Learn to become fully conscious under all circumstances and in all situations of life, and learn to recognise your own motives mercilessly, but without too much self-condemnation. You should sometimes criticise yourself severely, but this criticism must always be constructive, and never merely destructive, if it is to help you in your spiritual striving and evolution. The

negative 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner' attitude makes you a sinner; and a greater sinner from day to day, and takes you away from all true spirituality.

VI

Never say you cannot find time for your practices. It is never true. One of our monks is a great expert in gardening and spends much of his time in the garden to grow beautiful flowers to be offered in the Shrine at the time of our different Pujas. When he was one day scolded for not devoting enough time to his spiritual practices, he said that he could not do so as the garden needed so much care that most of his time was taken up with working in it. Then he was told to uproot all those plants which had become old or did not yield good fruits; for then he would be able to find time for both—for his garden and his spiritual practices. No, the thing is this: our mind is so restless, is in such a tension, that we imagine we have no time. We set such a high value on outside cleaning, that we forget to clean the mind properly. Really we can do both.

We should be very careful not to forge new fetters for ourselves or others through passion. There are men and women who go on forging fetters for others and for themselves all their life; and they have to pay heavily in the end. There are men and women whose whole life is spent in making others free from all such fetters, and it is they who find love and bliss and peace and the fulfilment of life. "He who sees the same Atman in himself as well as in all others, he cannot hate anybody." But you may remain indifferent. It is not necessary for you to love everybody in the beginning. "Seeing the one Lord, equally present in all, he does not kill the self by the self and attains to the highest goal." And seeing the one Lord in all means that there cannot be any attraction, nor can there be any aversion, because he who has reached such a state, no longer sees the person, but only the Principle. That is why he is able to remain unaffected and to love all without loving anybody. He has wholly transcended the domain of personal affection, of personal likes and dislikes, and rests in the Atman alone.

THE STORY OF THE BAHAI MOVEMENT—I

BY ACA SYED IBRAHIM (DARA)

[Students of religious history are aware of the metaphysical blossoming of the Semitic Islam in Persia, producing a vigorous type of spiritual mysticism called Sufism, which has notable resemblances with Vedanta. In Western Asia Iran has been the cradle of religious aspiration and thought for over a couple of millenniums, and we may say that Bahaism, a development of the last century, is one of the latest phases of Iranian religion. This Movement, one of religious and even social and perhaps political importance, has boiled over the boundaries of Persia, gaining ground in Turkey and Africa, and has claimed several adherents from among the rationalists of the Occident as a religion of humanity. Bahaism is not an abrupt emergence; it is the outcome of the theological implications of the Shiite Faith which believes in Imams endowed with superhuman wisdom and spiritual perfection and who act as the channel of Divine grace. The last Imam having retired from mortal ken without a successor is supposed to act through intermediaries or 'gates' or Babs in bringing down to man the light of Divine wisdom. Bahaism has its root in this faith as its history reveals. The following interesting sketch of the Movement is by one who is a keen student of Islamic spiritual culture and a Sadhika of Sree Aurobindo's Ashrama. —The Editors.]

PERSIA can be called the garden of Islamic countries amidst whose fresh running streams and luxuriant orchards poets and mystics are born as naturally as its birds and flowers of so many different shades and hues. These poets have evolved a mystic literature which claims for its sweetness and melody an immortal place in the literature of the world. In spite of it all, Persia always had a bigoted and an unrelenting Government dominated by very orthodox views, which always wished to persecute these broad-minded Sufis for transgressing the limits of religious injunctions. Its purest saints have thus been imprisoned, hanged or stoned to death by Government orders.

The last and the greatest of these saints has been Baha Ullah, who, after a long period of imprisonment, suffering and tortures, succeeded in his great mission, and brought about a greater understanding and a freer atmosphere in the land for further

spiritual development. In the following articles we shall give a short account of the life and the struggle of Baha Ullah and of those that were intimately connected with this great world-wide Movement called Bahaism.

Before coming to Baha Ullah it is necessary to mention the great Work of Bab, who opened the door for him by prophesying his coming, and who, by his heroic courage and dauntless will, won for him the most ardent support of thousands of followers even before Baha Ullah proclaimed himself the World Teacher, the long-promised Mehdi of Islam.

BAB: THE DOOR

The unique story of this wonderful Movement begins from the year 1819 A.D., when a very beautiful son was born to a wool merchant in Sheraz and was named Mirza Ali Mohamed. From the very infancy

there were many signs of greatness in this boy, and there was no doubt that he was a great soul. Unfortunately for him his father died when he was still a child and Ali Mohamed was taken into the family of his maternal uncle who sent him to a school where he did not get more than a very elementary education in Persian. But as he grew up he began to command the love, respect and admiration of everybody who came into touch with him. He was noted for his strong character and indomitable will, harmonised with extreme nobility and gentleness of nature and personal charm. He was remarkably beautiful in person and all the qualities of a great hero and saint began to develop in him naturally. He was never in his whole life accused of any flaw in his character. He proved himself an original thinker and a good inspiring orator who even as a boy could win his argument against a learned Mulla. He got round him a group of followers and his fame spread in the town. In the year 1844 A.D., he gathered a large number of learned people of the town, and some from every class, and declared to them that he had come to the world with a divine message from God to start a new spiritual Movement for unifying all mankind, irrespective of religion, nationality, race or creed, into one great divine Brotherhood. Like all the other prophets he declared that he too had come not to destroy but to fulfil. He insisted on the purification of the existing religions and *Ishat*, so that we should be able to follow their spirit and not the dead letter. He did not believe that the *Quran* was final and said that Teachers would come in all ages to the end of time to fill the earth

with God's Light and Truth.¹ He prophesied that a Great Prophet was to come and proclaim Himself a World-Teacher very soon, and that great Light and Truth would come down with him on the earth and that the kingdom of God would be established here, of which Truth, he proclaimed himself to be the Bab, *i.e.*, the gate or the door. He wanted to prepare the country for the acceptance of this great Teacher, Messiah, or the promised Mehdi, for whom the world had been waiting for a thousand years. Bab exhorted his followers not to reject the "Great One" when He appears, for He would be the one "whom God will manifest" and who would "reveal Light in its full Splendour." He prophesied the date of his coming to be nineteen years thence.² Later on from his followers he chose eighteen persons who were ready to bear the Truth and sent them to different parts of the country to spread his teachings. They were called the "Letters of the Living," of whom Bab himself was "the Point"—the nineteenth one in number. One of them was a lady who had become famous for her suffering and heroic work, named Kirrat ul Ayn (literally meaning consolation of the eyes). She was the daughter of one of the leading Ulama of Islam who left her house to be a Babi. She is referred to as the Joan of Arc of the Bahai Movement and well deserves the title.

¹ Bab's own words are—"In the past, whenever there was need, God raised up a Prophet on the earth bearing a book containing Divine Revelation and He will do the same in the future whenever there is need."

² The number 19 was held as an auspicious number by Bab. For reason see his book "*The Babi*."

These eighteen, together with a large number of ever-increasing followers, began to spread a vigorous movement in all parts of Persia, and thousands of people became Babis—the followers of Bab. The fanatic Mullas and the orthodox section of the population soon became alarmed at their rapid success and tried to nip it in the bud. They created a strong agitation and appealed to the Shah; and though the Government helped them greatly, they were reluctant to arrest Bab; for his message was of peace and love. Bab soon began to get into trouble. There were plots to get him arrested and tried publicly for heresy. He travelled from place to place and lectured to thousands who gathered to see and hear him in every town. He began to get hundreds of followers in every town he visited.

There is a prophecy in Islam that when the Last Imam, Mehdi, will appear, his appearance will be announced in Mecca on a certain date; and on that date Bab reached Mecca and before a gathering of a hundred thousand pilgrims from all parts of the world, he announced that the "Great One" has come and will reveal Himself to the world in a few years and that he, the Bab, was his forerunner. After a brilliant success at Mecca he returned to Persia and as the opposition against him had grown very strong he stopped at Bushair.

From Bushair he journeyed to Sheraz where a storm had been gathering to burst upon him. He was roughly treated by the opponents. The Mullas insisted on his arrest and he was kept in a remote house under guard with an order to remain within its confines only. Somehow here too,

people got access to him and he sent out a large number of inspired preachers into the country. As his presence in Sheraz was considered always a source of danger, he was asked to go elsewhere and he went to Isfahan where he had a large following. The Governor of the place sent for him and after a conversation openly declared his faith and became his follower. He befriended him in many other ways too, and gave him facilities for declaring and spreading his message. This very soon brought a very severe attack on Bab from the enraged clergy and they wanted to kill him. The Governor hid him in his official quarters and thus saved his life. Shortly after, the friendly Governor died and orders were issued by the Government of Teheran to bring him there. He proceeded to the capital under a strong guard, and through whichever town they passed, crowds gathered to listen to him and people in very large numbers began to accept his teachings. This impressed the guards so much that some of them too, became his followers. The news of the expected arrival of Bab in Teheran created a great sensation there and two formidable groups, one of his supporters and the other of the Mullas and orthodox Muslims, began to form themselves; and there was a fear of a religious uprising. So the Government issued another order that he should not proceed to the city but halt in a town not far from it. From there too he had to be soon removed to a very isolated fortress of Mukku which is in the extreme north-western part of Persia. Throughout his long and tedious journey Bab went on preaching as before and meeting success everywhere. His movement was spreading like wild

fire throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The rapid spread of the movement to so many thousand people in such a short time is itself a great miracle. Professor Browne in one of his articles on the subject says, "I have often heard wonder expressed by the Christian ministers at the extraordinary success of the Bahai missionaries, as contrasted with almost complete failure of their own." "How is it," they say, "that the Christian doctrine, the highest and noblest the world has ever known, though supported by all the resources of the Western civilization, can only count its converts in Mohammedan lands by twos and threes, while Bahaism can reckon them by thousands?"

The reason was that whereas the Christian missionaries try to work for the propagation of religion which is only an outer shell of the Truth long lost to the Church, the Bahais and the Babis were the burning torches that set fire to the hearts wherever they went. They were channels and instruments to the working of a Divine Force that was descending upon the earth at that time. At another place Professor Browne says, "Persian Muslims will tell you often that Babis bewitch or drug their guests so that these, impelled by a fascination that they cannot resist, become similarly affected by what the aforesaid Muslims regard as a strange and incomprehensible madness. Idle and absurd as this belief is, it yet rests on the basis of fact stronger than that which supports the greater part of what they allege concerning this people. The spirit which pervades the Babis is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influ-

ence. It cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will; but, should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion which they are not likely to forget."

A strong Movement of persecution was launched by the Government and the Mullas, who constantly excited the ignorant masses against the Babis. Many families of the Babis were ruined and many innocent people suffered great cruelty and martyrdom at the hands of the agitated and the fanatic Mullas. This, far from lessening the vigour of the Babis, filled them with a greater spirit of heroism and zeal, and each vied with the other to do his duty and face the ordeal bravely. Kirrat ul Ayn formed an order of women workers who did splendid work and shared the burden and sufferings of their brothers and husbands. She herself was a poetess, orator and a "heroine of the cause" and a tireless worker whose every word was inspiration itself. She travelled from city to city preaching the new faith and organising its expansion and filling all whom she met with a new spirit. She too was arrested and cruelly tortured and finally put to death. A European writer, Charles Mason Remey, writes about her: "As a woman many decades above her time, her life and example are an inspiration to all, specially to her sisters of the Orient, who, through the cause for which she died, are now being lifted from former condition of ignorance and oppression into one of knowledge and freedom."³ The tortures to which these women were ex-

³ From *The Bahai Movement*.

posed can be imagined by the following extract from a speech of Abdul Baha delivered in Paris⁴:—"East has begun to educate its women. Some there are in Persia who have become liberated through his cause (*i.e.*, of Bahaism) whose cleverness and eloquence the Ulemas cannot refute. Many of them are poets. They are absolutely fearless. The mother-in-law of Sultan ul Shuhoda (King of the Martyrs) was at Isfahan when Bab declared himself. She was in the company of that famous woman, the poet Kirrat ul Ayn, and together they were stoned in the streets. When her son-in-law was imprisoned she was living with her brother, and the day they martyred him she passed her time in prayer, crying, 'O God, help him to remain firm.' This noble woman witnessed his martyrdom and that of her husband's. She passed through great trials. They pillaged her husband's belongings and left her without support. . . . The prince, the governor of Isfahan, when he heard that she was at her brother's house, sent for her. She entered his presence alone and hardly had he set his eyes on her when he fell upon her with blows, and kicked her till she became unconscious. Calling to his wife he said, 'Come and see to what a state I have reduced this woman;' then he threw her out into the street. Later when her brother found her she was half-dead. In spite of this, as with a new impulse, she spread the cause everywhere. Her brother said to her, 'Are all these troubles not sufficient for you that you begin again?' 'I cannot help it,' she replied, 'I must go forward; if how-

⁴ From Talks of Abdul Baha given in Paris.

ever my actions are a source of danger to you, I will go away,'—but he would not allow this and they remained in Isfahan. . . . She was one of those women to whom I refer. . . . She was free and unafraid. Wherever she went she spoke of what she knew. . . . You in the West can hardly understand the extent of this progress." The ruthless persecution that followed during this period is too cruel to believe. The following passage from "The Bahai Movement"⁵ will give an idea of the terrible fanaticism of the orthodox. "Aroused by their priests the fanatical Moslems fell upon the believers in many parts of the land, pillaging and burning homes, torturing and murdering men, women and children. These crimes are too revolting to be mentioned in detail. The heart seems to stand still while listening to the accounts of the marvellous courage and fortitude of even the children, not to mention that of women and men. These souls with the greatest calmness and joy submitted to the most fiendish torture and death, rather than resent or deny their faith, when denial would have saved them. . . . Sometimes, the Babi fugitives banded together to resist the attacks of the Moslems, and in some instances they defended themselves bravely only to be slaughtered in the end by the overwhelming numbers of their adversaries. That 'the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church' is again proven to the world. . . . people who knew little or nothing of the Bab and his teachings, save that a great Prophet's forerunner had come, were confirmed in the faith and went forth to serve and to die when called

⁵ Charles Mason Remey.

upon." It was one of the strictest injunctions of Bab not to show enmity or hatred to the enemy, and to bear all suffering patiently with a pure heart and mind. The Babis did this too well, regarding which the same author writes, "As one listens to the account of the early Babis, of their mission and labour, sufferings and martyrdoms, one sees a wonderful spirit of love of God which actuates them as they respond to the call. One is thrilled as he realises that the days of the vital and the burning faith, such as moved the apostles and the fathers of old, has again come to pass; for this latter day religion is bearing the same kind of spiritual fruit which the religion of the past bore in their earlier days."

From the above account it can be seen clearly that Bab's life was in constant peril. There was no chance of his release. The fanatics were clamouring for his death. He was removed from the fortress of Makku to a still remoter prison in Chih-rik and was closely guarded. The Clergy demanded from the Government a trial and an open examination of his views; and this "investigation" was held in the town of Tabriz by the Governor's order. Bab was brought there before the tribunal as a prisoner, where all manner of insults and indignities were heaped upon him and in the end he was flogged, one of the chief Mullas applying the rods with his own hands. After this Bab was returned to his former prison in Chih-rik. In this prison Bab wrote a number of letters to his friends which were with great difficulty smuggled out. In many places of his letters he alludes to the great Glory of the one whom God will manifest, and who was in the world at that

time but remained unknown to men. He enjoined on his followers to be true to him when he comes. He sent many letters to a person named Mirza Hosain Ali Noor, who later on became known as Baha Ullaha (The Glory of God), whom he had never personally met but with whom he felt a constant inner union. With the last instalment of letters he sent to him his signet ring and his pen. Baha Ullaha at this time was actively working for the same cause. At length the Government saw that no amount of repression could check the Movement. They thought that the only way to strike a fatal blow to it would be to put an end to Bab's life. Accordingly an order for his execution was passed by the Prime Minister and Bab was transferred from the fortress of Chih-rik to the prison of Tabriz. On the 9th July 1850 Bab and his chief disciple were taken to an open square in the town and suspended with ropes against a wall. A company of Armenian Christian soldiers was drawn up and the order of fire was given. A volley of bullets were shot at them and the people saw the two falling on the ground, the rope on the top being cut by bullets. But when the smoke cleared a little more, there was a great consternation on finding that both the prisoners were unhurt and alive. Evidently the aim was too high; perhaps no soldier wished his bullet to kill the saint, so aimed at the rope instead. Bab and his devotees were again suspended as before, but there was such a consternation among the soldiers that the officer-in-charge declined to take any further action. So another batch of native soldiers was ordered out and this time the volley riddled them with

bullets and death was instantaneous.

After the death of these two, several Babis were led to be executed, among whom was Bab's uncle, Haji Mirza Seyyid. The people in the crowd called them mad men. "There upon," writes Professor Browne, "Haji Mulla Ismail turned towards them and said, 'Yes, we are Babis, but mad we are not. By God, O people, it is for your awakening and for your enlightenment that we have foregone life, wealth, wife and child, and have shut our eyes to the world and its citizens, that perchance ye may be warned, and may escape from uncertainty and error, that ye may fall to making enquiry, that ye may recognize the truth as it meets, and that ye may no longer be veiled therefrom.' Then he took off his turban

and said to the executioner, 'Go on with thy work,' and the latter, filled with amazement, struck the fatal blow."⁶

The dead bodies were cast in the moat open to the public view as a warning to all. In the darkness of the night they were removed by some faithful Babis and after being swathed in silk removed from the town disguised as a bale of merchandise. For many years they had to be kept hidden and removed secretly from place to place as occasion and wisdom demanded, till Abdul Baha, the son and the spiritual successor of Baha Ullaha, deposited them in a sarcophagus in the crypt of the shrine of the Bab, in the Holy Land.

⁶ From Professor Browne's *A Traveller's Narrative*.

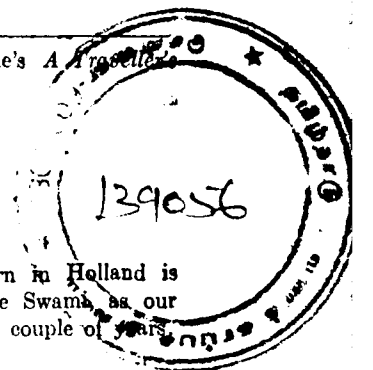
A VISIT TO HOLLAND

BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

[The following note of Swami Siddheswarananda's short sojourn in Holland is culled from one of his letters written from Paris in May last. The Swami, as our readers are aware, is propagating Vedantic Culture in Europe for over a couple of years.—The Editors.]

I SHALL write about my visit to Holland. I was to have gone this time to Florence as I had written before; but owing to the course of political events, my friends would not permit me to go to Italy, where there is no sympathy for British subjects at this moment. So on the 21st of April I took train, in the morning, for the Hague. Amsterdam Express goes at an enormous speed, but one does not feel it owing to the excellent construction of the carriages. While I was in the restaurant car during the lunch hour, I was reminded, on seeing the waiter, of a story that is now

current. A Dutchman was dining in the restaurant car of a German train, and when the waiter approached him with the usual "Heil Hitler," he made no reply. The waiter was annoyed. "Every time I say 'Heil Hitler' to you," he said, "you must say 'Heil Hitler' to me." "Hitler," replied the Dutchman, "does not mean anything in Holland." "May not now," said the waiter, "but one day you will get our Fuhrer in Holland too." "Perhaps so," rejoined the Dutchman smiling. "We already have your Kaiser!"



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I had half a mind to stop at Antwerp and Brussels where there are some people very interested in our literature and who regularly correspond with me, but I did not want to break the joy of a holiday by again thinking of work. One thing we have to learn from the West is how to take a holiday. These people know it as they know the secret of work too. During the time they are at work, they know only that; and when they have their weekends, they get out of their homes only after bundling all their cares and worries safely out of contact with their programme for outing.

As we got off Belgium, or even before that, we found indications of the nature of the land from which Holland derives her name. In French the country is called *Pays Bas*, that is, low country. Extensive flat lands, with only here and there windmills to show any variation in dimension. The country is absolutely two-dimensional. When we crossed the frontier we had to set back our time; for the summer time in Holland begins only on the 15th May, whereas in France it begins on April 8th. As days become longer there is a corresponding adjustment in clock time. In October, again, in France as days become shorter, the time will be changed and we gain one hour as we lost one hour in summer. So when it was twelve noon in France it was only eleven in Holland. I was reminded of this in a curious manner. Seeing my time approaching the arrival hour in the Hague, I began to arrange my things to get out of the train, when I was humorously told by my neighbour that I have to wait one more hour to see the Hague. I fulminated against this indiscretion of

changing hour in each part of Europe according to its own whims and fancies. The European comes to standardise life in India by telling us of our faults—that we have so many differences in dress and food. But what is Europe but an area of multiplicity! And they want to civilise us into unity! Between Paris and the Hague one sees three different currencies, three or four different languages and such vast difference in the customs and manners of the people. Even the lunch and dining hours are different, and it takes time to get habituated to these and to train the appetite according to these customs. The European who tells of our faults forgets for the moment that the area of India is that of the whole of Europe minus Russia; and still at bottom there is greater cultural unity in India than here. In spite of our numerous quarrels between the Hindus and the Mohammedans, our civilisation has not failed; for at the bottom we are all children of Hindustan. European civilisation has not achieved this; for there is no integral unity based on a continuous tradition that is strong enough to avoid total collapse.

By four in the afternoon we arrived at the Hague. Swami Y— along with two devotees had come to meet at the Station. After dinner the Swami took me to the sand dunes that border the beach; and from the dunes we had such a fine view of the sea. Oh! what a relief I felt at the sight of the sea after so many months. Then we came to the world-famous beach of the Hague called the Scheveningen. It is a most luxurious place. I got some idea of the war neurosis of the Dutch. The soldiers were patrolling some portions of the beach and with high-

power projecting lights they were scanning the skies; for the Fuhrer can invade them at any moment. But the Dutch have a nice way of warding off attack. You know that the country has a lower level than the sea in many places and the famous dykes hold water out from the plains that are extensively used for agriculture. Now they have made all the necessary preparations to dynamite the dykes and flood the country; and Hitler will have to swim with his army, unless it be in mid-winter when all water will get congealed. So when the same experiment was tried during the Napoleonic wars, it was a failure, as the Emperor marched on the ice and subdued the country.

In Holland they have monarchy. Queen Wilhelmina is ruling for the last forty years or more. She seems to be the nearest competitor with Queen Victoria in the art of occupying the throne for so many successive years. She is very much revered, and in these days, when the democracies with republican basis have all failed, Holland is imitating the conditions in England in making the throne the centre of stability and continuity of tradition. The Dutch are so sorry that for so many years they had no king. Last year when the princess Juliana was expecting a baby, there was so much excitement as they all expected the birth of an 'Orange,' as the king is called. But the child was a girl. They will have the same excitement this year also as the princess is expecting another baby.

It is curious to observe the change in the atmosphere from France to Holland. Everything becomes different in five hours. The first thing

that impresses one is the extraordinary cleanliness with which everything is kept in Holland. The roads are scrupulously clean; in Paris one gets the impression of being only in Calcutta or Madras. But in Holland we get some idea of European cleanliness as in Switzerland. The country is very very rich. They, with a population of five or six millions, have big colonies full of resources. They rule over fifty million people in East Indies. They are very cultured, all politeness. The Hague is the virtual capital of the country although for name's sake it is Amsterdam. The Queen has to stay because of this in the nominal capital for a week in a year. The palaces, the parliamentary buildings, the international Peace Palace (High Court to judge international problems), are all here, and the famous University of Leyden is only fifteen minutes drive from the Hague.

One Dr.—, a graduate of the Calcutta University is in the Hague. He is a disciple of B—G— and is also devoted to Sri Ramakrishna. He is an extremely enterprising young man with an enormous capacity for different vocations such as painting, photography, etc. He is in Europe for the last fourteen years, and is much liked by all. He has a Clinic called 'Institute Prana' where he treats people by giving massage. He has wonderful powers of the hand, besides the science he knows. Swami Y— was treated by him for the rheumatism he developed, and now the Swami says that he is completely free from it because of the massage he took from this Doctor. He has one of the finest buildings in the fashionable quarters. It is in his well-furnished

and decorated receiving room that Swami Y— holds his weekly discourses. On the Wednesday I was there, the Swami requested me to give the talk which I did. I find Holland is a very fine field for Vedanta work. For Swami Y— it is specially easier here, as every one knows English. Because of the contact with the East some of them have great reverence for our culture and ideals. And Swami Y— humorously remarked, "Yes you have to pay the price of your conquest. You have taken so much from the East, now you accept the riches of the East in another form—the riches that will stay with you. No Hitler can rob you of it. That is the nemesis of conquest. Rome conquered Greece; but who conquered finally? It was Grecian culture that spread through Rome to Europe."

The method of Swami Y—'s work is quite different from the type we are accustomed to see in the West. He has formed different groups in Zurich, Lausanne, St. Mortiz and Geneva. And you all know that the work in Paris is the direct result of his enterprise. A few friends invite him to a place, he goes there, and in a very informal manner he starts classes and gives interviews. He attracts very sincere souls to him. In Holland, besides the general interest he has created in the group, we find some excellent devotees whose atmosphere makes us feel, even in distant Holland, that we are only in India. I came into contact with four such families and three of them invited us to their homes, where we had tea or dinner. The Swamiji has an invitation to go to Sweden. Perhaps during the summer months, if he does not go to Switzerland, he may go there.

One of the friends of the Swami who attends his class took me to see the Art Gallery. The paintings of Rembrandt, Van Dyke, Ruebens, Potter and a host of others impressed me very much. Some of these paintings of the 17th century are so large in size, that they are more the work of a school of painters than that of a single painter.

One of my dreams in visiting Holland was to see the place where the great philosopher Spinoza lived and worked. Spinoza was a very poor man and he worked his livelihood by cutting glasses for spectacles. He had a patron who allowed him to stay in a small room just under his roof. One can hardly stand up there without the head touching the tiles and in the place where he breathed his last there is not even the space for one to stretch himself normally. There on that solitary spot, hangs a wreath of flowers, the humble homage of some other visitor. I felt sad that I did not bring a wreath to place at the place where he died. But there I stood in deep meditation and paid my homage to that philosopher who is so well known in India. In that room there is minimum furniture—a simple table and a chair—and on the wall he had hung up the motto in Dutch language, which he himself had etched on the brass. It runs thus: ONKUNDE DOET DWALDEN, which means "Ignorance is the cause of error." In another room are preserved the books on Geometry and other subjects which Spinoza used and some manuscript pages from his books. On another table are arranged some sample pages from the books or articles on Him written in the different languages of the world. I searched in vain to find

some in any of the Indian languages; but there was none. Why should India be behind in honouring the memory of this great philosopher! From another side of the room one can see the synagogue which excommunicated Spinoza. There are some pictures on the wall that represent the persecutions that Spinoza had to undergo; one of them represents the philosopher as walking calmly on the road while his co-religionists are throwing stones at him. There is a perfect composure on the face.

On my arrival at the Hague, Swami Y— told me that he and Dr.— desired to perform a *homa* in right Hindu style in the Doctor's house. The Swami asked me to help in the preparations. We had to find many substitutes for *durva*, *bilva*, *sesame*, etc. One of the devotees brought a good number of sandalwood chips. On the previous day I melted a large quantity of good butter and made ghee. A good asbestos sheet was got to raise the *homa-kunda*. So, on the 31st of April, at morning 10 A.M., we did the *homa*. We were both dressed in pure Hindu style with *gerrua* cloths and the Doctor and another Indian student from the Leyden University put on *dhoti*. The Indian student, Pundit P— read and chanted *Purusha Sukta* and other Vedic verses. A few selected friends were invited. The whole atmosphere was made tense by the gravity and meditation of Swami Y—. The ceremonies were gone through exactly in the same manner as we do in India. And once more I got back that spiritual atmosphere of India. These external forms have much value. They are the vehicles through which the culture of India has been preserved; and when

we touch them, once more the whole pageant of Indian History, punctuated by its spiritual heroes, passes before the mind's eye. If to us the *Janmabhoomi*—native land—is more a spiritual concept than a geographical expression, we get a bit of India whenever its spiritual ideals are honoured. And for a time, enveloped in the smoke coming from the *Ahuti* made with the rose leaves dipped in ghee and smell of burnt sandalwood, we were screened out from all that is not India, and through the shortest and speediest means of cultural transport, we were in Bharatavarsha on the curls of smoke coming from the *homa-kunda*. Doctor himself had cooked Indian dishes and we all, along with some Dutch friends, squatted on the floor and ate with our fingers. We told our friends that this ceremony should not be taken as any indication, or any promise, of its introduction into Europe. Far from it. We four Indians met, we felt the desire to be back home, and we felt quite at home when we smelt and felt India through the Ganges water which we all carried and these little artistic ceremonies and our mother-tongue. We four Indians spoke three different mother-tongues. Fortunately we all knew Bengali and we spoke that to our heart's content. I found great difficulty to talk Bengali in the first few days, owing to the percolation of French words. Bengali too, being an acquired language as far as I am concerned, I had for a time to wrestle with French words to express my thoughts.

Swami Y—'s main interest in inviting me to the Hague at this time of the year was to show me the extensive tulip fields in blossom. Last year though he was in Holland, just

at that time when the tulips were to blossom he had come away here. This time he wanted me also to go to him for this purpose, though I told him that more than in any sight-seeing my interest was to share his holy company and see the devotees of the Lord. In a tourist car we went out. There was an excellent sun and for more than an hour we moved about seeing these bulb fields. The colours on the flowers are so variegated that one gets fascinated by the play of colours. Holland is famous for these bulbs. The farmers grow them not for the flowers. These bulbs are exported to all the imaginable horticultural gardens of the world; and during this season, the huge production of flowers except for a few that are brought to other places, are all thrown to the cattle. We were wondering why no essential oil is prepared from these or some colour extracts. So, silently we have thrown a suggestion mentally to any prospective scientist, who wants to complicate life more by fresh discoveries, to find some use for these flowers. Everything is possible. In Germany because of the economic difficulties, of which the outside world hears so little, people are making cloths and many things from extracts of milk. Our *Kamadhenu* would not have even thought of sending out such finished products from her being, as the scientists are able to command from her.

Holland you know is the place for cows. Some say there are more inhabitants of the bovine species in Holland than the human. However, we saw many huge grazing grounds and mother cow was evident everywhere.

Another day we went to Leyden, the University town. First we went

to see the State Museum where the world-famous image of *Prajnaparamita* is preserved. *Prajnaparamita* is the Goddess of wisdom in the Buddhist Pantheon. When we came to the presence of the image, we all felt that a visit to Leyden only to see this would be worth while. It is so charming, imposing and expressive. It gives expression through sculpture to what would take a whole system of philosophy to expound. We saw many statuettes of Buddha, and in one very guarded chamber we found all the jewels and ornaments the Dutch got from India. There were beautiful images of Ganesha and Durga as *Mahishasuramardini*, and in front of all these images I chanted hymns and paid them a type of honour that they do not receive from students of archaeology or history, who come there to conduct research work. We then went to the museum. One section of the museum is worked by Mr. B—, a student of the Swami. He works on the section devoted to the collection of molluscs. He opened many cases and showed us the evolution of the molluscs. Our conch was there; with many of its ancestors, of thousands of years of antiquity. Mr. B— takes such an interest in his subject that I envied the students that will come to this section to study. He makes every description living. We saw the skeletons of some antediluvian elephants.

Pundit P—, of whom I have already spoken, besides being a student of archaeology at the Leyden University, has also a temporary appointment there as a professor of Hindustani and Bengali literatures. Because of Punditji we were able to see the very old university. It is one of the oldest in Europe. Amongst the

other old ones are the one at Prague and the one in Paris. We went and saw the Senate House. It is a very very old convent. As we climb the staircase, we pass through centuries. On the walls we find pencil sketches made by students, perhaps as they stood waiting for their turn to be called before the Board of Examiners. One represents a student explaining his thesis; and it must have been so dry or the professor so stupid, that he goes into deep sleep and the student by the strength of his voice attempts to rouse the professor. This must have been centuries old. There is a waiting room and on the time-worn table we find all kinds of pen-knife cuts. All the marks on the walls are kept as they were inscribed hundreds of years back. This sense of respect for antiquity we have to cultivate in India. Last year we had some nice fun when Swami Y— was here. He was disappointed with Paris. "What is this, Brother," he said, "your Paris buildings are not at all whitewashed." Then I pointed out to him how these buildings were so very old, and that for preserving the atmosphere of the place no modernism was permitted to spoil the effect which was transmitted through ages. The historic sense is so strong in the people here that we can see things kept in the same way as it happened centuries ago. I remember a visit we paid to the historic temples of Belur and Halebid in Mysore in 1926. There, in Halebid, we were in some places shocked by the effect of whitewash seen on the walls that contained beautiful images. Now, thanks to the Monuments Preservation Act of Lord Curzon, no such vandalism is permitted.

A place like the university quarters at Leyden takes you back to the historic past. Even the signboards with "apartments are to let," are still done in Latin. They say—I do not know how far true—that throughout Europe it is only in Leyden you see this vestige of the middle ages. We saw round the Senate Hall, and the museum of the university. I hope our Indian universities and colleges will have the museums where one can see the history of the institution through the documents preserved from long time. In the museum they have hung up a bust, enlargement photo, of the Princess Juliana, daughter of the Queen. She worked like any ordinary student in the university and took her doctorate in law a few years back. Many stories of her democratic temperament are current in Leyden. Her mother, the Queen, preserves the old tradition. But the princess is very modern. She used to go to the college sometimes in ordinary street cars or tram cars as we saw there. She was, so the story goes, often late in catching the tram. One day, seeing her coming in hurry to catch a car that was just starting, the conductor took pity on the unknown student, made some concession and stopped to pick her up. But as this was repeated some other days also the conductor, it is said, told her. "Mademoiselle, this will be the last occasion I can show mercy. You must come in time." Long afterwards he came to know that he was addressing the heir to the throne.

The day before I left we went to Amsterdam. It is some fifty miles off from the Hague. There is now a new autostrade between the Hague and the Capital. I loved the visit more for the journey in the car. The

road is so fine that our car went at an ordinary speed of 130 kilometres per hour, i.e., some hundred miles per hour. I, who am so nervous in Paris, or even anywhere else, if the car speeds above forty miles, felt so poised that I could have allowed even a higher speed. On a very flat road, with fine pieces of gardens, with green verdure in the middle to separate the two courses of traffic, with two demarked sections even on your own side for cars to 'double up,' i.e., to overtake another, there is no chance to have any nervousness. It was raining at Amsterdam and I felt very dull. We went only to see the picture galleries where I was so an-

xious to see the engravings of Rembrandt. We saw them and many other sections of paintings and sculpture and then saw in detail the colonial museum. That impressed me very much. One can have some very definite ideas of the Dutch in East Indies.

Holland is the country where bicycle is largely used. The country is very flat and this perhaps is the cause. Sometimes when the traffic is regulated at road crossings, one finds three hundred or four hundred cycles waiting to get the permission from the policeman directing the traffic, to proceed.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

(1) *Talks with Swami Vivekananda*; (2) *Practical Vedanta*; (3) *The Last Message of Sri Krishna*: Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora Himalayas. Price, Rs. 1-12-0, As. 10 and Rs. 2-8-0 respectively.

The first of these contains a series of inspiring conversations that Swami Vivekananda held with an intimate disciple of his. In these conversations the Swami is seen at his best. They give his views on a variety of themes, both spiritual and secular, in a luminous and pointed manner. Several points of genuine interest to a real patriot as well as a spiritual aspirant are beautifully explained here. The last book is the 11th Canto of Srimad Bhagavata with the Sanskrit text, English translation and brief notes.

It may be noted that none of these books are new in their contents. They are however new in their form and the titles they bear. In this world of relativity the form is as important as the spirit—sometimes perhaps more. A good dish served in an unclean manner becomes repulsive, while even an indifferently prepared dish served in the proper way may become attractive. In the same way a good book

loses all its charm when it is printed and got up badly, while sometimes even a book of inferior worth appears charming when its form is attractive. In the case of the books under review, both form and matter come to an equally high standard of excellence. Though they are reprints, it will be advantageous even for those who possess their earlier editions, to go in for them; for they come to the highest standard of excellence in the art of book-making, and the inspiring messages they convey, will be found all the more inspiring in the setting of rare beauty that the book-maker's art has given them.—S.T.

Cultural Movements in Modern India: By Ram Prasad Pandeya, M.A., Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publisher, Agra. Pages 122. Price, Re 1.

Mr. Pandeya attempts in five chapters a short history of the Cultural Movements of India that originated in the last century. In these chapters, after giving an account of the historical origin of Indian civilization, he passes under view in a kaleidoscopic manner the various religious revivals such as Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Vedanta Society, Satsang and Educational, Literary

and Political movements and concludes with 'a vision of the future.' The book deserves attention in so far as hardly any other attempt has as yet been made in this direction by any one else. But an endeavour to assess contemporary history is beset with many difficulties; it is nearly impossible that our estimate will be either proportionate or detached. In the dust-storm of the political struggle events can hardly be seen in their proper perspective, everything looking blurred and shadowy. This is not, therefore, the most convenient time for unbiassed chronicling. In spite of these handicaps Mr. Pandeya has succeeded to a large extent in taking an impersonal view of the data, and his small brochure will serve not only as an introductory book for the college students, for whom it is intended, but will be an interesting and instructive study to the general public as well. The book instils in us the hope that India is not yet a subject for post-mortem analysis; she lives and grows in dynamism and power. While thus recognising the value of the work we should not fail to call attention to some inaccuracies in the book which could have been easily avoided by careful revision in the light of books deemed authoritative on the subjects concerned. To give a few instances, Sri Ramakrishna was born in 1836 and not 1834 as given in the book; the statement that the Brahman lady instructed Sri Ramakrishna in monistic doctrines of Vedanta is also not correct. The Brahman lady instructed him only in Tantric practices. The statements that Sri Ramakrishna lived and behaved for years as Christian and

Mohammedan also cannot be authentically documented. He took only three days to complete his Islamic Sadhana and he had to make no effort for Christian realisation which dawned upon him on seeing a picture of the Madonna and the child. That Swami Vivekananda was taken to Sri Ramakrishna by an uncle is an erroneous statement, the truth being that he was advised to visit Sri Ramakrishna by Ram Chandra Datta who was a cousin.

In spite of these inaccuracies as to the details, in general outline the book is well written and serviceable.

It has an index of proper names appearing under the sub-heading 'Principal Institutions.'—P.C.

Modern India: By Swami Vivekananda. Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 64. Price as. 6.

The present treatise is the third edition of the translation of Swami Vivekananda's famous book, Vartaman Bharat in Bengali. The book is one of the most striking works of Swami Vivekananda. For, it is both a reminiscence and a prophecy; a guidance for the future in the light of old achievements and past experiences. Those of our national workers who draw their inspirations from the Third International will do well to go through these pages and then and then only will they be able to achieve successfully the hopes and aspirations engendered in them by exotic influences, in a way that is best suited to the genius of the race. Otherwise there will be friction and dissensions and so much labour lost. The book will be helpful in the real understanding of India.—P.C.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Brindaban, Dt., Muttra, for the year 1938.

The above Sevashram "possesses the only large indoor Hospital at Brindaban, the indoor Hospital conducted by the District Board and Municipality being intended only for a few police cases." In the indoor department there were 24 beds altogether; and 346 cases were treated in 1938 of which 47 were surgical cases. The outdoor depart-

ment treated 15,810 new cases and 26,339 repeated cases, the total number of surgical cases being 583. About 23 poor invalids and helpless ladies also received monthly outdoor relief in kind or cash. The total receipts and disbursements during the year under review were Rs. 8,813-11-9 and Rs. 7,988-10-3 respectively. Thus the balance left was Rs. 815-1-6. The income derived from the permanent fund of the Sevashram is not sufficient to carry on the present work even for three months. For the ba-

PRIVATE MORALITY AND CIVIC DUTY

MANKIND has been having a prolonged schooling on this planet, extending over ages. Consequently to-day it is the possessor of a grand civilisation and a subtle culture. The wealth of wisdom acquired after age-long experiment, error and amendment passes on as the property of the many from the hands of smaller groups. Culture cannot be democratised overnight, because like the ingredients that form the crystal or the pearl that is produced in the oyster shell, a subtle internal change alone can engender the refined quality of culture. None can jump into maturity—it is not like disastrously jumping into conclusions. Growth has its own laws, and they require to be satisfied before it can take place. Culture, like water, gravitates from higher to lower levels by percolation, creating its pre-conditions by proximity. It cannot be had in a trice. No one can, by striking a bargain, exchange a disorderly, coarse, dull mind for a co-ordinated, well-furnished, alert one. One gets true culture only by submitting to healthy influences internal and external in all the relations of life. The individual and the society are reciprocals; influence issuing from the one permeates the other, and returns back to the source wherefrom it started. If habit is second nature, nature is only inalienable habit. Nature plays large and nurture larger part in raising the fruits of culture.

The points on which civilisation and culture contact life are many. We shall essay below to consider some aspects of civilisation known ordinarily as decencies of social life,

envisaged under moral character. At a time when the political and social fate of India is in the focal point, and the deplorable lack of discipline is trounced by the experienced leaders, it may be fitting to note, both from the viewpoint of private morality and civic duty, some of the neglected points of decency in life which, though apparently commonplace, lead to the impairment of important sides of a man's character by infraction.

No nation could afford to be so proudly narrow as to believe that culture and civilisation are the prerogative of a particular age or a particular country, although it might be conceded necessarily that they do not spread simultaneously over any society in its entirety. One has also to recognise that there are different types and forms of culture; but everywhere there is a norm of behaviour and a standard of decency according to each. It is often repeated by thoughtful men that culture is a matter of the mind. Civilisation cannot be reckoned merely in terms of the concrete products of crafts and technique. The cultural forms of one time may not have the same value at another; yet so long as one particular tradition is alive they have great influence in elevating a people.

Human mind has a potentiality for order. Knowledge is but stamping of this quality of order on external Nature; that is what classification and mutual association do in any branch of learning. Order in outlook is the major part of morality; order in behaviour is the best part of

civic behaviour. Every moment we are in need of our fellow-beings; mutual intercourse is the *sine qua non* of social life. On such occasions of contact there are accepted ways in which things are to be done and others in which things are not to be done. They are for the most part taken for granted without questioning at every step. Perhaps sometimes on scrutiny they may prove to be meaningless. An imperceptible mandate issuing from the social group to which one belongs easily rules out the objection that may lurk in the mind of some individuals. Rules of mannerly behaviour are the unwritten laws of any society. Though they may appear negligible in certain cases, disregard of conventions often would lead to barbarous consequences. A certain English writer remarked once, Habit or ritual is the mistress of men sane. Social rules have a sanctity which prevents collapse of manhood. Virtue is the offspring of good conduct—*achara-prabhavo dharmah*,—says the *Mahabharata*. Doubtless laws are for men and men are not for laws. Conventions have not even the force of law; but disregard of conventionally fixed ways of conduct soon threatens to be a moral danger. One may not get any answer when the grounds of such conventions are questioned, beyond the impersonal imperative which they carry. But to sustain wholesome human relations their value is immense. We shall specifically consider some of them immediately.

In all societies where personality or status plays an important part there is a high standard of courtesy. Courtesy is the inseparable companion of virtue. It grows within the hedge of healthy social conventions

jealously guarded in every stable society like tribal honour. The desire to please others by anticipating their wants and wishes and studiously avoiding all that would give them pain constitute the essence of polite behaviour. This is visible in the address and manners of a person. At every step, a dignified complacency and kindness render his behaviour attractive to everyone. It comes almost natural to every moral and refined person and sets off his character from that of the rest. It has special value in one's civic life. Even shining inner virtues will not look beautiful unless they are embellished with decency and decorum. Rightly has Tennyson remarked:

The greater man, the greater courtesy...
For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.

And according to Goethe, politeness is not merely obliging attention. "There is a politeness," said he, "of the heart which is akin to love. It gives the most agreeable politeness of outward conduct." Often expressions of thanks which people freely distribute are without this heart's politeness. The sagely author of *Samkshepasariraka*, Sarvajnatman, remarked in one place: To foster a sense of obligation is the sign of kindness—*etad eva hi dayalu-lakshanam yad vineyajana-buddhi-varadhanam*. According to situation, by observation, one may find out the conduct most suitable to the expression of such polite inner attitude. In any society one may easily tag on a catalogue of such virtues.

For instance, in Western countries there are certain unwritten social rules which everyone who has respect for good manners will not violate. A

gentleman speaks low. As a rule of conversation he will not gesticulate or raise his voice in drawing-rooms or in the streets even when he is justly excited. It will be always considered an affront to refined behaviour if an impulsive man gives unrestrained expression to all his moods in brawling strong language. It is the power of convention that guards one against several indecencies that are liable to arise in life—sharp contradiction, hoarse laughter and blustering and thumping parlour eloquence. One is not to announce his indisposition or uneasiness in the company of those who call on him. Even in a society where smoking is no taboo smoke-soddenness is never respected and no well-bred person would stoop to wound the susceptibilities of his neighbour by rude addiction to such a habit. More goes to the making of a fine gentleman than clothes. Newman's description of a gentleman is no doubt a sermon to bring home to all that it is not the gay coat that makes the gentleman. The influence of conventions in breeding true gentlemanliness is well recognised. It is the power of conventions that guard against such indecencies as noted above. What lies at the bottom of such conventions is respect for the personality of others, their body as well as soul. *Bhagavata*, IV: 3.22 says that the rule of going forth to meet, modest behaviour and salutation is observed by intelligent people directed towards the Divinity in man. As in any other matter, herein the spiritual view, which Hindus take even in matters of ordinary conventional behaviour, is evident. Where there is this respect, human relation will be sound and dignified. No gentleman, as an English moralist

observed, would "like to be hugged and slobbered over, or even perpetually thumped over the back, or prodded in the ribs, by his 'comrade' and still less the comrade performing all necessary natural functions in his presence." Respect and certain inviolable privacy supply the foundation for comradeship. That beautiful and salutary trait of modesty is nothing but the proper respect for the bodily presence of another. Sister Nivedita states in one of her writings, although there is only one 'you' in English to represent the different shades denoted by the various words in Latin or Indian languages denoting the second person singular or plural, the very tone will carry the sense which the speaker wants, if his mind is attuned to the sentiment required to be expressed.

Education begins a gentleman, conversation completes him—says the proverb. But few people are patient enough to lend ear to his interlocutor. The Persian writer Sadi observes with his usual vivacity: "A speech, O wiseacre, has a beginning and an end; bring not one speech into the middle of another. A man of judgment, discretion and prudence delivers not his speech till he finds an interval of silence. A prudent man will not obtrude his answer till he has the question stated to him in form." This reverence for form, proper in every activity of life, demands and justifies an intense application to the general details of life; it may not be significant to hasty eyes. But susceptibility to a feeling of its need is the essence of refinement.

They are important equally to the individual and the society to which he is bound. A man has to see that those to whom he comes nearest are

made happy. Business cannot be made an excuse to decline offices of humanity. One has to give what life with others may hourly demand. A man who has no humility, no reverence, no deference and no respect and who is not capable of true admiration is miles away from religion, and his social conduct is seldom free from blemishes. The late Professor McDougall has rightly warned, "Fussing and fuming irritate others by infection, even when our anger is not directed towards them; shun the company of such irritable and irritating people. . . . To clever, quick-brained persons the stupidity of other persons is apt to be irritating. Let them remind themselves on every such occasion that the other fellow's stupidity is not his fault, but rather his misfortune; and that their own quick cleverness is a gift from the gods which entitles them to no exceptions, but rather lays special obligations upon them—obligations of helpfulness, of tolerance and of service."

Works of great geniuses like Valmiki and Vyasa, Kalidasa and Shakespeare, Manu and other sages, reveal at every step how polite behaviour is to be cultivated in every situation. They have characterised great heroes in such a way that their reactions to situations impress us at once; at the same time sufficient allowance is made to errors in order that they may not be completely foreign to our nature. There are several places where Kalidasa has thrown beautiful hints of polite behaviour that is to be adhered to at court, in company of friends, in the presence of ascetics, in approaching hermitages and in meeting one's relations. His characterisation of King Dilipa, as

one in whom there was knowledge conjoined to modest silence, power graced by forbearance, charity free from self-adulation—is on the lips of every student. Magha, another well-known poet of the classical period, gives a beautiful picture how Sri Krishna met Yudhishtira and others on the eve of the great sacrifice (*Sisupalavadha* cantos XIII and XIV). There politeness, courtesy, affability and modesty are depicted in a highly poetic and impressive manner. In XIII: 68, he says that Sri Krishna, who was so much respected by the whole tribe, questioned the welfare of all, even that of a boy, all of whom among his innumerable kinsmen he distinctly remembered. In II:11, the poet puts in the mouth of Krishna these words: I am not sorry that the wicked Chaidya has offended me; I am deeply grieved that he harasses others.

There are hundreds of customs in domestic relations and one's daily behaviour which are calculated to refine our character. A metrical composition which depicts a hundred traits of a fool, *Murkhasataka*, says among others: A fool is idle even when he has capacity; he boasts in the company of the wise and learned; he desires to do big things beyond his power; he hastens to interpret without study; he pines over what is already given in gift; he is ready with unsolicited eloquence; he is mute when called upon to speak; he falls out when the gain is to be shared; he is full of anger at dinner; he gloats over wounding words; he seeks medicine in perfect health; he is inflated with flattery; he hits at another's heart with smiling words; though wedded to poverty he delights only in gossip; he boasts over the

pedigree without any virtue of his own; he attempts music though he has only a grating voice; he praises persons whose wickedness is patent to all; he slinks away from an assembly before its dispersal; he goes on errand but forgets the message; he praises his own taste of the food when the guests are many; he minimises food to get adulation; he interlopes when two persons speak; he worms into others' secret and broadcasts it; he stands security for persons unknown only for securing praise; he is jealous of a wholesome adviser; he is anxious to teach but is unfit for the purpose; he is shameless in wickedness; and he drowns what he wants to utter by foolish laughter.

A detractor is his own foe and the world's enemy. One may embroider his conversations and make them interesting to others by revealing all and more than what he knows of others' affairs and their personalities. Ultimately he plays a losing game; he hurts and estranges his own friends. A fool's tongue is long enough to cut his throat, as the proverb goes. Excessive loquacity is detrimental to one's esteem. He who distributes blame freely and speaks freely of himself cannot be liked by others and is a failure in team work. He lays down laws for others and creates only opposition. "The brutal mania for leading," said Swami

Vivekananda, "has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life. Take care especially of that" (Comp. W. S. V. Vol. V. p. 29).

Manu commands: One should not enter into altercation with his parents, relations and servants (IV: 180). One who salutes habitually and respectfully approaches experienced elders promotes his life, wisdom, honour and strength (II: 112). Do not be ready with a reply uninterrogated. Deaf ear to unjust enquiries (II: 110). Chewing the thumb and dirtiness are ruinous (IV: 71). One should not make over a gift with levity. In one place Valmiki says that *mangala* means noble conduct. Even according to rhetoricians of old one of the purposes of poetry was to familiarise with polite and moral behaviour.

We have made a rapid survey of the importance of social conventions, the moral attitude they foster and their effect in social life. The foundation of this essential, universal and imperative demand of social and individual virtues lies in the rational man's command over himself and his moods. The whole range of polite behaviour can be reduced conveniently to self-restraint and self-control which religion demands as soon as one makes up his mind to tread its path.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY A DISCIPLE

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

It was morning. The Holy Mother was preparing fruits for worship. The disciple was reading to her a letter written by a devotee. He wrote in a strain as though he were piqued with God. The Mother said in reply, "The Master used to say, 'Sages like Suka and Vyasa were at best ants.' God has this infinite creation. If you do not pray to God what does it matter to Him? There are many many people who do not even think of God. If you do not call on God, it is your misfortune. Such is the Divine Maya. He has thus made people forgetful of Him. He feels, 'They are quite all right, let them be!'"

Disciple: Mother, it is not that people, like the writer of this letter, do not want to see God; otherwise, why should such a question arise in their mind at all? The thing is that they feel greatly hurt that God whom they like to feel as their very "own" moves away from them. Buddha, Chaitanya, Jesus Christ and others like them, did so much for their devotees in order to insure their welfare.

Mother: That was also the attitude of our Master. It is not possible for me always to recollect all the devotees. I say to the Master, "O

Lord, please bless all, wherever they may be. I cannot remember everyone." And see, it is He who is doing everything. Otherwise, why should so many people come?

Disciple: That is true indeed. It is rather easy for men to believe Kali, Durga and other deities to be God, but is it easy to accept a man as God?

Mother: That depends upon His grace.

One day, later on, a devotee arrived. The disciple said to the Mother, "Mother, it is this devotee who wrote you that letter." The Mother said, "Is it so? I see he is a good boy." Then she said to the devotee, "You see, it is the nature of the water to flow downwards, but the sun's rays lift it up towards the sky; likewise it is the very nature of mind to go to lower things, to objects of enjoyment, but the grace of God can make such minds go towards higher objects."

It was about half past ten in the morning. A household devotee arrived and saluted the Mother. "Mother," said he, "Why do I not see the Master?" The Mother said, "Continue in your prayer, everything will happen in time. For how many cycles did the Munis and Rishis

of old practise austerities to realize God but did not succeed, and do you believe you will attain God in a flash? If not in this life, you will attain Him in the next. If not in the next, it will be after that. Is it so easy to realize God? But this time the Master has shown an easy path; therefore it will be possible for all to realize God."

After the devotee had left her, the Mother said, "He is so deeply engrossed in worldliness. He is the father of scores of children and still says, 'Why do I not see the Master?' Many women used to come to the Master. They would say to him, 'Why can't we concentrate our mind upon God? Why can't we steady our mind?' and things like that. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell them, 'You still smell of the lying-in room. First get rid of that smell. Why are you so worried about God-realization now? Everything will happen in course of time. In this life we have this meeting with one another. In the next we shall again meet and then you will attain to your goal.' It is easy to see a person as long as he lives in the body. I am now living here, so one can see me by merely coming here. How few have the good fortune to see the Master now with their physical eyes! Vijaya Goswami had seen the Master at Dacca. He felt his body. At that the Master said, 'That my soul goes out is not good; perhaps this body will not last for many more days'."

"Can you tell me who has seen God? He made Naren attain God-realization. Suka, Vyasa, and Shiva are big ants at the most. One may see a vision in dream but to see God in physical form is a matter of rare fortune.

(Excitedly) "Why can't one meditate if he has a pure mind? Why should he not be able to see God? When a pure soul performs Japam, he feels as if the holy name bubbles up spontaneously from within himself. He does not make an effort to repeat the name. One should practise Japam and meditation at regular times giving up idleness. One day while living at Dakshineswar I felt indisposed and left the bed rather late through sheer laziness. At that time I used to get up at three o'clock in the morning. The next day I woke up still later. Gradually I found that I did not feel inclined to get up early at all. Then I said to myself, 'Ah, here I have fallen a victim to idleness.' Thereupon I began to force myself to get up early. Gradually I got back my former habit. In such matters one should keep up the practice by one's grit.

"Austerities, worship, pilgrimage, the earning of money—all these one should do in the younger days. You see, even I have visited so many places at Benares and Brindavan on foot, but now I need a palanquin to go even a few feet. I lean upon others. In old age the body becomes filled with phlegm. It does not possess any strength. The mind loses its vigour. Is it possible to do anything at that time? It is quite right that the young Sannyasins of our Math have been directing their mind to God at an early age. This is the right time for them to do so. (To the disciple) My child, practise austerities and worship from right now. Will these things be possible later on? Whatever you want to achieve, this is the right time."

Disciple: Lucky indeed are those who receive your blessings now.

What will they do who will come later on?

Mother: What do you mean? Do you mean to say they will not succeed? God exists always everywhere. The Master is always there. They will succeed through His grace. Are not people of other countries making spiritual progress?

Disciple: The mind feels longing when it knows that it is loved; but do you really love us?

Mother: Do I not love you? I love him who does even a little for me, and you are doing so much. Whenever I touch a thing at home, I remember you. I love you very much and at the present state of health it is not possible to demonstrate it actively. I often think of those of you who are with me and for those who live far away, I say to the Master, 'O Lord, please look after them. I cannot always remember them.'

The Mother was seated on her bedstead. The disciple was reading to her letters written by her devotees. Krishnalal Maharaj was also there. The letters contained such statements as, "The mind cannot be concentrated etc." The Holy Mother listened to these and said in a rather animated voice, "The mind will be steadied if one repeats the name of God fifteen or twenty thousand times a day. It is truly so. O Krishnalal, I myself have experienced it. Let

them practise it first; if they fail, let them complain. One should practise Japam with some devotion, but this is not done. They will not do anything, they will only complain saying, 'why do I not succeed?'"

A devotee entered the room and asked the Mother about meditation and Japam. She said, "Repeating the name of God by beads or on fingers or according to fixed number is calculated to divert the mind to God. Through these means it is attracted to God. While repeating the name of God if one sees His form and becomes absorbed in Him, his Japam stops. One gets everything when he succeeds in meditation.

"The mind is by nature restless. Therefore at the outset, to make the mind steady, one should practise meditation by regulating the breathing a little. That helps to steady the mind. But one must not overdo it. That heats the brain. You may talk of vision of God or of meditation, but remember, mind is everything. One gets everything when the mind becomes steady.

"It is quite natural that man forgets God, therefore whenever the need arises, God Himself incarnates on earth and shows the path by Himself practising Sadhana. This time He has shown the example of renunciation. He himself has said that this time He will live for one hundred years in the company of his children."

THE CULT OF BHAKTI IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA-II

BY PROF. JADUNATH SINHA, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

[Dr. Sinha is the author of *Indian Psychology: Perception and Indian Realism* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London), two important books on the subjects indicated by the titles. The following instalment completes the article which we have published in the June issue of *The Vedanta Kesari* under the same title.—The Editors.]

BELIEF IN PERSONAL GOD

THE goal of the path of knowledge may be impersonal Brahman or the Absolute. But the cult of devotion requires a personal God. Devotion is possible only with personal God. "Personality implies a capacity for fellowship, or communion, or a feeling together." So God who is the object of loving devotion is the God of love. The Gita describes God as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe—father, mother, providence, support, lord, witness, shelter, and friend (IX: 17-18). He is our father, mother, friend and lover. He is our very own. He is the nearest and the dearest to us. None is nearer than He. None is dearer than He. He loves us more than our parents, friends, and lovers. He is the Purushottama or the Supreme Person. Let us love Him with all our being and abide in Him, full of infinite love and bliss.

BELIEF IN AVATARA

The Gita in expounding the cult of Bhakti, preaches the doctrine of Incarnation of God. Not only the human spirits are born again and again to complete the cycle of their empirical life, but God also assumes a human form, and appears on earth in person to give an impetus to the spiritual evolution of the human race. Transmigration of souls and incarnation of God go together. They are equally rational events (IV: 5).

Though God is imperishable, immutable lord of the universe and though He is devoid of birth in His inner essence, He creates Himself and assumes a human form by resorting to Prakriti, made of pure Sattva (purity), through His inscrutable power of Maya (IV: 6). The Lord says, "Whenever righteousness languishes and unrighteousness prevails, I create myself. I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the sinful, and for the establishment of the reign of righteousness." (IV: 7-8). "An Avatara is a descent of God into man, and not an ascent of man into God." Man, however elevated and sanctified, can never attain the nature of an Avatara. He remains a man all the same. God assumes a human form through His inscrutable power and becomes an Avatara. To recognize the divine nature of an Avatara or Incarnation of God in human form is extremely difficult. It passes comprehension by reason. God is infinite and eternal. He is imperishable and immutable. He is unmanifested and inexpressible. How can He manifest Himself in a finite human form? How can the Infinite become finite? How can He bind Himself in time and space? This passes our understanding. The deluded and the uninitiated think of an Avatara as a mere human being with all his littleness and greatness.

They cannot realise the imperishable, supreme nature of God in His finite human form. The deluded world cannot realise Him, the unborn, the imperishable, in a human form (VII: 25). The foolish disregard the human form of God, because they cannot realise His supreme divine nature in it. They cannot, for a moment, dream that a frail human being can be the supreme Lord of the whole universe (IX: 11). An Avatara is a mystery. He cannot be realised in His true nature, because He envelops Himself in a veil of inscrutable Yoga-maya or cosmic illusion to make Himself incomprehensible to common folk (VII: 25).

In the path of devotion God is conceived as God of love. There is fellowship between man and God. Man loves God and gives His whole being to Him. God also loves man and gives His whole being to Him. "I am thine. Thou art mine." This dictum sums up the relation between them. So there is nothing strange in God's limiting Himself by His inscrutable power and assuming a human form to love man and be loved by man like a human being. It is God in a human form. None can comprehend Him except through His grace. He makes Himself intelligible to a few blessed immortals. He gives them glimpses into His divine nature. No one can have an uninterrupted realisation of the divine nature in a human being endowed as he is with frailties of humanity. Blessed are they who realise the Infinite in the finite—God in man. The Lord says, "He who knows the secret of my divine birth and action, in its essence, comes unto me, and is never born again." (IV: 9).

GOD IS ATTAINED BY UNFLINCHING DEVOTION

God, the Supreme Person, is attained by unswerving devotion (VIII: 22). He who constantly meditates upon Him, without thinking of any other, can easily attain Him. He is eternally united with Him (VIII: 14). And such a condition can easily be attained through unswerving devotion and love (VIII: 10). The Lord says, "Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, prostrate thyself before Me, Thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy supreme goal, attuning thyself to Me" (IX: 34). "Fix thy mind on Me; concentrate thy reason on Me; thou shalt undoubtedly abide in Me hereafter" (XII: 8). "I speedily deliver those from the cycle of birth and death, who surrender all their actions to Me, fix their minds on Me, and meditate on Me with undivided mind" (XII: 6-7). He who serves Me exclusively by devotion transcends Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas which constitute human nature, and attains kinship with Brahman" (XIV: 26). "I cannot be realised by the study of the Vedas, by the practice of austerities, by charity or sacrifices. But by undivided love and devotion alone, I can be realised in my essence" (XI: 53-54).

Whatever is offered to God with love and devotion is accepted by Him. He does not reject any humble offering of a loving soul. The Lord says, "He who offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that I accept from the aspiring soul, offered as it is with devotion" (IX: 26). But we should offer our being to Him. Whatever we do, whatever we eat, whatever we sacrifice, what-

ever we give in charity, whatever penances we undergo, all these we should offer to God (IX: 27). We should dedicate our very soul to God.

Japa and Kirtana (repetition of holy names and chanting of divine songs) are the easiest means of meditating on God and calling forth love for Him. Japa is the best of all kinds of sacrifices. The Lord identifies Himself with the Japa-yajna (X: 25). Reciting the name of God easily fills the heart with devotion. It purifies the mind and tunes it to the Divine spirit. Kirtana or chanting the name and glory of God in company with devout men is another potent means of spiritualizing human nature. It easily inspires the heart with divine influence. The Lord says, "There are some who always chant my name, prostrate themselves before Me, and worship Me with devotion, ever united with Me. With their minds fixed on Me, and their lives centred in Me, enlightening each other, ever conversing about Me, they live in perpetual bliss. To them ever united with Me, worshipping Me with love, I give true knowledge, by which they come to Me. Out of pure compassion for them, I dispel the darkness of ignorance by the light of wisdom" (X: 9-11; IX: 14). Thus devotion leads to true knowledge and wisdom. Devotion dispels ignorance (avidya) and the light of wisdom floods the soul. The Lord says, "A person suffused with the spirit of God and with a tranquil soul and a good will to all beings, obtains supreme devotion to Me. By devotion he knows Me in essence, and enters into my being" (XVIII: 54-55). Thus devotion gives rise to true knowledge of God, and this knowledge

brings about perfect communion between the devotee and God.

KINDS OF DEVOTEES

The Gita recognises four kinds of devotees: (1) the distressed, (2) the inquisitive, (3) the selfish, and (4) the wise. These four classes of persons are devoted to God. The distressed pray to God for deliverance from distress. The inquisitive adore God with the object of knowing Him. The selfish pray to Him for the attainment of objects of desire. The wise who know God are devoted to Him (VII: 16). Of these four classes of devotees the distressed are on the lowest plane. They cannot deliver themselves from distress, so they invoke the aid of God for deliverance. The selfish pray to God to satisfy their cravings. They are on a higher plane. They deliberately pray to God to fulfil their desires for worldly enjoyments. Their devotion is temporary. It lasts as long as their cravings for worldly enjoyments last. The inquisitive pray to God in order to know Him. Their devotion is on a higher plane. They have no mean selfish end. They seek light and wisdom from God not to help them in worldly affairs but in religious pursuits. They invoke the aid of God for spiritual enlightenment. So their devotion is superior to that of the distressed and the selfish. The wise have deep faith in the existence and perfection of God. They have knowledge of God. The Lord says, "Of them the wise devotee is ever united with Me and is attached to Me with a single-minded devotion. I am exceedingly dear to him and he also is dear to me" (VII: 17). The Gita does not advocate irrational emotionalism. It preaches the cult of de-

votion enlightened by true knowledge. True devotion is not blind faith. It is enlightened by knowledge. It is not mere faith. It is knowing love of God. The Lord says, "All these kinds of devotees are noble; but the wise devotee is verily Myself, being eternally united with Me, he abides in Me, the highest goal" (VII: 18). Prof. Radhakrishnan truly observes: "The Gita has not the weakness of emotional religions which deny knowledge and will for the sake of love. While all devotees are dear to the Lord, the possessor of wisdom is the dearest of all. The other three classes of devotees—the suffering, the seeker of knowledge and the selfish—may have petty aims and cease to love God when their desires are fulfilled, but the seer worships him ever in purity of spirit. Bhakti, or intense love for God, becomes then a fire, scorching, burning and consuming all limits of individuality; the vision of truth is revealed. Without this restraint of the spiritual truth, the Gita religion might lapse into emotionalism, and devotion itself might become a mere carnival of feeling." (*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 564).

THE VIRTUES TO BE CULTIVATED

BY A DEVOTEE

A devotee should cultivate goodwill to all beings. His heart should be full of the milk of human kindness. He should be friendly to all human beings, and compassionate to all animals. He should do no harm to anyone, in thought, word, or deed. He should not be a source of danger to any one. Nor should any one be a source of danger to him. He should be forgiving to evildoers. He should live in perfect peace and amity with

the whole sentient creation (XII: 13 & 15).

A devotee should cultivate perfect equanimity of mind. He should not be elated by success or dejected by failure. He should not crave for anything; nor should he grieve over anything. He should not covet or miss anything. He should renounce good and evil. He should treat his friends and foes alike. He should accept praise or reproach with equal composure of mind. He should put up with heat and cold, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, with supreme unconcern (XII: 13 & 17-19).

A devotee should cultivate contentment. He should rest contented with whatever comes to him unsolicited. He should feel quite at home everywhere, with no home to call his own (XII: 14 & 19).

A devotee should cultivate firmness of mind. He should have firm resolution in the pursuit of the supreme goal. He should constantly exert himself, to realise the highest good. He should have unflinching devotion to God, who is the supreme goal (XII: 14 & 20).

A devotee should cultivate a spirit of independence. He should not depend on anything or anybody. He should rise above all circumstances. He should cultivate purity, dutifulness, indifference, and tranquillity (XII: 16).

A devotee should cultivate passionlessness. He should be free from all attachment for worldly objects. He should purge off all egoism. He should be free from the sense of 'me and mine.' He should renounce all worldly efforts born of attachment and restlessness. He should be free from joy, anger, fear and anxiety. He should direct all his attachment and

devotion to God (XII: 13, 15 & 16).

A devotee should do everything for God. He should dedicate the fruits of all his actions to God. He should consecrate all his actions to Him. He should live a life completely dedicated to God. He should live, move, and have his being in God. His life should be firmly rooted in God (XII: 10-11).

MAN AND GOD

A devotee enters into the very heart of God. And God also enters into the heart of the devotee. God is dear to the devotee. The devotee also is dear to God. The Lord says, "He who is devoted to Me and fixes his mind and reason on Me, is dear to Me" (XII: 14). "My devotee is dear to Me" (XII: 16, 17, 19). "Those who are devoted to Me, the supreme goal, and endued with faith, are excessively dear to Me" (XII: 20). "The wise devotee with unswerving devotion is dear to Me; I am excessively dear to him" (VII: 17).

"The worshippers of gods go to the gods, but my devotees come unto Me" (VII: 23). "Those who worship me with devotion, abide in Me, and I abide in them" (IX: 2; XII: 8). Devotion is intense love. It presupposes duality of God and the human spirit. The ultimate goal of devotional love is perfect communion but not identity.

God is always at the service of man. He is ever ready to minister to the needs of his devotee. Those who always think of God, without thinking of any other, and are always united with Him, are waited upon by God Himself. He supplies them all their needs—food, clothing, and shelter (IX: 22). They are in the care of God Himself. The invisible hand

of God protects them at every moment. His benign grace is showered upon them and drenches their very being.

THE GRACE OF GOD

In the cult of Bhakti faith, knowledge, devotion and beatitude depend upon the grace of God. They cannot be achieved by man himself by self-exertion. They cannot be earned by the study of the Vedas, moral elevation, penances, religious rites, meditation, or the like. They are given to man by God through His grace. They cannot be attained by physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual attainments.

Faith is the beginning of devotion, and this faith is given by God to man and made firm in him (VII: 21). Firm faith is a gift of God. He gives faith and devotion to the aspiring soul, which ultimately leads to true knowledge. It is God Himself who, out of pure compassion, dispels the darkness of ignorance and illumines the soul with wisdom. God Himself, by His infinite grace, admits the devotee into His fellowship and eternal bliss. The grace of God is the first and last word in the cult of Bhakti. It is the eternal bed-rock of the religion of love (X: 11; XVIII: 56, 62, 66 & 73).

THE PATH OF BHAKTI IS THE HIGHEST OF ALL

The cult of devotion is the best of all cults. The Lord says, "The Yogin is greater than ascetics; he is greater than men of wisdom. He is greater than men of action. And among the Yogins he who is full of faith and with his mind entirely fixed on Me, adores Me, is most completely united with Me" (VI: 46-47). Thus

those who follow the path of devotion are superior to those who follow the path of action, knowledge, and Yoga.

"Knowledge and action are motivated by egoism and pride. But devotion is meek and humble. So knowledge and action cannot excite God's compassion. Those who are humble in spirit throw themselves entirely at the mercy of God, bring down the grace of God on them. They are blessed with love of God." (Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. II; Author's article on the Bhagavata Religion, p. 63).

THE PATH OF DEVOTION IS OPEN TO ALL

God is the God of love. Love knows no caste, creed, character, or sex. So the path of devotion is open to all. None can deny anybody the right to love God.

The Lord says, "Even if a person of the vilest conduct worships me with undivided devotion, he should be regarded as a saint, for he has well fixed his mind on Me. He quickly becomes a virtuous soul and attains everlasting peace. O Arjuna, this is My word of promise: My devotee never perishes. Even persons

of sinful origin attain the highest goal by taking refuge in Me alone" (IX: 30-32). All persons without distinctions of caste or sex attain God by unflinching devotion to Him.

Even the most sinful are purged of their sins when they are overwhelmed with the consciousness of their sins and throw themselves in utter humility of spirit on the saving grace of God for deliverance. They are humbled by their sense of sin and surrender themselves completely to God, who floods their souls with light and love and transforms them with the magic touch of His infinite love. They are sanctified and inspired with the love of God. The sense of righteousness very often generates false pride and egoism which set up a barrier between man and God. Egoism separates man from God. The sinful, keenly conscious of their utterly depraved nature, are devoid of egoism. They can easily surrender themselves to God, who is ever ready to help the seeking souls. God loves humility of spirit and absolute surrender. And these are offered by sinners to God. So they are saved by Him. Let us all unreservedly surrender ourselves to God and seek His grace, and we shall be saved.

GOD IS LOVE: LOVE IS GOD

BY Dr. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

If the *one* had not willed to be many, there would have been no emanation, no manifestation and no creation; there would have been no plurality of lives, no separation, no multiplicity of forms, no egoism, no pain, no suffering, no joy and happiness.

For the sake of manifestation the One limitless Being has, for the time being, limited Itself. This process of limitation in Mayavic forms, matter, time and space, may be called Involution of the One in the Many.

As the nature of the One Supreme Reality is bliss, one of its most shining and outstanding characteristics is love. It is this cementing power of love that is holding the earth and heavens together. It is by virtue of this magnetic force that all the elements of nature coalesce and cohere together. From the lower to the higher region of the phenomenal world, be it mineral, vegetable or animal kingdom, everywhere without an exception, it is the law of love that operates in various forms of attraction, sympathy and mutual aid.

Creation of physical forms, bodies and vestures would not have been possible without the all-dominating influence of love.

Propagation of species, creation and the continuance of the human race would have come to an end without it.

It not only creates but preserves. During the whole process of involution, love appears in the form of attachment to the outer form; but it is

this clinging to the physical form that helps to develop in an individual and a family germs of unselfishness and service. The same process of unselfishness is continued and developed to fuller extent on the upward path of evolution. The more evolved a person is, the more unselfish he is in his love. In the measure of his unselfishness his power of love is weighed. It is the power of love that expands his consciousness and deepens his feeling and endows him with the sense of sacrifice and service. When love is seriously and assiduously cultivated in various ways and in diverse relations, it trains the individual to develop what is called universal love, which leads him on to union with God—the goal of human effort and struggle.

Under the force of spiritual alchemy, what was attachment to the form, on the path of forthgoing, has been now transformed into one-pointed, unswerving devotion to the One Life indwelling in all forms—the Soul of all souls.

GENETIC STUDY OF MYSTIC EXPERIENCE

BY DAVID MALAIPERUMAN, M.A., Ph.D.

[Religion is a personal experience and a social influence. Mysticism is the technique and interpretation of the higher expressions of personal experience in the field of religion. It is therefore as old as religious consciousness itself. In the West it has a long history from the Greek Mysteries through the Desert Fathers and great Christian Saints down to the recent times. Arabia, Persia, China and India also have had legions of mystics. At the dawn of the industrial age, when religion was well-nigh reduced to a social welfare scheme mysticism in the West entered poetry, wherefrom it emerged into the scientific world as a sort of abnormal psychology in religion—to be suspected by science and despised by religion. However the truth in mysticism has been reasserted throughout the ages. It is now recognised as a universal phenomenon that has evoked widespread interest, and the brilliant writings of Underhill, Hugel, Inge and a host of others have not only dispelled the suspicious odour that has been clinging to it but also brought it to the focus of investigation and scientific study. People are not wanting who assert that if any part of religion is to prove its worth in the crucible of scientific test it is mysticism alone. No wonder therefore that such an

important subject is studied from new viewpoints and approached from fresh angles. Dr. Malaiperuman's short article is a clear and sufficiently documented study of mysticism from the anthropologic viewpoint.—The Editors.]

THERE are two schools of thought, one emphasizing the instinctive basis of religious experience and the other the social aspect of religious experience. Both assumptions may be carried to excess. Dean Inge refers to a deep-seated religious instinct or a faculty of faith.¹ With regard to the instinctive craving for religion, the Psalmist may be quoted: "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks: so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God."²

Prominence has been given to different instincts or impulses (to use a more modern term) as the basis of religion. The Freudian emphasis on sex and Trotter's³ preference to the herd-instinct are examples. Others trace it to the instinct of self-preservation and posit a providence-element. All these theories have a partial measure of factual basis but none of these primary impulses by itself can explain the roots of religious experience. Frazer⁴ recognizes a complexity of instincts, besides that of food or self-preservation, "which have exerted a powerful influence in touching his imagination and stimulating his energies, and so have contributed to build up the complex fabric of religion."

Durkheim is the foremost representative of the school which emphasizes

group consciousness. One will get the impression from Durkheim of a group of primitive tribes or savages out in the open going through certain ceremonials best calculated to the interests of the group and receiving from these group activities certain social concepts. The priority of origins over the social situations must be taken into consideration. Facts would point to a genesis which antecedes social consciousness. The religious practices and beliefs of the group, however, are related to impulses, together with other innate tendencies of a more individual character. Adjustment of primitive man to the environment, human, non-human and super-human, was more or less impulsive to begin with. He reacted without having in mind any conception of self-conscious insight or purpose. The impulsive emotional reaction of primitive man in the face of the forces of Nature was indeed prior to his definite conceptualization of these forces.

The core of religious experience is mystical. The roots of religious experiences are as much individual as they are social and the former antecedes the latter. That it is through the instinctive psycho-biological reactions, rather than through social values, that the religious thrill first finds entrance will be evident from the study of the origin of the primitive concept of MANA, which signifies the emotional reaction to the unknown and mysterious complexity of the surrounding universe. It refers to the reaction of early man to the unknown, a psycho-biological reaction free from theorizing or

¹ W. R. Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, London: Duckworth & Co. 1909, p. 145.

² Psalms 42: 1, 2.

³ N. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, Macmillan, New York, 1917.

⁴ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Macmillan, New York, p. vii.

questioning, the thrill yielding exaltation, elation and fear. His reaction to the unknown forces of Nature, such as lightning, thunder, meteors, eclipses, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, was as a contestant in the struggle for existence. This was an organic and physiological or impulsive reaction rather than intellectual or rational behaviour.

At a later stage, ideas of benevolent and malevolent, sacred and profane, developed. Mana is something which distinguishes the super-usual from the usual, that power which makes objects either dangerous, effective or uncanny. The notion of this impersonal force may be regarded as the direct result of man's first and most unreflective reactions to the world.⁵ The roots of religious experience may be traced to the emotional reaction of primitive man to the universe which so overwhelmed him with a sense of mystery. Mana is the direct objectivation of the religious emotion. The techniques used to relate oneself with the Mana force were mechanical to begin with. But to the extent that this force becomes personified and Gods develop, an effort is made to establish personal relations in order to come into direct contact with this power. Through dance, ceremonials and various cults primitive man felt a sense of self-enlargement, a consciousness of being lifted out of his prosaic everyday life into an exalted mental state. Likewise, during fasts, long vigils, frenzied dancing, men have claimed an experience of contact with this "outer" reality and have tried to cultivate the experience.

⁵ Irving King, *Development of Religion*, New York, Macmillan Co., 1910, p. 145.

We may trace mysticism to the Mana concept. Etymologically the word "mysticism" is closely related to mystery. From time immemorial man has reacted with a sense of awe, a feeling of insecurity, with a shudder and wonder, in the face of mysterious phenomena. It is not the mere unfamiliarity of facts "fuzzy with mystery" which initiates mystical reaction. Rather mystical experience is awareness of that, for which the existing equipment of organized habits and impulses is not sufficient to make adequate adjustment. Features of the environment and intricacy of stimuli are found to be too overwhelming for specific response.

There are various ways whereby one may react to the complexity of environmental stimuli: (a) through fanciful and wishful thinking; (b) through intelligent inquiry; (c) with strong emotion, such as love, fear, awe, and reverence, but with minimum of imaginative construction. In the first instance, through fantasy and imagination, the complexity of environmental stimuli may attain in the imagination the status of a spirit endowed with characteristics, and thus gain the semblance of reality with which one's organized behaviour can deal. In the second case, Mana may be the starting point of rational or self-conscious orientation to the world. On the other hand, mystical reaction exists where the subject does not bring the uninterpreted stimuli into the form of familiar objects, but reacts without understanding. Thus we may trace back to the concept of Mana the roots of myth, of science and of mysticism. But despite the development of myth and science there always remain areas of experience which thwart and baffle and

seem to withstand the effort to reduce them to familiar simplicity. These remain as a hinterland of mystery which challenges mankind. When one reacts with love or strong emotion to this area of experience one may be said to be mystical. What can be understood passes into the heritage of knowledge. What is not understood is ordinarily ignored. But when it does arouse emotional response without understanding, we have mystical experience.

The development of Hindu mysticism,⁶ for instance, will indicate the evolution of the mystical element from the Mana concept to the highest types. The early settlers on the plains of Hindustan found themselves in a mystery-laden environment. The forces of nature to which they reacted with a sense of wonder, awe and suspense led to the creation of various ministrants who were in course of time deified and distinguished as Devas and Asuras. Sacrifices were offered to placate the deities. Sacrificial mysticism belongs

⁶ H. Sircar, *Hindu Mysticism*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1934.

to this level. The first dawn of mystic life begins with the sublimation of nature—the rising of the sun in all its glory, the silvery rays of the moon, the rainbow, the hovering of dark clouds, the flash of lightning or the tremor of thunder. These features have a halo of mystery and carried to the soul the message of a new life.

In the natural course of events, these unknown forces were endowed with an "over-soul" or Atman, the all-pervading spirit which displaced the plurality of deities. The individual began to identify himself with the cosmic spirit. This stage is that of Upanishadic mysticism. Various techniques were later developed by different schools to gain communion with the deepest reality of the universe. Nurtured in the Upanishadic spirit arose the great Bhaktas in later times who soared to sublime levels of consciousness. Since mysticism is an attempt to deal with that which lies beyond man's ordinary equipment, it has claimed for its formulations an authority and sanctity altogether above reason.

THE STORY OF THE BAHAI MOVEMENT—II

BAHA ULLAH—THE SPLENDOR OF GOD

BY AGA SYED IBRAHIM (DARA)

[Students of religious history are aware of the metaphysical blossoming of the Semitic Islam in Persia, producing a vigorous type of spiritual mysticism called Sufism, which has notable resemblances to Vedanta. In Western Asia, Iran has been the cradle of religious aspiration and thought for over a couple of millenniums, and we may say that Bahaiism, a development of the last century, is one of the latest phases of Iranian religion. This Movement, one of religious and even social and perhaps political importance, has boiled over the boundaries of Persia, gaining ground in Turkey and Africa, and has claimed several adherents from among the rationalists of the Occident as a religion of humanity. Bahaiism is not an abrupt emergence; it is the outcome of the theological implications of the Shiite Faith which believes in Imams

endowed with superhuman wisdom and spiritual perfection and who act as the channel of Divine grace. The last Imam having retired from mortal ken without a successor is supposed to act through intermediaries or 'gates' or Babis in bringing down to man the light of Divine wisdom. Baháism has its root in this faith as its history reveals. The following interesting sketch of the Movement is by one who is a keen student of Islamic spiritual culture and a Sadhaka of Sree Aurobindo's Ashrama. —The Editors.]

THE persecution of the Babis continued even after the death of Bab. In 1851 A.D., two years after the martyrdom of Bab, a great calamity fell upon his followers. A fanatical Babi, whose mind had become unbalanced by seeing the cruelties inflicted on his brother believers and the cruel death of his own master who too was a Babi, made an attempt on the life of the Shah, foolishly thinking that he could thereby improve the situation. This man fired at the Shah when he was going out in a State procession. The shot missed its aim, and the man was arrested on the spot by the attendants of the Shah, and killed immediately. This unfortunate incident gave the excuse to the Mullas to denounce the movement of the Babis as not only outrageous to the Islamic faith but also to dub it as a revolutionary political movement aiming to overthrow the government. Then began "a terrible outburst of persecution, torture, and martyrdom". Orders were given to plunder and persecute the Babis, and thousands of them, men, women and children were mercilessly put to death. The Babis, following the instructions of Bab to abstain from retaliation, showed great heroic courage in their patient self-sacrifice. They were not only fearless in the face of death but tried to do good in return for evil. For example, when suddenly people rushed into some Babi's house with drawn swords to slaughter the inmates they stood

fearless and calm and spoke gentle words to them and even offered sweets and drink to the murderers.¹ The accounts of the behaviour of the Babis even under such provocation is an immortal record of heroic devotion, faith and sacrifice about which Professor Brown of Cambridge wrote: "They may perhaps be paralleled in history but cannot be surpassed." "This was the beginning of the season of the most bloody massacres and horrible torture of the believers. Even to be suspected of being a Babi was, in many cases, sufficient to cause the extinction of the whole family."² It is estimated that during

¹ From a discourse of Abdul Baha in London, given in *The Light of the World*, p. 41.

² C. M. Remney: *The Bahai Movement*. To give an idea of the fiendish tortures to which some Bahais were submitted the following story related by Abdul Baha at Paris will suffice:

"I wish to tell you the story of two martyrs; one was a Persian noble man, a favourite at court...known throughout the country. It was discovered that he was a follower of Baha Ullah. This glorious man was taken into custody and in company of another was thrown into prison without food or water...On the fourth day they were taken out of the prison and two bears were made to dance before them; also several monkeys were brought in order to humiliate them. Solomon Khan and his friend were taken into a room; their breasts lacerated and in the yawning apertures lighted candles were placed...then they started on parade through the town. Solomon Khan looking about him said 'There is no need for such commotion, why such ado about our death? Verily this is our wedding feast and we are

those two years, 1851 and 1852 A.D., from thirty to forty thousand Babis lost their lives.

In the midst of this dark cyclone of bloodshed, a youth of a wealthy and noble family of Tehran came forward as a leader. His name was Mirza Hosain Ali Noori, who later on came to be known by the name of Baha Ullah. Born in 1817 A.D., he was then about 34 years old, and had been an ardent supporter of Bab since the very beginning of the movement. Though he and Bab had never met personally, Bab had written many letters to him from his prison, and just before his martyrdom sent him his ring and all his writings with secret instructions. Baha Ullah was famous from his very boyhood for his goodness, piety and love, and in Tehran he was called 'father of the poor.' He was soon arrested by the government, along with his many followers, and thrown into a dark damp cell of the prison with a heavy chain round his neck which fastened him and many others together. They

remained there for four months, subject to all manner of insults and cruelties; and, though the government could not bring a single charge against him to prove that he had political intentions, he was deprived of all his land and property and threatened with death. All the efforts of his influential family to release him proved fruitless; "but through the intercession of the Russian ambassador and other persons of influence his punishment was commuted to banishment, and he was carried under an escort of soldiers to Bagdad beyond the borders of Persia."³ "The Russian ambassador visited the Shah twenty times before he could achieve this object."⁴

At Bagdad he was kept under police watch, but was allowed to meet others. Here Baha Ullah preached to those that came to meet him, and instilled courage and faith in all his followers. After the long period of the above-mentioned massacres, which lasted over an year, the Babi movement had lost its vitality and was in danger of splitting up into sects. All those that had met Bab personally and understood his teachings having been slain, few remained that had any real knowledge of it. The writings of Bab too were difficult to obtain and none knew the authentic ones from those that passed as his. Besides this, a sect was forming which believed that Bab himself was the Manifestation and they needed no other after him. Baha Ullah tried to clear these and other difficulties by

happy.' Accompanied by a band and followed by people they were paraded through the bazars and streets of the city. People pricked them with long needles, saying 'Dance for us!' With unflinching courage and exultant joy they walked along from morn till eve...When the candles burnt down they were renewed by the jailors...Finally they arrived at the outer gate of the city where each was cut into four pieces...This story will be found in a history compiled by an enemy of this cause, for all has been recorded by Shah's historians. At the end the historian says of Solomon Khan, 'This man was possessed by an evil spirit.' Ponder on this story that you may understand the mystic 'power of sacrifice, of faithfulness, how these martyrs were stirred by the good news of the new dawn.'

³ 'A Heavenly Vista' by Louis G. Gregory.

⁴ For details of the interview vide Healen S. Goodhall & Ella Goodhall Cooper: *The Daily Lessons at Acca*, p. 58.

his patient and untiring work. He sent inspired workers and personal messages of strength and faith and wrote books such as *The Hidden Words*, which are claimed to be revealed. This particular book was revealed at Bagdad but was kept hidden and secret and had no more than three copies till he was there. George O. Latimer writes, regarding his literary ability: "Baha Ullah, though a person of noble family, never studied in any school, nor associated with learned men of religion; yet he manifested such knowledge and perfection that all people of Persia marvelled at his wisdom, while his enemies spoke of him as Renowned Baha Ullah."⁵ Baha Ullah one day suddenly retired into some solitary retreat in the mountain and nobody could discover where he was. Here he remained deeply absorbed in contemplation for two years, and never came out to his disciples even once during this period. Even his closest friend did not know his place of retirement. When he came out after two years their happiness knew no bounds and the event was celebrated with great rejoicings and 'show' of eastern pomp.

Baha Ullah brought with him a reserve of calm strength and peace. His words had the power to unveil the mysteries of the soul. The fame of Baha Ullah had by this time reached Persia and Arabia and notable visitors began to come from those places. Even learned scholars of renown came to get their various difficulties solved; and they all went back with their doubts resolved and minds inspired by the contact they had with the fount of inexhaustible

wisdom. These events were watched by the Mullas, who once more began to agitate against him. They made the Persian Government write to the Sultan of Turkey, in whose jurisdiction he was, to call him to Constantinople. After some diplomatic correspondence between the two Governments, "a settlement was arrived at by which Baha Ullah was to proceed to Constantinople and there await the pleasure of the Ottoman Sultan."⁶ At this news there was a great consternation among his followers and many of them resolved not to leave him and to share his difficulties and fate.

Before his departure to Constantinople Baha Ullah visited the garden of El Rizwan at a short distance from Bagdad with some of his chosen followers and there encamped for twelve days. Here he made the declaration that he was the Manifestation, whose coming Bab had announced. One of his followers describes him at this occasion thus, "His proclamation was made with the certainty of the immediate knowledge and Divine understanding. . . . Brilliant, spontaneous, mighty, he was like a conscious sun bursting on the dark dead world. Verily in future these rays are to be the healing of the nations."⁷ The first one to accept him was his eldest son Abbas Effendi, who was later on known as Abdul Baha and also as the Branch (of the Divine tree). This Manifestation took place in the year 1863 A.D., nineteen years after Bab had made his famous proclamation. It was kept secret to avoid the wrath of the enemies and the secret was

⁵ *A Heavenly Vista*, p. 6.

⁷ Isabel Fraser Chamberlain: *Divine Common sense From the world's greatest prisoner to his prison friends*, p.5.

confided only to the most trusted of the devotees.

After this Babism slowly began to change into Bahaism and the Babis into Bahais. Bab's movement was more or less confined to Islamic countries only but Baha Ullah proclaimed that Bahaism was for the whole world, the East as well as the West. It aimed at the unification of the people of countries throughout the world into one spiritual brotherhood. It advocated kindness and love towards all and utter tolerance of all other religions which were true in their time and came from God. Compulsory education and a common language were considered necessary, and complete equality was given to women. Bahaism had its deeper spiritual and mystic side too which can be found in the book *The Seven Valleys* by Baha Ullah. *Kitab ai Akdas* (*The Book of Laws*) and *Kitab ai Ighan* (*The Book of Certitude*) lay down the principal rules and the general doctrine. They have all been translated into English by various authors.

After this historic declaration Baha Ullah and his large group of followers proceeded to Constantinople travelling by caravan through Irak and Asia Minor, and then by sea to Turkey. At Constantinople they were detained for five months under official surveillance, and then sent under guard to Adrianople which was considered "far removed from the world which their cause was agitating." Baha Ullah remained for five years at Adrianople. Here too he wrote books and sent messengers to various countries both of Europe and Asia who spread in the world the news of his Manifestation. This was still not quite an open secret and the work of

propagation was entrusted only to the reliable devotees. In his later years at this town Baha Ullah made it public by writing personal messages and letters to all the crowned heads of Europe and Asia. These letters are called the Tablets of Baha Ullah. In these he declared that "for the sake of Eternal love to His creatures He had turned His footsteps from the invisible to the visible world and veiled his splendour in the body of dust." Like Christ he invited them to partake of the Divine Supper. These Tablets also contain various advices on matters of Government as well as on religion. They were asked not to rule harshly and unjustly and to abstain from war and bloodshed.

These Tablets could not be sent from Adrianople but were later on despatched with trusted messengers from Acca.

After five years at Adrianople the Government thought it better to send him to a still remoter place. Baha Ullah was thereupon separated from many of his followers, and his own family and very close devotees were sent as prisoners to the fortress of Acca. The following quotation from Paul Kingston Dealy⁸ regarding the place is interesting, and it also shows with what an ardent and sacred spirit these Christian disciples of Baha Ullah adored him. He writes:— "Regarding the prophecies concerning the place and the time of the Lord's coming, we shall quote a few passages to show that the events we have so far related are in exact accord with the scriptures. We read in Hosea, Chapter 2 Verse 15: 'And I will give her the vineyards from thence and the

⁸ *Dawn of Knowledge and Most Great Peace*, p. 22.

⁶ *The Call of God*.

valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth and as in the day when she came out of the land of Egypt.' And in Isaiah 65: 10, 'And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor the place for the herds to lie down in, for my people they have sought me'.... accordingly Achor is to be a door of hope for the people of God; a place for his people to lie down in, who have diligently sought Him; where they have rest in true knowledge of God; and through which door shall go forth the uplifting Word to the uttermost part of the earth..... This is the same Acre mentioned in history, that Richard Coeur de Lion..... with his French allies, besieged for two years from 1187 A.D., during the holy wars of the Crusade. It was at this same Acre where Napoleon Bonaparte met his real defeat in 1799 A.D., as recorded among his sayings; 'The slightest circumstance produced the greatest events,' said Napoleon. 'Had St. Jean Acre fallen, I should have changed the face of the world.' And again, 'The fate of the East lay in that small town.' Whatever its historical background be, the fact was that this remote and extremely unhealthy fortress had been used as a place of exile. The Sultan of Turkey sent to this place his worst criminals and political opponents. "The deadly climate of that fever-stricken rock slowly but surely accomplished the desired destruction of many of these unfortunate ones." It was clear that the Government intended to put an end to the life of Baha Ullah by his move. The instructions sent to the Governor were also very severe. He was told that they were "Criminals, murderers, nihilists and thieves, and must

be allowed no concessions and liberties of any sort."

The party of 150 members, including men, women and children, were all consigned into two rooms in the racks, within the prison fortress. The food was not only poor but insufficient and unhealthy. Water was drawn from a 'fever-stricken well.' Soon many fell ill of malaria, typhoid and dysentery; but through the blessings of Baha Ullah and tireless nursing of Abdul Baha and others nearly all of them recovered. In this large group there were only six deaths in all, while a large number of the soldiers and the guard died. It was a period of extreme hardship and tests. A small son of Baha Ullah fell down from the terrace (which was the only place to get fresh air) and began vomiting blood. The condition was hopeless and death only a matter of few hours. Baha Ullah went to him and asked "Do you want to live or die?" To the surprise of all, this brave boy replied, "I do not fear death but I want that the visitors who come to see you be allowed to do so." This reply melted even the hearts of the authorities. The boy died to the great sorrow of his father and mother.

At this period a number of visitors were coming from distant countries, but the authorities could allow only a few to meet Baha Ullah. Others had to return after a sight of him through the barred window of the prison. There was no possibility of any communication with the outside world. The supervision was so strict that every loaf of bread that came from outside was cut open to see that it contained no hidden message.

Two years after their arrival, because of a war, the tower of Acca was mobilized and all the Barracks were

needed for the army. Then Baha Ullah was allowed to shift to a house outside the prison, but within the fortifications. Here he found greater comfort and peace when some lenient Governor came. He allowed him greater liberties; while a stricter one made conditions very much the same as before. Here too an official guard was at the gate and four soldiers used to accompany the person who went daily to the market to get provisions. It was here that Baha Ullah met most of his visitors that came from Europe and America and also from the eastern countries. Many of these have written their impressions in glowing terms and there are many books on the subject. Professor Brown of Cambridge describes his visit to Acca in very high terms. The following passage gives his impressions of Baha Ullah:—

".....At Behje was I installed as a guest, in the very midst of all that Babism accounts most noble and most holy; and here did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and un-hoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the very fountain heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit, which works with invisible, but ever-increasing force, for the transformation and the quickening up of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was in truth a strange and a moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression. I might, indeed, strive to describe in greater detail the faces and forms that surrounded me, the conversations to which I was privileged to listen to, the solemn melodious reading of the sacred books, the general sense of harmony and con-

tent that pervaded the place, and the fragrant, shady gardens whither in the afternoon we sometimes repaired; but all this was nought in comparison with the spiritual atmosphere with which I was encompassed.....

During the morning of the day after my installation at Behje, one of Baha's younger sons entered the room where I was sitting and beckoned me to follow him. I did so and was conducted through passages and rooms at which I scarcely had time to glance....

I dimly suspected wither I was going and whom I was to behold. A second or two elapsed, ere with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untended. In the corner where the *divan* met the wall, sat a wondrous and a venerable figure, crowned with a felt dress of the kind called *taj* by dervishes, round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow, while the deep lines on the forehead and the face implied an age which the jet-black hair and the beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love, which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain....

A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: Praise be to God that thou hast attained thou hast come to see a prisoner in exile .. we desire but the good of the world and the happiness of

nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition, worthy of bondage and banishment.... 'That all nations should become one in faith, and all men as brothers; that bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religions should cease, and differences of race be annulled....what harm is there in this?....Yet so shall it be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come.... Let not man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind.....'"*

It would take a large space to mention all the interesting events that took place at Acca. From here Baha Ullah sent his Tablets to the rulers of various countries, which had been revealed to him at Adrianople. He got a courteous reply from Queen Victoria to the effect that "if he were from God nothing could harm him or his cause and if not there is no harm done." The Queen had received the messenger kindly and Baha Ullah was pleased with her. So he wrote another Tablet to her promising her a long life and a prosperous reign. The Russian Government also showed courtesy; and a person was sent to Acca to see things there and report. He went back with very favourable impressions. Baha Ullah sent his blessings to the Russian Emperor and it is interesting to note that during later years Russia took great strides in progress, "its population doubled itself in 30 years and its territories trebled."

The Emperor of France, Napoleon III, who was then at the height of

his power and so proud that he is said to have declared, "on this globe, I am the one God" laughed at Baha Ullah's Tablet and throwing down remarked, "If he is one god, I am two gods." In reply Baha Ullah wrote to him, "Because of what thou hast done, affairs shall change in thy kingdom and the empire shall depart from thy hands as a punishment of thy action...thou shalt find thyself in manifest loss...the glory that hast made thee proud, by my life, verily, it shall not endure, but shall pass away, unless thou takest hold of this firm rope. We have seen the humiliation hasten after thee, while thou art of those who slept....."

The subsequent years proved the truth of Baha Ullah's saying. In the Franco-German war, Napoleon III sustained a crushing defeat and after the surrender of Paris he had to flee for his life to England. The Pope of Rome too, who had scorned at the Tablet of Baha Ullah, was warned by him and foretold of his downfall which took place when the victor of Rome arrested him.

The Shah of Persia received "A most wonderful Tablet" from Baha Ullah. Baha Ullah had told the bearer, whose name was Badi, that he will be killed; nevertheless he undertook to take it for the love of martyrdom for this great cause. He went all the way on foot hiding the Tablet on his person; though he met Bahais in all the towns, he passed; he never disclosed to them the great secret entrusted to him by Baha Ullah. When he reached Tehran, the Shah was coming out of the gate in a procession. He went as near as he could and then waved the message above his head so that all could see that he wished to give a letter. The Shah

ordered it to be taken from him thinking that he wished to give some petition. But Badi cried aloud, "It is not a petition. It is a command." Thereupon he was seized. Badi once more called out "My Lord who has sent me said to me that I will be killed." Hearing this the Shah replied, "We shall not kill him then, just to prove that his Lord does not speak the truth." He ordered that Badi be tortured with hot irons and be made to confess all the secrets of the Bahais. After the torture the Shah was informed that this strange man feels happy when tortured and reveals no secrets. The Shah could not believe it; so he ordered Badi's photograph to be taken at the time of torture. The photograph too showed Badi smiling while smoke rose out of burning flesh! The Shah on seeing it was so furious that he ordered Badi to be killed, quite forgetting his former word.

After three months the Shah sent for the Tablet, read a few lines and threw it down saying, "Take it away, if I read any more I too shall become a Bahai."

Baha Ullah had written in the Tablet, "O thou Shah, send for this servant to come to Tehran, gather together an assembly of doctors and philosophers, and we will discuss with them whatever subject thou desireth." When the disciples of Baha Ullah came to know of it, they addressed themselves to the Shah and said, "O thou just ruler, assemble the judges and the priests that they may put a question to Baha Ullah." But the ministers of the Shah replied, "Nay rather, we must sound the alarm that all may beware of such a man." A learned philosopher said, "Verily one cannot speak in his pre-

sence!" Abdul Baha, after describing the above incident in one of his speeches at Paris, commented upon it thus: "They criticised his disciples, decried his teachings, but never his power."

In his later days Baha Ullah was allowed to be shifted to a house which had a better view of the country. They named the place Behje—a short form of garden, meaning joy. He visited the port of Haifa too and the Mount Carmel which Christ used to cross and which the Prophet Mahomed too had visited twice. He expired at Behje on May 1892 A.D. after forty years of imprisonment and suffering.

After Baha Ullah's death his eldest son Abdul Baha, as appointed by him, became the head of the movement and spread its teachings all over the world. He visited Europe and America holding meetings and founding societies, and met with remarkable success everywhere. The following quotations are from Baha Ullah's utterances:

1. O Son of Man! The Light hath shone upon thee from the horizon of the Mount, and the Spirit of Purity hath breathed in the Sinai of thy heart. Therefore empty thyself of doubts and fancies; then enter into this mansion that thou mayest be prepared for the Eternal Life and ready to meet Me. Herein there is no death, no trouble nor burden.

2. O Son of Man, in my ancient Entity and in my Eternal Being was I hidden. I knew my love in thee; upon thee I laid my image and to thee revealed my Beauty.....But how can a man love God, whom no eye hath seen? He, Himself answers and says, "My love is in thee, seek

*A Traveller's Narrative.

and thou wilt find Me near. I have placed within thee a Spirit from Me, that thou mightest be My lover."

3. "O Son of Existence! Thy heart is my Home; purify it for My descent. Thy Spirit is my outlook; prepare it for my manifestation." "If My will thou seekest, regard not thine own, that thou mayest die in Me and I live in thee."

4. Verily we reveal according to thy capacity and perception, not according to my state and reality.

5. Dost thou think thy body a small thing, while in thee is enfolded the Universe?

6. Whosoever hath known himself hath surely known his Lord.

7. The World is non-existent adorned in the form of existence.

THE PROBLEM OF SEX IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

[These are the notes of the class-talks given by the Swami to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.—The Editors.]

In the Bhagavad-Gita Arjuna says very touchingly to Sri Krishna: "You speak of Yoga which is characterised by evenness of mind, but I do not see the possibility of its being made steady owing to the restlessness of the mind. Verily the mind, O Krishna, is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding. I regard it quite as hard to achieve its control as to achieve the control of the wind."

And then the Blessed Lord in His infinite kindness and love for all beings said reassuringly to Arjuna: "Without doubt, the mind is restless and difficult to control, but through practice and renunciation it may be brought under restraint. Yoga is hard to be attained by one of uncontrolled self; such is My conviction; but the self-controlled man, striving by right means, obtains it."

Here Sri Krishna holds out His helping hand to everybody who is sincere, just as Christ does when He says: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." But the mind can be controlled only if we follow the right

means unconditionally. There is no religious life without previously attaining control of mind. Mental control, in the case of the beginner, is a regular warfare; and this we can carry on only if we observe strict continence and wisely follow all the laws of warfare. Making use of the wrong methods, we may strive eternally without any success. Religious life without mental control is not possible, except the popular religion of the unthinking crowd which, after all, amounts to nothing more than certain outward observances.

And there is a general rule to be observed by everybody. Never give the enemy a frontal attack, unless you have already become very strong and very well established in purity.

Do you know the story of the monk who was ruined by a rat? There was a monk who was continually disturbed in his meditation by a rat. So some kind people, meaning well, brought him a cat to catch the rat. Now, naturally, the poor monk had to feed the cat and needed milk, and as it was rather

difficult for him to get it always, he decided on getting a cow. He did so, but another difficulty offered itself to him. The cow had to be fed, so people told him: "Why not buy a field?" Finding this advice very reasonable he bought a field, but after a short time he found out that the field had to be tilled. And this meant quite a lot of work which he could not do alone. So he married, and was gone. This presents allegorically what generally happens in human life. One desire just breeds another, till in the end they have become innumerable and can no longer be controlled.

If any temptation comes, raise just the opposite current of thought. But if you can, you should avoid temptations by being very careful in your company. And temptation is mental. It is not what you do, but what you think. So be aware of how people's vibrations affect you and develop more and more a very high sensibility. Do not say: "I have not done anything impure," but realize what you feel and what you think in the company of others, whether they attract you or not. The moment there is any attraction or aversion, be on your guard. Salute all such people from a safe distance. No attraction is harmless in a finer sense, neither is aversion so. Never deceive yourself on that point. You should not allow old impure associations to crop up in your mind by mixing with people who may awaken them through their form and old memories. When you follow this advice and raise strong opposite currents of thought, you will be able to efface the impure impressions in time, those impressions which you have allowed to sink into your mind by your life, and then your spiritual life will be made

safe to a certain extent. By raising opposite thought-currents, temptation, in time, becomes weaker, and finally the new thought completely replaces old associations and memories, but only if you strictly follow the advice. There can never be a vacuum in your mind, so new thoughts must come in if you drive the old ones away.

Control of the mind comes step by step through practice and circumspection, but never hope to attain it if you are careless in your ways. If you allow the attraction of any other person to gain influence on you, you will never be able to attain control of mind, whatever you may be doing at other times. Then you are bound to have a nasty fall after some time. If you allow any woman to meet you as a man, if you allow any woman to attract you or see the man in you, control of mind is out of the question. You should always behave in such a way that no woman will dare to speak to you as a man, and that every woman will feel that she cannot meet you on the plane of sex, that you do not see the woman in her and are not interested in the woman. But for the beginner the only way is to avoid the company of the other sex as much as possible and never to have intimate talks with any person belonging to the other sex. We should be dignified and reserved, though polite, but never allow a person of the other sex to become friendly with us. If others want to stand in our way, we must just brush them aside, even if their hearts break. There must be a parting of the ways, however intimate we may have been before. A love that is dangerous has to be avoided at any cost. Do not grow sentimental. We have to pay the price

for our folly and egoism, and why should we not? If I have made a mistake by loving the man or the woman, let me suffer for it, and let him or her suffer also. If someone wants to embrace me, I must just avoid him. If a person of the other sex offers me kind words, I must just leave him or her. Otherwise he or she kills me, i.e., kills the only thing that has any value in me. Even if such a person tells you that you make him or her miserable for life, there must be a parting of the ways. Once having committed the great mistake, you suffer and he or she suffers too. And very often sex hides under the cloak of duty. "It is my duty to be kind to him or her." Nothing but sex, coming in some nice garb and finding some nice excuses for my clinging to a certain person. Never allow yourself to be caught in the snares of your own mind. "Oh, my heart will break if you leave me." Are you responsible for the other person? Those who have committed the folly must pay the price. We should be sympathetic and pray for such people, but there must be a parting of the ways. We must have great patience because the mind always wants to run away and deceive us, because we are not fully sincere in our spiritual struggle. We succeed only after a long time, but the struggle must be carried on unceasingly and doggedly. Medicine is so unpleasant, but it has to be taken if the patient wishes to be cured.

The new opposite thoughts must be allowed to break our hearts and that of the other person completely. Never be afraid of truth, even if truth means death. If truth breaks your heart, well and good. If truth breaks other people's hearts, well and good. Allow your heart to be broken.

What is the use of clinging to your pet ideas? What is the use of clinging to your petty affections? At the beginning truth destroys everything we used to hold dear. First there comes a new foundation and on this new foundation the superstructure is to be built slowly and carefully, with great circumspection. The laying of a new foundation naturally always means destruction, but in the end, this alone brings peace and happiness and freedom to ourselves and to others. The poison-tree planted by our thoughtlessness and desire must be cut down ruthlessly. Having reared the poisonous tree we find it very hard to cut it down, but it must be cut down.

How to bring in the better thought? This is a great task to be performed by the beginner. The rest can be left to the Lord. But there must be a parting of the ways. It is very difficult, but without it, you will never be able to control your thoughts or your emotions. It is this: If you rear a poisonous tree with great love and care, you haven't the heart to cut it down after it has grown so nicely. You get caught in your own snares. Never listen to the voice of sex coming clothed in the garb of pity, either self-pity or pity for the other person, or both.

The whole thought-structure must be overhauled and reformed. We have been living on empty dreams, created by our desires, and when the whole edifice comes toppling down, we are left standing in the road without any support.

Filling the brain with all sorts of useless and impure thoughts, making the mind a chaos, instead of making it pure and systematic, we have lost all capacity to think in a dispassio-

nate and consistent manner without considering our own satisfaction. We have very many ideas, even good ideas, but we have not the capacity of thinking them in a definite order and in a detached and dispassionate way. Very often we go on thinking and thinking the same thought time and again, but all this is useless. If you want the mind to be pacified, you must go through a series of meditations. At the beginning, have fixed hours and lead a very retired life as far as you can do. Do not mix with other people if you can avoid it in any way. First rid yourself of the too many different thought-currents which are neutralising each other in your mind. Otherwise you can never maintain a balanced and dispassionate state of mind. Dispassion, true dispassion, is so very necessary for all spiritual progress—facing things as they are, not as we would have them to be.

Through meditation the mind becomes stronger and clearer. It slowly develops a kind of very strong non-attachment to everything. The will is also to be strengthened systematically. Intelligence is to be developed, the mind must be purified and our sentiments and feelings must be chastened. We must have a definite system, whereas most of us have no system at all. They just drift through life on their emotions and impulses. In spiritual life everything has to be systematised.

"Gurus may be had by hundreds of thousands, but it is very hard to find a disciple." Nobody really cares to follow the Path. Nobody is really

sincere. Nobody wishes to be on his guard and to avoid contact with others, which is harmful. We even find pleasure in such contact, instead of avoiding it. So for us, there is no real spiritual life. Out of thousands of people there may be one or two who really care to lead the higher life. The others are not sincere. It does not matter whether we attain to the goal in this life or not, the principal thing is to struggle, to fight, to become a man, to sacrifice everything for our goal.

Most of us are worse than animals and more impure than animals. Most of us lead an impulsive life which is far lower than that of any animal. Men just go on whetting their sensual appetites in the name of affection and love, a thing which an animal would never do. Men artificially create sensual appetites and even seek stimulants. We must work hard, but unfortunately we have neither patience nor the will to rid ourselves of our impure impressions and old associations with people, nor do we care to follow the advice that we are given. We have neither the will nor the patience to wait. We must work hard, as I said; and have great dogged perseverance; but, in fact, we have neither patience for the one, nor the inclination to have the other. So our spiritual life just remains a vague and idle dream, while we merrily go on following our impulses and trying to cling to our connections with others or even, what is worse, trying to form new ones. This is not spiritual life, whatever else it be.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

BY SWAMI THYAGISANANDA

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

SUTRAS 56 TO 66

In the previous five Sutas Narada has shown us how impossible it is to give an adequate description of Bhakti. It is really the inherent nature of the soul to love God, but it is clouded by the ego in the multifarious manifestations. As Sadhanas (spiritual practices) progress the barriers set up by the ego are broken down one by one and the intrinsic love of the soul for God begins to shine more and more through the obstructions. As this love filters down through the meshes of the mind, it appears to be coloured by the qualities, contents and tendencies of the mind. Thus during the early stages of Sadhana this love of the soul for God takes on various aspects. These aspects of Bhakti are known as Gauni Bhakti, as they are found associated with the qualities of mind. This Gauni Bhakti, which culminates in one continuous unobstructed stream of love for God, is classified in two ways in the next Sutra.

गौणी विधा गुणभेदाद् अर्तादिभेदाद् वा ॥ ५६ ॥

गौणी Secondary Bhakti विधा is of three kinds गुणभेदाद् according as the mind is Tamasic, Rajasic or Sattvic अर्तादिभेदाद् according to the classification given by Bhagavan in Gita, VII-16 वा or.

56. Secondary Bhakti is of three kinds. (1) Either it may

be classified as Tamasic, Rajasic and Sattvic, (2) or it may be classified as Arta, Jijnasu and Artharthi, Bhakti as per the classification in Gita, VII-16.

Note.—1. In the Tamasic stage of mental development the devotee does not often know clearly either the means or the goal. He is too lazy and indolent and prone to rely too much upon mere habit, customs and tradition, or some external help. Unmeaning slavery to rituals, dependence on priestcraft, fanaticism, faith in the magical power of incantations and mystic formulas, fear of evil powers which either he tries to satisfy by animal sacrifices and burnt offerings or to make use for injuring others etc. These are among the signs of a Tamasic Bhakta. Rajasic Bhakti is associated with extremely selfish desires and worldly ambitions, and the consequent incessant activity and effort to attain name and fame, worldly power and prosperity for oneself. God is resorted to only as an instrument for self-aggrandisement, and not for His own sake. This is finely portrayed in the Puranas as the Tapas of Asuras and Rakshasas such as Taraka, Hiranyakasipu, Ravana, Bakasura, Sunda, Upasunda and others. It is often seen also in the organised religions with their religious missionaries and church dignitaries, whose main objective is not spiritual

realisation but the conservation of power, prestige and prosperity. In Sattvic Bhakti, God is loved for His own sake; the goal and the means are perceived quite clearly and enthusiastically pursued in the face of all obstructions. Philosophy and science, ethics and social service, poetry and fine arts are all found associated with this stage. Cf. Bhagavatam, III: 29. 8 to 10.

2. In Arta Bhakti the underlying motive is to get rid of the misery of Samsara and to enjoy infinite Bliss. In Jijnasu Bhakti the underlying motive is to find out the reality behind the appearances, the permanent behind the phenomena. In Artharthi Bhakti the motive is to achieve permanent Good for the whole world, the 'kingdom of heaven' on earth. Although these appear as different in kind, in reality the search is for the same God who is viewed differently. As an example of the first we may cite the example of Buddha, who was moved at first by the miseries of Samsara. The Rishis of the Upanishads as well as the Darsanakaras (or sages who propounded the philosophies) were all Jijnasu Bhaktas as their attempt was to realise the highest Truth. The Jewish Prophets, Jesus Christ and Mohamed, are representatives of the third group as they were moved mostly by the sense of sin and were enquirers after virtue and righteousness.

उत्तरस्मादुत्तरस्मात् पूर्वपूर्वा श्रेयाय भवति ॥ ५७ ॥

उत्तरस्मात् उत्तरस्मात् Than each succeeding one पूर्वपूर्वा each preceding one श्रेयाय conducive to the highest Beatitude भवति is

57. Each preceding one conduces better to the Supreme

Beatitude than each succeeding one.

Note.—Sadhana raises the mind from Tamas through Rajas to Sattva. Sattvic Bhakti is therefore superior to the Rajasic and the Rajasic is superior to the Tamasic. The superiority consists in the fact that Arta Bhakti is superior to others because after all Truth and Virtue are sought for only for the sake of freedom from misery which might be otherwise unavoidable. Therefore Bliss or freedom from misery should be the final goal and as such it is superior to others.

अन्यस्मात् सौलभ्यं भक्तौ ॥ ५८ ॥

अन्यस्मात् than others सौलभ्यम् easy recognisability भक्तौ in Bhakti.

58. Bhakti is more easily recognisable than others.

Note.—Although 'the highest Prema which is the same as oneness with God cannot be easily recognised as mentioned in Sutra 57, ordinarily, Bhakti or love for God is easily recognisable when it comes. For there is nobody who has not had experience of love towards something or somebody at some time or other. He must have loved his parents or his wife and children, or some pet dog or some beautiful picture. Bhakti is nothing else than this love when it is turned towards God. So it is not very difficult to recognise it when it comes, as he must be quite familiar with the emotion of love itself in some person or other.

प्रमाणान्तरस्यानपेक्षत्वात् स्वयं प्रमाणत्वात् च ॥ ५९ ॥

प्रमाणान्तरस्य of any other proofs अनपेक्षत्वात् because of non-dependence स्वयम् प्रमाणत्वात् as it is self-evident.

59. For it does not depend on any other proof; and it is self-evident.

Note.—This gives another reason why it is easily recognisable. Unlike any other new object the reality of which cannot easily be recognised, love does not require some other proof to recognise it. It is self-evident.

शान्तिरूपात् परमानन्दरूपात् च ॥ ६० ॥

शान्तिरूपात् Because it takes the form of peace of mind परमानन्दरूपात् because it takes the form of Supreme Bliss च and

60. Because it takes the form of complete peace of mind and Supreme Bliss.

Note.—It does not require somebody else to tell us that we are happy or that we are free from all worries and troubles; nor is it necessary to reason it out as a matter of inference from something else. On the other hand any amount of proof is useless by itself in relieving our miseries or making us happy. It is a matter of experience and not of proof.

The question may however be raised as to how it is possible for a Bhakta to have complete peace of mind or happiness when every moment of his life he has to think of the welfare, if not of himself, at least of the world. For example, are not the greatest of Bhaktas miserable because of the miseries of their fellow-beings? And do they not exert themselves to relieve the world of all misery? The answer is given in the next Sutra.

लोकहानौ चिन्ता न कार्या; निवेदितात्म-लोक-वेदत्वात् ॥ ६१ ॥

लोकहानौ for the miseries of the world चिन्ता anxiety न कार्या is not to be felt निवेदितात्म-लोक-वेदत्वात् because of the surrender of his own Self, the world as well as the Vedas to the Lord.

61. The Bhakta has no cause to worry himself over the miseries of the world; for he has surrendered his own self, the world as well as the Vedas to the Lord.

Note.—The Bhakta may be intensely active for the welfare of the world, but is not on that account worried over its miseries at all. It is only a matter of joy for him to serve the world, as everything belongs to the Lord Himself. He is not anxious about the welfare of the world, because he knows that the world belongs to God, and God is always gracious enough to bring about the welfare of the world. He does not stand in need of any help from his devotees. He is only glad to give any opportunity to his devotees to enjoy themselves in his service. All the activities of the devotees as well as their sympathy for others do not cause any worry for them. Their joy is never really disturbed by thoughts of the misery of others.

न तत् सिद्धौ लोकव्यवहारो हेयः; किंतु फलत्यागः तत् साधनं च कार्यमेव ॥ ६२ ॥

तत् सिद्धौ on attaining it लोकव्यवहारः social life न हेयः need not be given up. किंतु but फलत्यागः renunciation of desire for fruits of action तत्साधनम् helps to it च and कार्यम् एव must indeed be done.

62. On its attainment social life need not be given up; but

the fruits of all such social activities are surrendered to the Lord; and every activity that produces such results may be continued.

Note.—The Bhakta does not become an unsocial brute merely because he becomes a lover of God. There is nothing which necessitates his giving up his social service. He is not affected by the results of his actions as he does not want anything for himself and as he does everything only for the sake of the Lord. It is the attachment to fruits that should be given up, and not the fruits themselves, and therefore every activity should be consciously undertaken for the good of society. Niskamakarma does not mean aimless activity such as that of a mad man or a lazy man, but activity consciously undertaken for a definite aim and purpose—only this aim and purpose are not in the least selfish.

स्त्री-धन-नास्तिक-चरित्रं न श्रवणीयम् ॥ ६३ ॥

स्त्री-धन-नास्तिक-चरित्रम् Stories and descriptions of women and wealth and atheists न श्रवणीयम् should not be listened to.

63. Stories or descriptions of women, wealth and atheists should not be listened to.

Note.—Although all acts of social service may be undertaken without attachment for their fruits, it is dangerous to have anything to do with the opposite sex, or with riches, or with atheists. Contact with these is so dangerous that Narada thinks it would be safer for a Bhakta not even to hear stories about them. If he hears such stories, he may be-

come interested in them and be gradually tempted to give up the service of his Lord and run after the world. So social service must be undertaken with sufficient precautions against sexual temptations, temptations for worldly prosperity, or against lapse into atheism. Thus one ought to examine well his motive when he feels the anxiety to help women in distress, or to earn money to relieve the sufferings of the poor. Nor one should be anxious to read the writings of the atheists, however well-written they may be, for guidance as to how to serve the world. For in all these there is danger of a fall.

अभिमान-दम्भादिकं त्याज्यम् ॥ ६४ ॥

अभिमान-दम्भादिकम् pride, vanity and other vices त्याज्यम् should be given up.

64. Pride, vanity and other vices should be given up.

Note.—Other vices are such as mentioned in Gita, XVI.—the characteristics of people with Asuraprakriti.

तदपिताखिलाचारः सन् कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकं तस्मिन्नेव करणीयम् ॥ ६५ ॥

तदपिताखिलाचारः सन् dedicating all activities to Him कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकम् desire, anger, pride, etc. तस्मिन् एव with reference to Him or in the exercise of Bhakti towards Him alone. करणीयम् should be employed.

65. Dedicating all activities to Him, desire, pride, etc., should be only directed towards Him or employed only in the exercise of Bhakti towards Him.

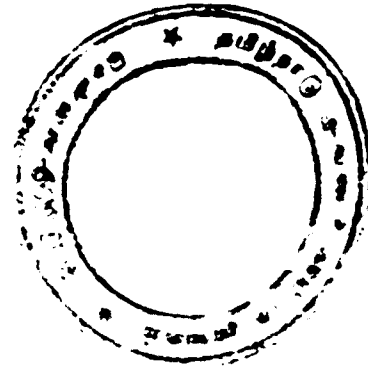
Note.—It is very difficult to destroy all selfish instincts and impulses suddenly; and forcible repression often leads to untoward consequences. They should therefore be conquered through the process of sublimation. This can be done by directing all anger, pride, etc., against the Lord Himself. This will gradually deaden these feelings. But this is not a safe course although it is often found advocated in some Puranas. The safer course is to make use of all these in the practice of love towards Him. Thus anger may be directed towards all obstacles to Bhakti, and then it will take on the colouring of Vairagya or dispassion. Pride may be entertained with regard to the fact that he is powerful enough to resist even the worst of temptations, or with regard to the fact that he is a devotee of the Lord. Even this pride is bad, and Bhagavan in his infinite grace would destroy the pride of every one of his devotees. But this is a better kind of pride than the ordinary pride of wealth, position, etc. This kind of pride, such as that one is the servant of the Lord, would take on the form of self-respect which would prevent one from doing actions that are demanding, for instance, telling lies etc. In this way each of the passions can be sublimated and made helpful and harmless.

त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकं नित्यदास्य - नित्यकान्ताभजना-
दिकं प्रेम कार्यं प्रेयैव कार्यम् ॥ ६६ ॥

त्रिरूपभङ्गपूर्वकम् Transcending first the triple form नित्यदास्य-नित्यकान्ताभजनादिकम् which take the form of constant service such as that of a devoted servant or wife प्रेम love कार्यम् should be practised प्रेम एव love alone कार्यम् should be practised.

66. Love and love alone such as that of a devoted servant or wife, which transcends the three forms mentioned in Sutra 56 should be practised.

Note.—All the forms of love mentioned in sutra 56 are lower stages; and the highest stage is reached only when God is loved for Himself alone, without any ulterior motive, whether it be selfish ambition, or spiritual realisation. When one does not care even for spiritual realisation, but loves God only for the bliss of His service, that is the highest Bhakti. But even this height is only the last summit on the ascent of Sadhana; for here the lover and the beloved still continue to be different, as otherwise no service is possible. It should not be confused with the Para Bhakti in which even this difference vanishes.



REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Veda and Vedanta: By Ernest P. Horowitz. Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 217. Price Rs. 2-0-0.

This book is a recast of the lectures delivered by the author at the University of Bombay. In it the author has attempted a panoramic survey of Indian philosophy and religion. Beginning his theme from the Vedic times, the author has travelled through the Upanishads and the Sankhya system, Buddhism and Vedanta, down to the time of Kabir and Tulasi Das. Not only that, he has a line or two to say about Maharshi Debendranath and Dr. Tagore and about Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. In his 'afterword' he even dreams of world-fellowship on the basis of Vedanta. To encompass such a vast field within 217 pages is no easy task. But the author has succeeded as much as one can with such a plan. His philological assumptions, on the basis of which he tries to build the history of the Aryans in Arctic region and also elsewhere, give to the historian much food for thought. Of course the generalisations in which he indulges may not be accepted by many; yet they direct our attention to a new possibility of research. The book is printed on antique paper and beautifully bound.—P.C.

Bengali Grammar at a Glance: By Swami Madhavananda. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. Price, as. 6.

Bengali being perhaps the richest of modern Indian languages, much interest is evinced in its study by people of other Provinces in India and students from abroad. A literature that contains the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in original, the immortal socio-religious dramas of Girish Chandra and ambrosial lyrics of Rabindranath may well claim a consideration from the outsiders. In order to meet the requirements of such people the present treatise has been published. We believe that the book will serve this purpose admirably and will acquire for them a real grasp of the language. Even those whose mother-tongue is

Bengali will find in the book certain guiding principles which will prevent mistakes and give a meaning to the usages of the language.—P.C.

Hindi Grammar at a Glance: By Swami Madhavananda. Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. Pages 61. Price as. 6.

This is a companion volume to the Bengali Grammar reviewed above. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture is to be congratulated for publishing such a convenient book. Hindi is at present struggling to become the lingua franca of India. As such, a knowledge of it is of pragmatic value to many. The English-knowing public whose mother-tongue is not Hindi will find in this brochure much help in acquiring a practical knowledge of the language. These two books are beautifully printed and decently bound.—P.C.

In Defence of Hinduism: By Swami Vivekananda. Published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 34. Price as. 4.

The book under review is the famous reply of Swami Vivekananda to the address of the Hindus of Madras presented on the occasion of his phenomenal success in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Coming as it does from the prophetic pen of the Swamiji, it is above any critical attempt. But it is worth while to remember certain facts in this connection. When the Swamiji penned these lines, Hinduism seemed to be on its last legs. Naturally, he had to write in defence of Hinduism. And what a defence it was! From page to page, from line to line, from word to word—the whole piece is charged with power and life. This and other utterances of Swamiji have galvanised into activity the sleeping consciousness of the seeming corpse, with the result that within the short span of half a century we can now think in terms of dynamic Hinduism. But from this it must not be supposed that the book has lost its utility and value with us. For, not only is it the defence of Hinduism that was, but

also a programme for the Hinduism that is to be. We have not yet achieved our end; we are only proceeding towards our goal. And when in the course of our journey we feel despondent and weary surely these words of the Swamiji will guide us as a luminous star and instil hope into our souls.—P.C.

With the Swamis in America: By a Western Disciple. Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Pages 110. Price as. 12.

This book gives us a glimpse of the first days of the Vedanta in America and also an intimate study of the pioneers of that movement. The author delineates how accidentally he came into touch with the movement and how under the guidance of different teachers of that movement his whole life underwent a complete transformation. Those were glorious days of the Vedantic movement, indeed. The veritable gods among men then moved about among us shedding lustrous bliss of spirituality all around, always, guiding and helping. The tidal waves created by these noble souls rolled into the inmost being of those around and seemed to lift them into some higher spheres. The records in these pages are true to life and give a delightful reading. As we finish reading this story of the transformation of many lives, we ourselves feel to have passed through some purificatory process and seem to bask in the pleasant warmth of the Pentecostal fire that the great ones carried with them. The printing and get-up of all the above books published from the Advaita Ashrama keep up the usual standard of excellence.—P.C.

The Hindustan Year Book 1939: By S. C. Sarkar. Published by M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Ltd., 14 College Square, Calcutta. Price Rs. 1-4-0.

Mr. S. C. Sarkar serves to us a repast of varied and excellent dishes. The book is a mine of information, political, economic or statistical. The political information is up to date, and the statistical tables have been drawn from reliable and authoritative documents. There is a very carefully compiled alphabetical index at the beginning of the book. Indian affairs are given the due importance and there is a brief history of the Congress administra-

tion of the provinces under their control. In the 'Who is Who' will be found brief accounts of the foremost Indian personalities. The book is not written in the usual colourless manner which we notice in others of the same category. There is the 'Black Record' of the League of Nations; and the book concludes with an article entitled "The Hoax" written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his most characteristic manner. It is a trenchant review of the recent episodes in International relationship.

The volume is handy and the get-up is attractive. A few typographical errors have crept in. We recommend the book as a specially useful one to all those who are preparing for competitive examination.—K.N.

The Life and Teachings of Buddha: By Devamitta Dharmapala. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pages 144. Price as. 12.

The late Devamitta Dharmapala was a missionary first and a biographer afterwards. Hence, his writings can hardly be expected to be free from orthodox zeal. The well-balanced dispassion of a good chronicler is sometimes lacking in this book when he postulates his pet theories, viz., that Buddhism was unaffected by Sankara's advent and that it was done to death by Islamic aggressors only and that Lord Buddha evolved his doctrines from a *tabula rasa*, untinged by Upanishadic teachings. But in spite of this, the book is interesting because it acquaints us with the standpoint of one who was for the past four or five decades one of the greatest upholders of the mission of the Blessed One and because it forms a handy compendium for the life and teachings of the Lord Buddha.—P.C.

The Life and Teachings of Zoroaster: By Prof. A. R. Wadia. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pages 140. Price as. 12.

Zoroastrianism or Mazdayanism, as Prof. Wadia would like to call it, is of interest to the Indians because it has enjoyed the hospitality of their country for the last many centuries. In this book, which deals with the life and teachings of the prophet of the said religion, it is really interesting to see the ethical religion as

propounded by the venerable Zoroaster slowly changing into a ritualistic and metaphysical creed that it is to-day. Much to the credit of the Mother of religions, it points to an example and a moral, as does Buddhism; that human nature requires external forms. Be that as it may, the picture that we get of the prophet here is one of a majestic and august personage who, even though does not inspire love as do Buddha and Christ, enkind-

les in us a spirit of extreme respect and admiration. Prof. Wadia's writing is free from bias and bespeaks of a highly scientific spirit. We hope this book will help in the understanding of a sister religion and will cement the unity of the two peoples, the Hindus and the Parsis, who come of the same stock. The price of these two books seems to be a bit high in view of the ordinary quality of printing and get-up.—P.C.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Floods in Midnapur

Ramakrishna Mission's Appeal

Readers of newspapers are aware that incessant rain for several days from the last week of July has caused heavy floods in several districts of Bengal. In most places the rivers have either overflowed or demolished their banks and inundated hundreds of villages, with the result that innumerable houses have been razed to the ground. The standing crops have been utterly destroyed by being under deep water. Everywhere it is one vast sheet of water, and it is a serious problem how to save the cattle. Being suddenly faced with this calamity, the homeless villagers with their families are passing their days in starvation on highlands or on house-tops.

Heart-rending tales of woe are daily reaching us from the ravaged areas, with piteous appeals for help. Our funds being too meagre to give relief on a large scale, we have sent a number of workers to the Daspur Thana of the Ghatal subdivision in the Midnapur district to start relief work with the small amount at our disposal. In this area, the embankments of the rivers Cossaye, Silabati and Rupnarain giving way on the 5th instant, the torrents devastated hundreds of villages. Fifty per cent of the houses have collapsed, and the people are in an acute state of agony, being without food, shelter and sleep. For the present we are opening only one relief centre here.

We earnestly appeal to our generous countrymen to try their utmost to save their suffering brothers and sisters from this dire extremity. Funds permitting, we

intend to extend our work to other areas also. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address:

The Secretary Ramakrishna Mission,
Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

(Sd.) SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

17-8-'39

Summer Rural Service Camp, Bangalore.

The youths of the Vivekanandhana Sangha, an Association that is in existence for the last two years under the supervision and guidance of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, undertook rural work during this summer in a village called Koppa, 16 miles away from Bangalore, according to the plan chalked out by the Ashrama authorities. The Camp began on May 1st, and lasted for 50 days. The village has an inhabitation of 520 people and about 100 houses. The work done by the Camp consisted of 35 night-school classes and 20 noon classes for literacy propaganda with the aid of charts, which were attended by 50 adults and boys. Recitations of Puranic stories and the use of gramophones formed items of instruction in the noon classes. A library of 50 books was made available for those who knew reading, part of which is retained with the villagers themselves. Besides, drainage cleaning, reading out of health and hygiene pamphlets, magic lantern shows with slides calculated to impress the need of sanitation, house-to-house visits for giving suggestions for sanitary improvements according to the needs, imparting knowledge of new games to the boys of the village, and