

129

Vol :
XXXII

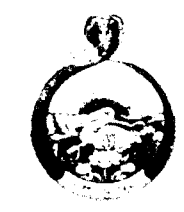
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273



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THE VEDANTA KESARI

Vol-XXXII

May-1945-April-1946



Poet-Patriot of India By Gurdial Mallick	...	...	...	...	88
Prapanna, Nine Meditations of the— By R. Tirunarayana Iyengar	...	...	...	...	133
Prohibition, The Problem of— By Rajasevasakta Prof. A. R. Wadia	...	...	...	...	157
Ramakrishnananda, Swami By Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachariar	...	...	...	...	72
Ramakrishna Sri By Swami Madhavananda	...	...	...	...	192
Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and the Ideal of Universal Religion By Prof. S. N. L. Srivastava, M.A.	...	...	...	...	89
Ratna-Traya or Gem Trinity By Swami Vimalananda	...	...	...	...	52
Reality, Search After, On the External Plane I & II By Swami Siddheswarananda	...	...	...	...	74, 135
Religion, A Scientific Approach to— By Howard Luxemoor Carpenter	...	...	...	...	238
Religion in Practice By Kapileswar Das, M.A., B. Ed.	...	...	...	...	263
Reviews and Notices	18, 42, 66, 91, 114, 142, 165, 187, 208, 230, 252, 273	...	...	...	263
Samartha Ramdas By T. R. Gadre	...	...	...	...	185
Sankara and Ramanuja By Prof. D. S. Sarma	...	...	...	...	56
Sankara as a Scientist Sees Him By Sir S. V. Ramamurti, I.C.S.	...	...	...	...	27
Sankara's Message of Unity By Prof. Akshay Kumar Banerjee	...	...	...	...	228
San Juan De La Cruz I & II By Wolfram H. Koch	...	...	...	...	83, 103
Self-assertion in a Higher Sense By Swami Yatiswarananda	...	...	...	...	204
Sinner's Fate in Hinduism By Dr. M. H. Syed, M.A., Ph. D.	...	...	...	...	126
Sleep, Dreamless (Sushupti) in Vedanta By Diwan Bahadur T. Bhujanga Rao, M.A., B.L.	...	...	...	...	97
Spiritual Life, What it Means By Swami Yatiswarananda	...	...	...	...	15
Socrates By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph. D.	...	...	...	...	57
Song, The—(Poem) By Sri Tandra Devi	...	...	...	...	64
Tagore, the Philosopher By V. A. Tyagarajan, M.A.	...	...	...	...	260
Tiruppana—An Outcaste Alwar By 'Sri Saila'	...	...	...	...	111
Trinity, Our Underfed—(Editorial)	...	...	...	...	212
Vasudeva is All By Dr. M. H. Syed, M.A., Ph. D.	...	...	...	...	13
Vedanta, The Pace of, in France By Swami Siddheswarananda	...	...	...	...	268
Virtues or Faults (Sanskrit Text and Translation)	...	...	...	...	87
Vivekananda Swami, and the India of To-morrow By Prof. K. Swaminathan	...	...	...	...	245
Vivekananda Swami, and the Times we live in By Prof. P. S. Naidu	...	...	...	...	36
Winds, To the—(Poem) By Sri Tandra Devi	...	...	...	...	163
Wisdom, Pearls of—	1, 21, 45, 69, 93, 117, 145, 167, 189, 211, 233, 255	...	...	...	255

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PEARLS OF WISDOM	255
THE GITA AND THE TIMES WE LIVE IN—II	256
TAGORE, THE PHILOSOPHER By V. A. Tyagarajan, M. A.	260
RELIGION IN PRACTICE By Kapileswar Das, M.A., B.Ed.	263
A LITTLE KNOWN PARABLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA	266
THE PEN AND THE POTENTATE By M. N. G.	266
THE PACE OF VEDANTA IN FRANCE By Swami Siddheswarananda	268
THE HIMALAYAS OF THE SOUL By Gurdial Mallik	272
REVIEWS AND NOTICES	273
NEWS AND REPORTS	275

“AMRUTANJAN”

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Vol. XXXII

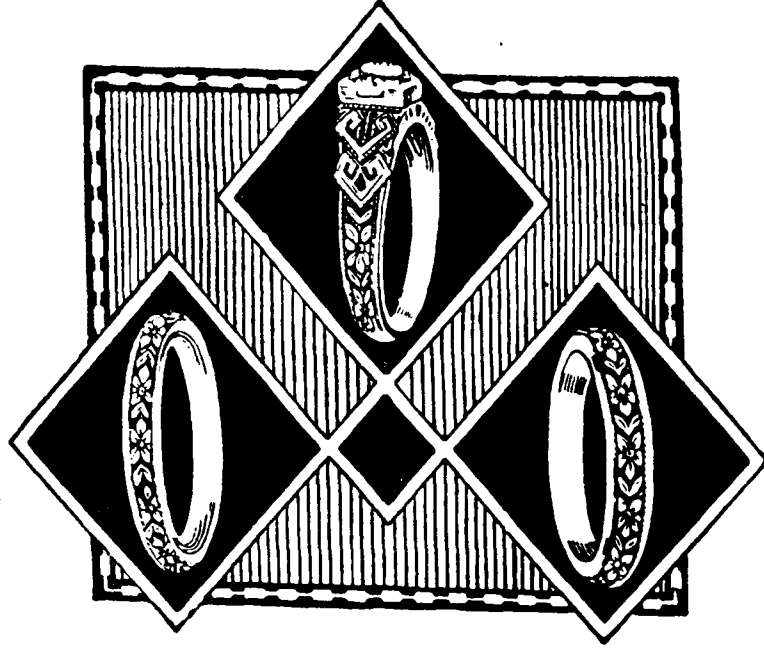
MAY 1945—APRIL 1946

INDEX TO CONTENTS

	PAGE
Advaita, Practical By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M.A.	138
Advaita, Pure Practical— By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M.A.	33
Advaita—Realistic Aspect By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M.A.	203
Advaita, The Phenomenon Theory of— By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M.A.	60
Artist in His Sanctum By Dr. A. R. Poduval, M.D.	50
Atom Bomb, An Answer to the— By John Moffitt	225
Bodhisattva Avadhana Kalpalata (Translation)	29
Bulla Shah Saint, and His Vedantic Teachings I & II By Swami Jagadiswarananda	129, 205
Bystander, The—(Editorial)	168
Christianity If, Understands Hinduism Aright By Dr. A. R. Poduval, M.D.	250
Concentration Has Its Dangers By Swami Yatiswarananda	40
Culture and Nature By Gurdial Mallik	16
Culture as Deep as Life	141
Cultural Co-operation, The Price of—(Editorial)	2
Cultural Patterns, Changing Shape of— By Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph. D.	242
Cultural Unity of India, Contribution of the Gitacharya By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph. D.	215
Cultural Unity of India, Contribution of Jainism and Buddhism By A. Chakravarti, M.A., I.E.S.	176
Cultural Unity of India, Contribution of the Vedic Sages By Dr. C. Kunhan Raja	194
Democracy, The Core of Modern—	244
Editorials:	
Bystander, The—	168
Cultural Co-operation, The Price of	2
Gita and the Times we live in I & II	234, 256
Irreligion, On the Edge of	24
Love, This Age of—	190
Master—The and the Disciple	118
One Step Enough for Me I & II	46, 70
Passing the Third Floor	146
Peace, Foundations of	94

Peace with Honour	22
Trinity, Our Underfed	212
Gandhiji and the Gita By Diwan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.	149
Gita and The Times we live in I & II—(Editorial)	234, 256
"Gita Through a Modern Eye" By Dr. M. H. Syed, M.A., Ph. D.	31
Hen that Lays the Golden Egg	17
Himalayas of the Soul, The By Gurdial Mallik	272
Hinduism and Islam—Where the Twain Meet By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.	9
Hinduism Is, on the Decline? By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.	128
Human Volition and the Historical Process By Krishna Chaitanya,	61
Huxley Aldous, and Indian Thought By Prof. Manoj Kumar Chatterjee, M.A.	76
Image-worship in Hinduism By Dr. Satishchandra Chatterjee, M.A., Ph. D.	5
Indian Culture By Sir S. Radhakrishnan	153
India New, A Vision of—(Poem) By K. Vaidyanathan, B.A.	227
Indian Philosophy, Ideas Toward a History of By D. P. Lingwood	197
Irreligion, On the Edge of—(Editorial)	24
Jesus To, On His Birthday—(Poem) By Sri Tandra Devi	171
Karma cannot be Hoodwinked—(A Story)	161
Kite, The—(Poem) By Sri V. K. Raman Menon	41
Krishna Sri and The Message of Love By Prof. D. S. Sarma	122
Live on the Top-most Flat By Swami Yatiswarananda	184
Love, This Age of—(Editorial)	190
Madura Kavi—The Mellifluent Alwar By 'Sri Saila'	34
Mankind, The Future of— By Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph. D.	10
Master The, and the Disciple—(Editorial)	118
News and Reports	29, 44, 68, 92, 116, 144, 166, 188, 209, 232, 253, 275
Nikolai Hartmann's Theory of Moral Values, I & II By Dr. S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph. D.	172, 219
Non-Violence, The Concept of—A Psychological Analysis By Prof. P. S. Naidu, M.A.	199
One Step enough for me I & II—(Editorial)	46, 70
Passing of the Third Floor—(Editorial)	146
Peace, Foundations of—(Editorial)	94
Peace, Towards Lasting— By H. E. Thanassis Agnides, Ambassador of Greece	217
Peace with Honour—(Editorial)	22
Pen and Potentate By M. N. G.	266

DIAMONDS



sparkle like a star

All the light that falls on the upper surface of a cut diamond is made to reflect and none allowed to leak out from the underside of the stone. This is done by proportioning the stone and cutting the facets with correct inclination. A diamond cut thus does something more than mere reflecting of light. It tends to split up the white light into the colours of the spectrum so that, mixed with the vivid flashes of white light, we have gleams of rainbow hues and hence the diamond is properly called a Brilliant.

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The Vedanta Kesari

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APRIL, 1946

PEARLS OF WISDOM

अब्धार्देन हरिं प्रमत्तमकरोदौत्तानपादःशिशुः
सप्ताहेन नृपः पराक्षिदबला गामार्द्धतः पिंगला ।
खट्वांगो घटिकद्वयेन नवतिप्रायोपि तन्नव्यथे
तं कारुण्यनिधिं प्रपद्य शरणं शेषायुषा नोष्ये ॥

— A Mystic of Malabar

O Lord, Ocean of mercy, that I have thought of Thee only very late in life does not at all discomfort me. I know that age and want of time are no barriers in the path of Thy devotee. King Uttanapada's son, Dhruva, was but a boy and he joined Thee by half an year's devotion and King Parikshit by seven days. It took only two hours for that lady, Pingala to reach Thee and most wonderful of all, Khattvanga gained Thy Feet by two seconds! Hence my old age is no bar. I take refuge in Thee and with the little time left to me, I propitiate Thee, O thou, ocean of mercy. [It is said that the old Brahmin who composed extempore and chanted this verse and prostrated before the Bhagavan Sri Krishna at Guruvayur Temple, did not get up.]

The wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on the sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the strong always keep the sails of their minds unfurled to catch the favourable wind and thus reach their destination very soon

— Sri Ramakrishna.

THE GITA AND THE TIMES WE LIVE IN—II

The modern decay of human material makes the Gita anxious. For its sure and all-round improvement the Gita, as we saw in the last article, thinks a double-method highly necessary: an inner change, a transformation in the individual, accompanied by a healthy and helpful social ordering. Hence the task has to be shared both by the yogi and society. But more by the yogi; for society itself is a process, and its changes are determined in large measure by the moral ideals of its members. But both have to keep in mind one basic law of life: If an organism at its lowest ebb wants to pull itself together, it requires, more than any amount of extraneous help, the co-ordination and integration of its powers into a whole and their switching on to a higher plane of life. To realise self is always to realise a whole. The Gita, with insight into this law of life does signal service to the worn-out modern man.

The Gita prepares him thoroughly, if he would yield—by organising and co-ordinating his philosophy, religion, ethics and psychology into the effective working hypothesis of the complete man. Today we have almost everything; but we have missed the above fundamental law of life, the law of self-integration. We have lost the habit of collecting and integrating our inner 'men' into the one full and efficient Man. We have artists, we have scientists, philosophers, scholars, but we have no men. We have enough art to make immoral idiots. We have philosophy enough to make life dry and void. We have emotions hot enough to push us into fruitless and thoughtless activity. The result is that we now-a-days seldom produce great men, full men, Saviours. To our society that has almost forgotten the art of full and integrative life Gita begins to give its *credo* by first painting the background of pragmatic idealism. We saw in our last article how without the realisation of oneness of the yogi and the Sarva or the All, honest practice of pragmatic idealism is impossible. It is

256

all a philosophy of the Advaitic One and the empirical Many. The yogi is of course that One; but he is at the same time the Many, with his hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and mouth everywhere. In other words the yogi, the ideal individual is the society. To ignore this inter-relation will be to the peril of both. To such a one the practice of social virtues enumerated by the Gita in the thirteenth chapter (Stanzas 7 to 11) virtues of humility, modesty, innocence, patience, purity, absence of attachment and egoism and the like become spontaneous. The Gita to make its point perfectly clear equates these social virtues to real jñanam, knowledge. The Gita thus gives sound validity to its ethics by grounding it in the philosophy of the one. If a man's social ethics, his right conduct with and love for, his neighbours, were to be really sincere and not hypocritical, it must spring from the knowledge of his essential identity with his neighbours. It is with insight into this vital relation between ethics and philosophy that the Gita equates its ethics with its philosophy. In the yogi this relation lives and illumines his life. The yogi interprets this relation to others: he practises the social virtues and he is the seat of the knowledge of the oneness of the individual and society. But how to earn a yogi? Society must live the life, and hold the banner of ideals aloft. And for that the Gita enjoins social virtues of Ahimsa, continence, and love not only for one individual but for the whole of society. Society must formulate its demand for spiritual men, for saviours. Saviours are a social property, a sign of the health and vigour of the society that produces them. A society cannot live dangerously—as we do now—and then at moments of repentance close its eyes and pray for a Christ or a Buddha to come and save it. The European society asked for a Hitler and got him. But did we ask for a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda or a Gandhiji? If we had asked for them honestly, should not we use

[VEDANTA KESARI

them when they are given to us? In spite of our indifference and neglect these saviours are working and effectively moulding society. Witness for instance how after their advent religion has become so socially conscious. At no time perhaps did religion turn its back on ideas of ritualism and personal salvation and engross itself in social welfare works as it has done to-day. It redounds to the credit of the Gita that its ideal of right ethics receives another affirmation: right ethics is the path that leads the self to Sarva consciousness.

Even to the daily religion of man the Gita gives a social turn. *Yajna*, *dana*, *tapas* and *karma* have been given a wider and social meaning and importance in the Gita. Before the advent of the Gita only certain particular works were considered 'religious'. *Yajna* was *yaga* or ritualistic sacrifice and nothing more; *dana* was a gift made to a Brahmana as a part of the *yaga* ceremony; and *karma*, was *nitya*, *naimittika*, *nishiddha* and nothing more. The Gita came and lifted all these spiritual auxiliaries from their narrow grooves and gave them wider circuit and a social efficacy. The Gita declared all actions spiritual: *sve sve karmanyabhiratah samsidhim labhate narah*: (man attains perfection by doing the respective duties to which he is inclined by taste and disposition). Here is a comforting gospel for the modern man who hates being tied to the post of hereditary functions and who wants to exercise his choice of career. Not only that: no work is considered less noble than another; all functions when discharged with the proper care and in right spirit lead man to higher fulfilment.

Yajna is socialised by the Gita and used in the sense of *tyaga*, or spirit of renunciation yoked to the bearing of other's burdens. The Gita says that actions which imply denial of the lower self and help the realisation of the higher self, actions done for the good of others, not only do not bind the doer but positively help him on to higher levels of experience. Karma is Nishkama Karma, non-attached and divinely dedicated action which

APRIL, 1946]

never recedes into the cell of 'one's own salvation' but is active in filling up the 'perfectibles' all round. The highest form of *tapas* is the three-fold austerity of the body, word, and mind, शारीरं तपः वाङ्मयं तपः and मानसं तपः. Worship of Gods and spiritual men, purity, straightforwardness, continence and abstinence from injury, come under bodily austerity. The speech which causes no excitement and is true as also pleasant and beneficial and the recitation of holy texts go to form the *tapas* of speech. Serenity of mind, humility, silence, self-control, purity of nature—this is mental austerity according to the Gita. To the man of today who wants health and strength of the muscle but will not care for his bodily purity, who complains he has no peace and does not control his tongue, who weeps saying religion is impossible, but will never bother himself about *sadhanas*—the Gita gives above enough saving wisdom.

The fruit of the Gita's social philosophy, ethics and religion is the experience *per se*, the experience of *samatva* (perfect peace and poise) of *samyagdrishti*, the integral vision which gives the yoga with the All, the global mood. By way of affirming the positive and utter practical nature of this experience, the Gita says that it is here and now in this very body, *chaiva*. The ultimate experience is here itself, because for the one who has realised that he is the blood and limb of the All, birth and death are at an end and there is no going to another world.

Some psychological implications flow from the above affirmation of the Gita that the final experience is here in this body itself. On the relative plane of time, space and cause how can man gain and maintain an absolute, timeless, spaceless experience, which is Samadhi or Samyagdrishti? When the mind ceases to look back into the past and to hanker for the future, the present becomes more real. Heavens no more tempt and the mind returns to itself to realise its primacy. Only an undisturbed and undissipated psyche ruled by unbiassed Buddhi can have the required strength to capture the

257

original oneness within and extend its peace outside. To this end the Gitacharya prescribes :

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहतचेतसां
न्यवसायादिमका बुद्धि समाधौ न विधीयते ॥

The first arrow from enjoyments is on the Buddhi; for the discerning power is easily vulnerable. And when Buddhi is shattered, confused, then with it falls its retinue. For the Buddhi is the king. To those whose Buddhi has been dissipated by a division in their psyche caused by attachment to *bhoga* and *isvarya*, *samadhi* or integral experience is impossible. Here is the clue to our psychological perils. The modern man is in search of his soul; he is frightfully unnerved and unhinged. The Buddhi, the one member of his being who could have, by virtue of its discriminative faculty, power of balance and right vision, helped him in his confusion, is itself vitiated by self-praise and rationalisation. Man today has lost the power of separating the bad from the good, unreal from the real: he has lost his Buddhi. The results of this Buddhinasa is very picturesquely described by McDougall in his *Psycho-analysis and Social Psychology*: 'It has greatly favoured a phenomenon which Dr. Sheldon happily describes as the emergence of the "waster mind" to dominance in our civilization'.

Sheldon writes :

The real enemies of character are not to be found among atheists or critics of religion or non-conformists but they are lusty, noise-loving expressionists, who believe in living for the moment, in having their fling, and who say, 'Let's have no more long faces no inhibitions and no wet blankets at our party'. They are the good livers, unchastened, unreverent souls. Their God is Expression, with a big E and their spiritual counsellors are the Freudian Psycho-analysts.'

Hormone psychology teaches that instinct is the prime-mover of human activity. Instinct dictates to the intellect to find sound arguments for its whims and fancies. The modern teacher in the class-room argues

that he canes the boy not that he is angry but that the boy may reform himself; the modern imperialists say that the Colonies are not for their markets and exploitation but for the 'civilization' of its inhabitants, and modern artists justify their descents into the infernal regions of lust by saying that art is impossible without full expression to their instincts. What a self-destructive psychology they have developed! No wonder war has become an institution and we fought two world wars within the space of thirty-years. There is a prophetic utterance in the Gita that when man is deluded by the *gunas* of the Prakriti he becomes attached to the functions of the *gunas* in his body and loses his capacity for discrimination and integral vision.

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु
तानकृत्वविदो मन्दान.....

This is exactly what has happened to-day. Science has brought man control over Nature's energies and man's attitude towards her has changed. This has resulted in the overturning of man's inner value scale. And when the value barometer falls, with it falls his philosophy, religion, everything. Witness for instance the fell tendency of bringing down the higher values in the realms of thought and life. Mainly four types of degenerated values can be distinguished. The reduction of ethical values to zero by the method of *reductio ad absurdum*: all life is a lie; the world is a fiction and is made up of contradiction. Secondly, the projection of biological laws on to the level of human ethics leading to Darwinistic conceptions of sociology—the survival of the fittest and prerogatives of the Superman which gave birth to the ethics of Fascism. Thirdly the reduction of social values like courage and self-sacrifice to the psychological level of masochism and death-instinct and of God-love to Oedipus-complex and the reduction of live organisms to chemical components. As a true child of the above reduction-mania comes the utter disregard of blood purity and the principles of Eugenics. If the present

sexual promiscuity and indiscretions are to continue, very soon the brilliant stalk and race-purity will be a thing of the past. And last of all the reduction of religion to cheap Baba cults and the religion of the 'Swallow-pill' variety. Thus the picture is complete: The 'waster-mind' and rationalisation in psychology, expressionism leading to sensual art and literature, utilitarianism in philosophy, the cheap Baba cults in religion and the spreading wave of dysgenic population.

This in fact is the picture of the anti social individual at war with society, with Sarva. The whole problem of modern times can be reduced to this: the rupture between the individual and society. First came the rupture in man's psyche and that led to the hiatus between man and society. Our wise ones have said that one's own enemy is the enemy of all others. The Atom Bomb has come to us not as the last word in science, but as the last straw that has broken completely the link between the individual and society.

The Gita redeems these fallen levels of man's spiritual being, his philosophy, his ethics, his psychology and religion, before it constructs them into a whole. We have seen the Gita's social enthusiasm taking shape as pragmatic idealism. In ethics, psychology and religion the Gita would have us stress the need of realising our essential spiritual quality. To come by the Divine in us is to experience the Divine in everybody and thus to formulate a healthy ethics. To realise one's spiritual quality is to construct the psychology of a complete psyche and to reap the religion of strength, courage, and responsible optimism. In two words the Gita hits off its solution: *yogi bhava*.

Be a yogi, a man of balance, of steady wisdom, *sthitaprajna*. Our inner intensity, our spiritual quality, is the measure of all values. When that becomes impoverished through want of nourishment, we pitch our ideals low. Our power of judgment and striving becomes weak and perverted and instead of conservation of values being our

ideal, we turn destructive. This explains the emergence of the 'Waster-mind', rank expressionism and the crowding of cheap cults. The only cure is to restore the inner intensity of our spirit and strengthen it by the co-ordination and integration of our physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual powers. And to the Gita this is not achieved by repression and inhibition which have given this century its gifts of 'ticks' and neurosis. The Gita holds up to ridicule the *mithyachara*, the man who adopting the technique of repression gives up everything externally but broods over sense-enjoyments. The Gita gives a legitimate lease to desires and appetites; a lease that will not mean bankruptcy to righteousness. The Gita insists on the Golden Mean, life of balance, the one high ideal so ably upheld by the Upanishads in India and by the Greeks in the West. 'Neither he who starves himself nor the glutton, neither the one who sleeps too much, nor the one who keeps awake the whole night is the man of balance.' In this the Gita has done a symbolical rationing for appetites and comforts.

But more than this the Gita has condensed for us the perennial philosophy of India and has given it as a minimum working hypothesis. In the words of Aldous Huxley, the minimum working hypothesis comes to this:

That there is a Godhead, Ground, Brahman, a Ground which is both immanent and transcendent, which is the unmanifested principle of all manifestations.

That it is possible for human beings to love, know and from virtually, to become actually, identical with the Divine Ground.

That to achieve this, unity knowledge of the Godhead is the final end and purpose of human existence.

That there is a Law, or Dharma which must be obeyed, a Way which must be followed, if men are to achieve their final end. That this way is of humility and love, the Dharma is a living law of mortification and self-transcending awareness

Nevertheless, says Huxley, people like their ego and do not wish to mortify them,

get a bigger kick out of bullying and self-adulation than out of humility and compassion, are determined not to see why they should'nt do what they like and have a good time. They get their good time, but also and inevitably they get wars and syphilis, tyranny and alcoholism, revolution; and in default of an adequate religious hypothesis the choice between some lunatic idolatry, such as nationalism, and a sense of complete futility and despair. Unutterable miseries!

Of the many things that the Gita came to fulfil, offsetting the Upanishadic idealism and

the ethical idealism of Buddhism by her benign pragmatism was very important. Today she comes as the great Divine Mother to redeem us from our idealistic foundering. For the Yogeswara nothing is impossible. He can give us according to capacity, idealism blended with pragmatism, the yoga (contemplation) tempered with Dhanus (action). Let us pray to the Yogeswara who gave us the Gita to bless this yoga-less and restless age with the power of incarnating in its life yoga and action in righteous proportion and give us Indians above all, the courage of initiative and action.

TAGORE, THE PHILOSOPHER

By V. A. TYAGARAJAN, M.A.

The pre-eminence of Tagore, as poet and as philosopher points out to us how close is the relationship between poetry and philosophy. It is something like the friendship between Hamlet and Horatio. 'Give me that man who is not passion's slave and I shall wear him in my heart of hearts as I do thee' says Hamlet to his friend Horatio, the philosopher. Philosophy gives to us the white light of knowledge. Poetry accepts this and converts it, as the earth does with the light of the Sun, into the many colours of passion, and smiles with beauty in the face of the giver. The philosopher is the Tirthankara, the lone pilgrim in quest of truth. The archetype of the philosopher is the Buddha, the lone seeker after the Eternal. Poetry follows him, covers his path with flowers, and makes angels and demons wait upon his quest. It creates mythology and covers hill-sides with palaces of art.

Tagore's claim to rank among the philosophers is based primarily upon his *Sadhana*. He gives to us the ancient message of the Upanishads, but gives it to us with such freshness of conviction that in his hands truth bursts into beauty. He makes truth

come home to us with the novelty of a discovery and the richness of experience, that it looks as though the Bodhi tree has put forth a new branch, and shines with the fascination of fresh-grown leaves.

The philosopher is the truth seeker, the seeker after ultimate reality. Tagore states the aim of philosophy to be the realisation of the infinite. He points out that the infinite is not one object among many, it is not an addition to the other objects of our possession. The infinite cannot therefore be gained by adding one more to the ladder of the finite. It is rather when we surrender ourselves, our sense of possession, and our finitude itself, that we perceive the Eternal and the Infinite in us. Tagore not merely states that it will be a calamity if we do not perceive God here and now, but he also shows us how exactly we may come into contact with the Eternal. He gives to us a re-interpretation of the Vedic prayer, 'O Light! Make Thyself visible in me.'

Tagore points out that if God is the source as well as the culmination of all our sense of

the values of life, we can realise our sense of values not by estimating their value in terms of their usefulness but of their beauty. A purely utilitarian attitude estimates things not as ends in themselves but as means; and to that extent tends to estimate what is higher in terms of what is lower. But in the perception of beauty, in so far as the idea of self is forgotten, we see the truth of things. That is why the perception of beauty leads to love, for love sees the bond of unity that exists between self and the object of contemplation. The philosopher gives to us a poet's approach to the quest eternal; he shows to us how we may know God by the love of God. He further points out that it is this love of God that forms the basis of all creative activity. In meditation, man comprehends the Eternal in its perfection. In action, he liberates the limitless possibilities of perfection, as the eternal unfolds itself in the bondage of creative activity. All action that tends to annihilate selfishness, by breaking the bonds of self-limitation, works like love itself to realise the Eternal in us.

It is because the poet-philosopher lays such stress on the means of fulfilment, that his book is called the *Sadhana*. The starting point of such *Sadhana* is the discovery of the Soul within us. Tagore points out that at one end of our being we are one with stocks and stones. That is the matter side of existence. But at the other end of our being we feel in love, our one-ness with the Eternal. The Eternal therefore is our very Self. It is only as long as we cling to our narrow limitations that we feel ourselves estranged from our heritage of the spirit. But the moment we surrender ourselves to the Eternal we regain our patrimony. The moment we gain the consciousness of the Atman in us, we gain possession of God as the Antaryamin. The light reveals itself in us. Tagore thus lays clearly before us the starting point, the means and the goal in the spiritual life. But as the good life cannot be a means to something else, in that sense of unity that is felt, in that joy that is liberated, the end, means, and starting point alike become dissolved in

a single ecstatic realisation. The soul thus gains the freedom of the cosmos.

The One, says Tagore, reveals itself as the many; the many form the appearance, the One is the reality; the appearance is Maya, the Reality is Satya, and it is their apparent opposition that brings out the ultimate nature of Reality. There is everywhere a sense of opposition, as it were, as between the two hands or the two eyes, but it is by their co-operation that anything can be achieved. We get a unified vision of truth only when the two eyes work together. Hence too the problem of evil. It is an apparent sense of bondage that is given, so that the Self, by transcending this limitation, may realise its true nature. Evil binds the individual, like the tension which binds the strings of a musical instrument. But it is this bondage that makes the liberation of music possible, and to that extent makes the string realise its purpose. Similarly, pain liberates spirit from its bondage to the flesh, makes it realise its kinship with the divine. Pain cannot be an end in itself, and whatever is not an end is unreal. It is obvious that this realisation of higher values must come from within. The individual is therefore left free, either to pursue the path of license, with its attendant consequence of evil, or to pursue the life divine.

Tagore thus lays clearly before us the relationship between the individual and the Universal. He teaches us how to recover the values of personality, and points out that the surrender to the divine is the fulfilment of that personality. His attitude is the Buddha attitude, as given to us in the sermon to Simha, where the Buddha says that what he preaches is the annihilation of evil, and not of good, annihilation of discord, not of concord. Tagore thus helps us to rediscover the value and destiny of the individual.

The poet in Tagore perceives the manifest aspect of the divine—the Saguna Brahman. As a philosopher he finds its source in the

Nirguna Brahman. That is why to the poet-philosopher the world itself becomes the Brahma Vihara. The message of the poet to our times is the assertion of the artist's faith in ultimate values. At a time when pseudo-philosophies sport themselves, when they see nothing but discord and blank negation in the cosmos, when, as in Hardy's *Nature's Questioning*, the challenge comes,

Has some vast imbecility
Mighty to build and blend,
But impotent to tend,
Framed us in jest and left us to Hazards?
Or come we of an automaton
Unconscious of our pains?
Or are we live remains
Of God-head dying downwards, brain and
eye now gone?

the reply comes from the poet-seer who says against this chill gospel of negation. 'It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting "yes", to say—"I believe that there is an ideal hovering over and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise which is not the outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move'.

The place of Tagore among Indian thinkers lies in the fact that he shows to us how we can reconcile the problem of the one and the many. He explains this by the law of *dvandva*, of apparent opposition. He points out that those who cling to the many are like those who cling to the mud of the road, and fail to realise that the road is not an end in itself. He compares them elsewhere to those who cling to the paper of the bank-note as though the paper in itself has any value. He

points out that it is only when the paper is surrendered that it has any value. Similarly it is the One, the Universal that gives value to the many. But if the individuals were absent, if the self did not exist, there will be no medium for the Universal to work upon, to unfold itself. Tagore thus brings about a reconciliation between the various schools of thought. He shows how they all merge in the Universal. His place among the thinkers of the world is equally clear. By enabling us to discover soul value apart from the value of the mind, he shows to us how we can bridge the gap between pure reason and practical reason. He shows to us in what sense we should understand the statement of Jesus that the Kingdom of God is within man. The thought of Tagore is like the tree of life—it has its root deep down in the wisdom of the Upanishads, and its branches fresh with the sap of young life amid the latest manifestations of the Eternal. Poetry and philosophy are its fruit and flower.

It is by a similar apparent opposition between poetry and philosophy, by that *dvandva* that exists between them, that he brings out the true nature of Brahman. His writings as a philosopher and poet together form the *amrita setu*, the bridge of immortality, in the weary pilgrimage of mankind travelling down the ages.

'May that Divine Being who though Himself colourless gives rise to various colours in different ways with the help of His own power, for His own inscrutable purpose and who dissolves the whole world in Himself—May He endow us with good thoughts.'

RELIGION IN PRACTICE

By KAPILESWAR DAS, M.A., B.ED.

To put down all barriers of caste, colour and creed and work for a humanity broad-based on one common religion of love, fellowship and understanding is a much heard of talk of modern times. So far so good. Nevertheless, the concept of humanity in its all-comprehensive, catholic aspect, in its application to man as man irrespective of any temporal, historic, evolutionary contingencies has received unmistakably clear recognition from times immemorial at the hands of our scriptures. It is in short what is termed as *Samanya Dharma* in our books of holy wisdom. *Samanya Dharma* is commensurate with the human realm, distinct and unique, it covers the connecting links of human beings in totality, inseparable and indivisible by any social or individual demarcations. In substance, our Sastras have defined *Samanya Dharma* as comprising the acquisition and practice of the qualities and actions of forbearance, truth, control of external and internal senses, selflessness, service to preceptors and elders, purity, charity, going on pilgrimages, kindness, simplicity, greedlessness, freedom from jealousy and last but not the least, worship of the Divine and the spiritually advanced. Brihaspati has added to these the forsaking of fruitless exertion along with illegitimate, unwholesome, injurious actions, self-defence and the following of scriptural injunctions. *Mahabharata* has further added to this list the virtues of penance, contentment, humility, self-control and wisdom. It is evident from this enumeration that *Samanya Dharma* succinctly refers to all the traits of elegance and cultural excellence of idealistic conduct, the most valuable treasures on which humanity sets or ought to set its heart in all times and climes. The innermost sacred aspirations of humanity are eternal. No religion, no scripture, no ethical code can do without them. Cruelty, aggrandisement, self-indulgence, falsehood, hypocrisy, snobbery, greed, jealousy, etc., are simply impossible of being

countenanced in thought, word or deed by any seer, teacher or prophet of human welfare. *Samanya Dharma* is thus inclusive of the unchangeable, irreducible, irrefutable mode of human conduct. In its fulfilment man becomes man in the truest and deepest sense, he realises perfection and divinity.

But how is it going to be realised? Herein lies the crux of all problems, the pith and marrow of practical religion. Mere words fail to achieve anything. The long painful march of life through a succession of specialised situations cannot be denied. In the beginningless and endless process of creation, progress, philosophically viewed, is not a straight development but cyclic, rather spiral according to the Hindu outlook. A categorical display of moral commandments is not of much avail; all of them can be contained on the first page of a primer. In spite of them, they say, the world goes on merrily in its usual way; law is more often than not laughed at. Paradoxical as it seems, an ounce of practice is weightier than tons of theory. How is the ideal to be achieved? The answer is plain and emphatic in our scriptures—through *Swadharma*. Man is man: simultaneously does he occupy a particular position in a family, class, race, nation, country, etc., with corresponding duties to perform in these respective spheres. He should first do that efficiently, faithfully, cheerfully. It is no use evading, ignoring, neglecting these elementary duties and sing the burden of international brotherhood and universal love. The particular is the expression of the universal; the form is the manifestation of the formless. Form is not an unimportant accident, a mere chance, but an expression of the innermost being and in it the two worlds, the inner and the outer, the visible and the invisible touch. *Swadharma* leads the way to *Samanya Dharma* or universal well-being and the functioning of *Swadharma* is made possible through *Varnashrama Dharma*; for the latter is only the co-ordination

of the former in different spheres and stages of development. This is the unique contribution of ancient Indian thought in the solution of this most intricate problem.

There is again a talk in these days to take up good points from different religions and form a common religion. This tendency is again to be set in order. Has any religion got good and bad points in distinction? The points of practice of a particular religion wholesome to its evolutionary growth may not be so to another. Followed in a blind and irrational attitude without understanding the underlying spirit, particular characteristics are liable to be degraded giving natural scope to fanatic or dogmatic exclusiveness. But at the same time conglomeration of incoherent parts theoretically done without an eye on the naturalness of practice always produces wastage, friction and disharmony. Attempts at eclecticism have very often failed in the course of history. True synthesis is far from it. It visualises the fundamental importance of Swadharma on the life-giving background of Samanya Dharma. I must follow my own Dharma intelligently, lovingly, with conviction. But this does not mean that other religions are not to be studied or reverentially appreciated by me. Indeed, it is an axiomatic implication of Swadharma that Para Dharma should be cognised, valued, respected. There is no doubt that particular religions pursued in a spirit of intolerance and antagonism give rise to bigotry, prejudice, strife. This is not Swadharma. On the other hand, Swadharma indicates the sweet music of life blended with a thousand rich symphony, the beautiful picture of life toned with a thousand delicate lights and shades and colours. When a particular unit does not recognise its functional limitations in respect to its privileges and obligations and ignorantly or wilfully seeks to encroach upon others' bounds, then is clash the unavoidable consequence. Again, Swadharma offers, the line of least resistance: success in different domains of life is easy to one who follows the Dharma to which he is physically, psychologically

environmentally and socially, competent. If he follows an alien path, he feels out of his elements like the fish out of water; a certain ill-assortment and unsuitability and blind groping cling to his thoughts and actions which often end in frustratain. Hence the clarion-call of the *Geeta*, 'It is better to die following one's own Dharma: Para Dharma is fraught with fear and danger.'

There is again an attempt today in the field of religion to minimise the importance of action and to talk it out. Mere talk about religion and its truths will achieve nothing spiritual. There must be concerted, insistent, fearless action to put the latter into practice; definite means well calculated must be adopted to produce a thing; a vague wish for it is of no avail. Religion is not speculation but based on hard experience. Connected with this point is that of ritual and its place in religious observance about which also there is much shallow talk and misunderstanding now. No doubt ritual is a means to an end and the abuses of mechanical and unintelligent devotion clog the wheels of its progress. Nevertheless, a thing is not necessarily bad because it is abused and necessary means must be undergone to produce the desired result. Again, action cannot but be different for different persons. Man is not omniscient, all-perfect to standardise one code of action and morality for all. What may be fallible from one point of view may be necessary and useful from another. Really, no action in this imperfect world is completely good, absolutely pure. There is smoke in the brightest blazing fire. Action always is the outcome of quality (guna), and quality being a condition of relativity, no action can be perfect. Different situations call for varying degrees of emphasis in action, and sometimes even contradictory phases of it. For example, killing of men in righteous warfare or pure self-defence is not sinful according to scriptures and commonsense though as an act of wanton aggression it is most heinous. An insect born out of poison grows in and by means of it; if it is removed from that source, no good can come to it

may, it may die. Swadharma points out the correct perspective, legitimacy and objective of these different phases and stages of action suitable to birth, mental content, educational efficiency, cultural integrity, etc., in short the path to be chosen by an individual unit among the myriad paths of life. In violating Swadharma man does not only lay the axe at the root of his peace and happiness, but sows the seeds of dissatisfaction and dissension and disquietude in society. Conversely, in fulfilling it not only personal contentment and sovereignty but universal weal and progress are guaranteed. Truly has Apastamba said, as a man by planting a mango tree gets shade and fragrance along with its fruits, so does he following his Swadharma enjoy unexpected supplemental rewards in addition to the immediate ones. Verily has the *Smriti* laid down that he who does not adhere to his Swadharma is like the blind without his staff.

It is a truism that the progress of the individual depends upon social harmony and around balancing. Individuality, personality has its own inherent Dharma, the *Kshetra Dharma*, the Dharma of Embodiment. Carried away by a wave of superficial unitarianism, one cannot afford to be blind to the exigencies of actual varied life. True, the Spirit is perfect and universal; but what about its infinite gradations, multifarious representations, boundless reflections in the world of dimensions, in time and space?

Dharma in its real sense of holding and sustaining the world of relations co-ordinates and fulfils these conditions of embodiment of the Soul, the Substance, the Absolute or whatever it be. The constituents of *Kshetra Dharma* as outlined in our scriptures are desire in mind to achieve happiness (*ichha*), pain and anger at experiencing disillusionment as a result of the destruction of pleasurable phenomena (*duresha*), happiness in obtaining the desired end (*sukha*), the opposite mental complex (*dukha*), the body-sense apparatus as constituted by the five elements (*sanghata*), the inner instrument

(*antahkarana*), and the consciousness which manifests the mental modifications (*Atman*). Hence has the veda declared that mind is the formation of desire, doubt, determination, faith, faithlessness, hope, hopelessness, fear, modesty and the discriminative faculty. The embodied is again subject to the modifications of existence, birth, growth, change, decay and destruction. True religion has to take cognisance of all these principles and check, systematise and guide them to proper fruition. In this sense is Dharma more concerned with limitations, injunctions, disciplines, categorical affirmations and denials (*Vidhi Nishedha*) and this is Dharma in its particular aspect. The modern talk of international fellowship and brotherhood will be without foundations, will be apt to tumble like a house of cards without proper emphasis laid on this aspect. Indeed it is too patent in the orgy of destruction enacted before our eyes to-day.

Understood in this sense religion will not be an opiate, a pathological symptom, an anthropomorphic relic, a deliberate struggle against nature and the closing of doors of light and life and joy, as misunderstood by some of our eminent modernists. It does not lay its seal on any groundless pessimistic resignation: it deals with life, life in abundance, in plenitude, in full vigour and inexhaustible variety. It dismisses all perversity, stultification, stagnation. But this does not mean that religion puts a premium on any illusive optimistic view of life. It can never allow free play to unrighteous, undisciplined thought and action on the plea of a pretentious freedom: it can never leave the door open to rank materialism in the name of tasting life, being dynamic, being romantic. Moments of darkness come in everybody's life: life is not a bed of roses, not all laughter. Rightly understood, spiritually interpreted, they are a call to profound heart-searching, a seeking of freedom, a call to the Eternal. What life is so sunny that the cloud of affliction does not cast its shadow over it? Who is so gay that the mystery of life does not knock at his mind's door for a solution? No, deeper thought, greater conviction, more

ardent faith, greater up-and-doing are necessary to reach the goal of life.

Thus does the boat of Dharma sail on the troubled waters of Samsara between all

delusive extremities and controversies, carrying the loving adventurous voyager safe to the haven of calm, benignity and profound repose.

A LITTLE KNOWN PARABLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Once a king went out on a hunt, in the company of his minister. Accidentally the king's finger was cut off. He asked his minister, "What is the cause of this event?" There must be some profound hidden reason for this happening"—replied he. The king did not like this reply and therefore in an angry mood threw the minister into a well by the side, and asked him, "What is the profound reason behind this event?" The minister replied forthwith, "There is certainly a hidden cause for this too".

Presently a gang of robbers passed through that forest tract. These decoits, finding that their victim is a king, led him away to be sacrificed to Kali. They reached a solitary Kali temple and finished all the preliminary

rites of the sacrifice with alacrity. Suddenly they discovered that the King's finger was cut off and so was unfit for their purpose. For, the rule would demand a whole victim and not a mutilated one.

The decoits railed at him for the troubles they had taken and left him at large. Saved from death by the miraculous accident, the king remembered the minister's words and thanked God a thousand times. Immediately he lifted the minister from the well and narrated to him all that had happened.

Whatever happens, happens for good. With his limited vision man is pleased or displeased by small events the distant effects of which he is not able to foresee.

THE PEN AND THE POTENTATE

By M. N. G.

Not long ago a distinguished, because dynamic, leader of India, with the radius of his recognition extending to the ends of the earth, entered a protest against an assembly of men and women of letters when a message of welcome from the ruler of the State concerned, was read out at the commencement of their deliberations. The message touched on the principles and problems of authorship.

There was a little ripple of resentment in certain circles created by the leader's particular logic of life; there were also others who endorsed approvingly the action in question. Be that as it may, the said situation sets a

poser to all penmen and penwomen; nay, to all creative artists, working through various media of expression.

This is the poser: to whom does the author or the artist owe his primary allegiance? Is he or she to be loyal to a person, as such, or to a principle, which for aught one knows, may be embodied or illustrated in his or her life?

The obvious answer, which at once leaps to the mind is that not only artists (using the term in the broadest sense), but all others as well, should be loyal, first and last, to Truth

[VEDANTA KESABI

which, as Rabindranath wrote on one occasion in an autograph-book, 'is greater than the greatest.'

Assuming, then, for argument's sake, that the satrap of a province or the potentate of a peninsula is greater than all those who dwell in his dominion, yet Truth is greater than him.

Of course, the difficulty in implementing the Poet's dictum in life arises because of the incapacity, usually born of inertia, of a majority of people to perceive Truth. That this is so is confirmed by the question, put about two thousand years ago, by the Pilate to Christ, which has for him still remained unanswered. The fault, however, was not of the latter. For, Christ did preach some aspects of the Eternal Truth. It was the Pilate who with his brain drugged with passion and ears plugged with the cottonwool of contemptible prejudice, refused to listen to the Prophet.

But the artists are supposed to be, and the true ones among them are, the prisms through which the spectrum of Truth is revealed to the artisans, as one may describe the different classes of people who are not engaged in any creative activity. For they are akin to the lilies of the field 'that neither toil nor spin', but which yet give to the world and his wife a glimpse of an ineffable, invisible Beauty that is at the same time Truth.

Supposing, as a hypothetical case, that the Poet Laureate of a country is commanded by his Sovereign to compose a sonnet on him in praise of his person and he carries out the commission. How is his composition now to be judged? In terms of the King's own individual worth or in those of his being a vehicle of certain values of life, which he has to represent in his relationship with his subjects? It may be excellent as a piece of art, even as a penegyric, but if it is not

invested with the illuminating touch of Truth, as conceived in the context of the impersonal ideals of the institution of kingship, the sonnet, may not be reckoned as an achievement of a very high order, though some purist critics may be inclined even to pronounce it not worth the scrap of paper on which it is written.

The truth of the matter is that an artist is ever a servant of the spirit, before which kings and commoners all are one, and which is without the "touch-me-not-ism" and tyranny of the high and low—that still-to-be-expiated curse of our civilization. It follows, therefore, that he should burn incense, if he must at all, only before such attributes and aspects of life which the Wisest of all complexions and creeds, have, by common consent considered to be constituents of the corpus of the spirit.

Maybe, at the back of the great-souled leaders' protest against the penmen's obeisance to the 'word' of the prince as against the word of God, was the burning consciousness that the Spirit in man is free and equal. For as the signatories to the 1919 Declaration of Independence of the spirit, who were drawn both from West and East, said:

'The Spirit is the servant of none. It is we who are servants of the spirit. We have no other master. We are born to bear its torch, to rally round it all those who have strayed. Our part, our duty is to maintain a fixed point, to point out the polar star, amidst the whirl of passions in the nightWe serve Truth alone which is free, with no frontiers, with no limits, with no prejudices of race or caste. Of course we shall not dissociate ourselves from the interests of Humanity! We shall work for it, but for it as a whole. We do not recognise nations. We recognise the People—comprising all men, all equally our brothers.'

THE PACE OF VEDANTA IN FRANCE

By SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

Here is an interesting letter from Swami Siddheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Order who has been carrying on Vedanta work in France since 1938. The light of true Hindu spiritual outlook was always well received and appreciated by the French, even by devout Catholic churchmen. The tolerant French could not have been surprised when the Swami told them that the Hindu accepts Christ, but rejects Churchianity. They cheered him heartily when, after having been introduced to an audience by the President as a pagan (of course, using the term in its literal sense and not in any derogatory manner in which it is commonly used) the Swami began by saying that Hindus were not only pagans but have paganised Jesus by giving place to Him in their hearts as a Saviour, as an Incarnation. Evidently a fertile field for Vedanta.—EDS.

Coming back from Paris on the 16th October 1945 after about three months hard work in the capital, we stayed in Lavaur till the 7th of January. On November 13th I was invited to the neighbouring town of Castres where I spoke on the Message of Sri Ramakrishna. In spite of torrential rains and the lecture taking place at 10 o'clock in the night there was a large audience of over 700 people. On the next day there was a question-answer class when over two hundred were present. We have our usual Christmas celebrations in our home at Lavaur. After that we left for Lions (Lyon) on the 7th January. The weather was extremely cold as we were in mid winter. We stayed a fortnight in Lions. The work of the Lord received a magnificent reception. We were the guests of one of the most reputed surgeons of France, Prof. Berard, and Madame Berard. In this letter I shall give an account of the work done in Lyon.

The principal invitation that took me there was from the Catholic organisation that celebrate, all over France a week's festival called "La semaine de l'unité chrétienne". It was the same organisation that invited me to speak last year at Toulouse when the Cardinal Saliege presided. I spoke on the 12th January at Lions on the "Hindu view of Christ and Christianity". The rector of the Catholic University, M. Lavarenne presided. The Hall Rameau was packed to the full; more than 2,000 people were present: I

spoke extempore in French. It was the will of Sri Guru Maharaj. He alone made it a success. Coming to Lions I had a relapse of influenza and as I spoke I had more than 101 F temperature. Unfortunately the microphone did not function. In spite of all this the audience was sensibly moved as they heard the message of Sri Sri Thakur. I gave an unvarnished account—very politely worded, of the Hindu reaction towards missionary activities of conversion in India. The major part of the lecture was devoted to explain "how a Hindu accepts Christ but rejects Churchianity." Of the audience, I was told, more than 80% were practising Christians. There was a large number of monks and nuns. Perhaps this is the first time they hear in Lions from a Hindu, the point of view of a Hindu. For the one hour I spoke there was perfect silence. This catholic audience cheered when I spoke of how forcing a Hindu to accept Hebraic mythology proper to the traditions of Palestine, i.e., the story of Adam and Eve as the first lesson in catechism is as ridiculous as forcing Negro boys to learn by heart lines in text books written only for French children where there are found statements like "our ancestors the Gauls had blue eyes". (Such errors of the educational departments are well laughed at here). The Negro boy knew full well in his subconscious that his ancestors had never "blue eyes". Each nation has its own mythology and folklore proper to its traditions. And these

in certain traditions like ours based on revelations, have a right to interpret the GRAND SUPRA-RATIONAL in figurative myths showing the deep metaphysical truth regarding the Absolute and the relative. When we present to a foreign world our Lord Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Chaitanya or Ramakrishna we do not insist on the theological background such as the quarrel of the *suras* and the *asuras*, the representations made to Vishnu to descend to this earth and take human form and restore order, peace and Dharma. These theological backgrounds are proper to the country that understands these *puranic* incidents and has conserved for them a deep spiritual significance in the subconscious of the nation. To take these *puranic* stories out of their proper setting and force them on other nations that have nothing in them to respond to their values is a process that is doomed to create misunderstanding and its offspring "violence" in the people on whom these ideas are foisted. I explained how this violence to our national traditions have been produced by the lack of comprehension of European missionaries. Europe herself suffers from the result of this violence. European culture is essentially Greeco-Roman, cum Celtic-Druid in Latin countries. The superimposition of a Hebraic tradition, its *puranas* regarding the origin of life, of the state of man, of perfection, fall and redemption, etc. on European soil without synthesising them with the native traditions, has produced a disequilibrium. The greatest outrage to European consciousness was made when the words, 'pagan' and 'paganism' were invented. When Christianity came to Europe, the Greeco-Roman, Celtic-Druid mythologies were banned as Paganism or those that could not be so dealt were partially fused into the Christian way of life. But the springs of national life rooted in the rich myths and folklores were checked by the Hebraic traditions that were imposed on the country. The partial or full rapture with the past, the racial memory of Europe has never been pardoned. India on the other hand has kept

APRIL, 1946]

the potential of its race memories very active in all periods of history.

The Christianity that got rooted in India till the middle of the 19th century could succeed in its proselytising work mostly amongst the lower classes.

A historical perspective of the rise and growth of Christianity was then given and to introduce the contribution of our Lord and His ideal of Harmony of religions, a brief *expose* of the ideal of tolerance in Hindu Culture was given. A story relating to the advent of Jews in Cochin was received with loud acclamations.

A wave of Jewish Immigration came to Cochin after the fall of Jerusalem and took refuge in the port of Cochin. First they got rights for trading and then permission to construct a synagogue was given; but the site granted was in the same area where now, as before, stands the temple for the Divine Mother Durga. (According to certain historians the synagogue was erected during the time of the Cheraman Perumal, Bhaskararavivarman). This was very distasteful to the Hindu sentiment and representations were made to the ruler. As all questions regarding invisible things are solved by the astrologer, he was consulted. When all the calculations were made the astrologer nodded his head and said "no, no, we cannot change the synagogue; the Divine Mother says that She is exceptionally happy to hear Her praises sung in detail by her Christian children. We consider since then Jesus as an Incarnation. Then I showed the difference between the Indian conception and that of the Bible.

In conclusion a French writer was quoted and I partially agreed with him when he warns the French against the inundation of Indian religious ideas in Europe and its possible danger in creating a sense of weakness in the nation. The salvation of Europe is in its becoming truly Christian. Our Lord when he heard that Col. Olcott had become a Buddhist made the remark: "Why did he

269

leave Christ and his religion. Could he not have found truth here also." What Europe can learn from India (and this does not mean saying adieu to the religious evolution proper to her) is the comprehension of a metaphysical reality, a spiritual attitude which is extra-religious (but never anti religious) an attitude that synthesises and harmonises religion, philosophy and the scientific outlook, not barely on the plane of dialectics and reason, but on the supreme plane of realisation. Repeatedly I told them that all that I said has reference only to the Hindu reaction on the subject treated and that I have not the slightest intention to suggest changes in their dogmas. A Dominican monk after I had finished a lecture in Marseilles on "Tolerance in the philosophico-religious culture of India" wanted permission to speak. He came to the platform and said "Swami, I contest your thesis. For us tolerance is not the way. Intolerance is the way, intolerance of all points of view except that which is revealed by the church". I replied "Father, you have a right to hold on to your point of view. I have not come to proselytise you with my ideas. I give you only some documentation of the right Indian spiritual outlook. You have your right to hold on to your views and we have our right to be loyal to ours. I then explained how the Hindu ideal of tolerance is not a *faith*, but *truth* based on metaphysical foundations. Some minutes were spent to expound how there are degrees of truth on the empirical plane and how Satyasya-Satyam, the truth of truths is beyond all religious levels where its *anubhava* in the Turiya experience makes its at-one-ment with Paramarthika satta. Man does not progress from error to truth but from lower truth to higher truth.

The practice of the message of Christ from the Hindu point of view is more important than adherence to dogmas relating to salvation, rites and ceremonies. Without becoming a Christian, Mahatma Gandhi incorporates in his life the plenitude of the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. In this great spiritual agony that is stifling

Europe, perhaps the day is not far off when there will be another spiritual renaissance, and contact with India and its living currents of spirituality will surely play a great part in the fecundation of a new occident vivified with a religious outlook where the ideal of tolerance cannot but leave a profound impression.

M. Lavarenne in introducing me told the audience that they are going to hear the appreciation and veneration of Jesus from a *paleu* (pagan), using the term in its literal sense and not in any derogatory manner in which the word is commonly used. "Yes, we are pagans and we are proud to be so, if our devotion to our Gods and Goddesses and our veneration to them by perpetuating their temples, feasts and processions, and adherence to all forms of religious life sanctioned through the ages means paganism. Ramakrishna in modern times revealed to us that we are on the proper path and so long as we conserve our Hindu way of life we shall not perish. The great truths you all admire in Ramakrishna's teachings and Gospels were got from *these* that you stigmatise as 'idols'. They spoke to Him and the world is in mute admiration at those words, 'pregnant with celestial fire'. The Divine Mother whom Ramakrishna realised, revealed to Him that Jesus is an incarnation and because Ramakrishna has told that to us we believe the truth and *not because the missionaries tell us so*. Since the time of our Master no Hindu has any difficulty to recognise in Jesus an Incarnation, redeemer and Saviour. But he is not for us the only Incarnation. To us the Lord in His mercy comes down in human form at different epochs of history. The modern Hindu accepts Jesus as an Incarnation and gives Him the homage not according to your rites but according to Hindu Liturgy. If you permit me to use again the term "pagan" used by Monseigneur Lavarenne, we have *paganised Jesus Christ* and thus He shall remain in Hindu hearts along with other Saviours of the world, one of the cherished messengers of God that our scriptures have promised to the world whenever virtue

subsides and vice prevails. A Chinese writer wrote saying that the West brought to the Orient two gifts, the Holy Bible and the gun powder. It would have been better, if he had written that they kept the first for themselves and made a proper use of it and threw the other in the Mediterranean sea. (Loud applause). I ended by invoking the saying of Jesus "Whenever two or more assemble in my name I shall be there." "We are assembled here in His name. Surely He is with us and as a humble follower of Ramakrishna I share this truth with you all and we offer our prostrations at His Lotus Feet and in doing so we bring you the evidence of Ramakrishna who not being a Christian nevertheless KNEW HIM and communed with HIM in the supreme ecstasy of mystic union. This evidence of the existence of Jesus amongst us from a Hindu gives additional value. It compliments the evidence you have from your grand mystics, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, down to our modern times when we had a Pere de Faucauld, a Cure d'Ars and a St. Teresa of Lisieux. This *living Jesus* is the salvation of Christian Europe if only we would turn from theoretical ideologies and follow the footsteps of the great ones that lived their ideal.

As I finished there was continuous cheering. In spite of the microphone that failed to function, my voice was well heard. The Rector thanking in moving terms said that he had never seen such an audience in the course of his ministry in Lions. He appreciated all that I said with regard to our veneration of Jesus; but with a smile he concluded saying that as Director of the "Propagation of Faith" he cannot accept all that I said with regard to conversion and proselytism. This organisation that invited me wants to publish a full text of the speech. The day following I was to speak on the same subject before the students of a seminary that sends missionaries to all parts of the world. In this year France is sending over 5,000 missionaries to the world and a great part of this goes to India. As my fever continued I could not go. A few

days after a group of monks from a monastery came to hear me expound the principles of Rajayoga. Madame Berard directs a social service organisation. On the 17th I spoke to a crowded meeting arranged by her on "Realisation through service". On the 18th I was invited to address the students of the medical college. The medical faculty of Lions is well known in France. I was received by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. One of the reputed surgeons, Dr. de Reugement organised the talk and I spoke on "Evolution and its Purpose". On the 19th another packed hall in the Faculty of Letters, I addressed the Philosophical Society on "The Vedantic Method in the Determination of the Real". The Dean of the Faculty with many professors and students were present. The subject was very well received and there was a nice discussion in the end. The topic treated is dealt with in detail in an article I wrote for the *Review Thomist* which will be published soon. On the 20th to another crowded hall I spoke on "The *Bhagavad Gita* and the Problem of Suffering". Besides these public lectures I had to speak to select groups of persons. One such talk was to a group called "Action Catholic"; another was given in the house of Professor (Dr.) Delers, Professor of Pathology. The head of the Dominican monastery and the Mother Superior of the Franciscans came for long interviews. At the request of the devotees of Sri Guru Maharaj two classes for meditation were held. As there are a pretty good number of devotees of our Lord in Lions I have requested a kind friend, Monsieur Charles Andrieu to group them for weekly or fortnightly meetings. The groups thus formed in Marseilles, Toulouse, and Nimea are functioning well.

The kindness of our hosts in Lyon, Prof. and Madame Berard is beyond all description. They looked after me very well. My influenza disappeared after the first few days and this made it possible for me to fulfill all my engagements. I should not omit to mention the name of a venerable Catholic priest, Abbe Ceuturier who is the soul of the movement in France for organising a week's

festival each year for Christian Unity. He is a very spiritual man with very advanced views. Although Catholicism with its uncompromising dogmas *cannot* and *will* not accept any other point of view except that of the Church, the very fact that *in meetings organised by them*, a non-christian is allowed to express himself so liberally on their methods of conversion and to make observa-

tions from the Hindu point of view about their tenets and beliefs, is in itself, they say here, is a good sign of the times. Indirectly that is possible now because of the great personality of Sri Guru Maharaj whose surging influence in all parts of the world has become a vital factor to be reckoned with and even unwilling eyes are forced to open and see "the shape of things to come".

THE HIMALAYAS OF THE SOUL

By GURDIAL MALLIK

I. PASSION OF THE SENSES

I salute thee!

O Power Elemental!

That drivest me before thyself
As the wailing wind in the wilderness
Does a dry, decrepit leaf!

In the wake of thy fitful visit to me

Thou stirrest the sleeping senses
To vexatious wakefulness;
Takest away the mind from its moorings;
Rekindlest the dying embers of emotions into a fierce fire;

I salute thee, even though thou pullest down into dust my humble habitation, which, through the years, I thought I had made proof against the impact of the elemental.

Thou exposest me for a while in all my nakedness

To the raw and restless in nature;
Yet I salute thee.

For, art thou, too, not part and parcel of the power of Him
Who rides in the sky, on the seas and on the storms,
And who also accommodates His majesty and mien
To the contours and compass of the lowly dewdrop on the green grass that is trampled under a thousand feet?

I salute thee, O purple path of the Power Divine!

II. POWER OF THE SOUL

O ungarmented grandeur of the Power of God,

O unbosomed beauty of the Peace of God,

O inarticulate advocate of the Existence of God,
I salute thee!

To see thee is to discover Him in His restrained rhythm of repose

I salute thee!

When the virgin snow streams forth from its cloud-capped home
And, gathering on the way the blessings of its bounty-beneficiaries,
It winds towards the sea,
I feel, thy cheeks grow warm and wet with tears of love
Like the mother bidding farewell
To her newly-wedded daughter departing for the home of her husband.
I salute thee!

III. PEACE OF THE SPIRIT

O Divine! O delight of my soul!

If, during my sojourn in thy serene and sun-and-snow-lit shadow,
I have ever disturbed Thy silence with the shouts and shrieks of my petty,
protean self,

Forgive me!

If against thy boundless, unvarying beauty

I have ever pitted the endless ugliness of my interior and exterior life and thus
blemished it with a blot,

Forgive me!

If I have ever violated the purity of thy power, pitched in poise, with the profane
aggressiveness of my individualism

Forgive me!

Forgive me out of the depths of thy understanding

Of the frailties and fancies of mortal man,
So that, broken in by the thought
Of thy limitless love, I may, once again,
Strive to make good my claim
To my kinship with thee
As at once thy son and servant.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Is this Peace? BY S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
HIND KITABS, BOMBAY. PRICE RS. 1-4-0.
PAGES 70.

'I cannot emphasize too strongly' declared Mr. Byrnes, the U. S. Secretary of State the other day, "that the United States looks to the 'United Nations' as the path to an enduring peace. We do not propose to seek security in an alliance with the Soviet Union against Britain or in an alliance with Britain against the Soviet Union. We propose to stand with the 'United Nations' in our effort to secure equal justice for all nations and special privilege for no nations". The same day papers reported Russian troop movements in Persia and the Russian paper *Izvestia* gave the broadest hint that oil is one of the major factors behind Russian moves in Persia. The American assurance and the Russian action show how poles apart are the word and deed of the Allied Nations. Between these two

points the world's peace aspirations run to and fro and exhaust themselves.

Recently the prospects of world peace have sustained a serious set back by the suspicious atmosphere round the sharing of the Atom Bomb secret, and by the developments in Turkey, Persia, Far-East and India. At this juncture, Sir S. Radhakrishnan's poser, *Is this Peace?* comes as a 'warning to the West', as a stern reminder to the victors that to forget their declared war-aims would be to lose the peace for which they had bled. 'Will these historic months bring about the dawn of a new era when life will be organised on the basis of justice and freedom', asks India's philosopher, or 'will the peace purchased at such a heavy price be used to re-establish the old order, to give a new lease of life to the old conflicts?'

Sir Radhakrishnan sees mainly four hurdles in the path to peace: the treatment by the victors of

273

the Defeated Powers, the exercise by the Great Powers of the power of veto, the conflicts among the Great Powers, and the colonial rivalries between them.

To carry the vindictiveness and wrath of war to the peace table is certainly to torpedo a lasting peace. The Germans and Japanese are also human beings. They are not physiologically, or congenitally more criminal than others. 'Are you surprised,' said Lloyd George, 'that after waiting for 14 years the Germans have got angry'. Like other nations, they have also their ambitions and vanities. But the victors with a logic all their own have argued that the countries at war with them are the enemies of civilization, the worst fiends. That is the logic behind the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials and that logic will not pave for peace. Then, is the Security Council forged at 'Frisco going to help us in any way? No. For one thing, representation on the Security Council is based on power. Then again, humanity is demanded, not from the Assembly as in the League, but from the Big Five. And collective action cannot be taken against the Great Powers because each of them has the right to veto any proposed action! So then, what was possible under the League Covenant, would not be possible under the New Charter. And from the discussions that took place at the 'Frisco Conferences, we get a glimpse of the gloomy suspicions and crass conflicts between the Great Powers, as also of the mutual distrust and fears regarding the retaining of their colonies. The long and short of it all is that Imperial Powers do not like to get off the backs of the dependent peoples. In this context the author very rightly sounds a note of warning. The march for freedom of the peoples of Indo-China, Dutch East Indies, Korea, and India can be checked only by superior armed forces. So long as these millions of people are prevented from obtaining their independence on which they are determined, there is no chance of an enduring peace. It is time for organised international action to take a constructive line.

In the next two sections that follow, Sir Radhakrishnan suggests the need for organising an International force and promoting cultural co-operation to ensure enduring peace. 'No international machinery can automatically solve problems,' the author reminds us, which arise among the powers due to their conflicts of interest. This has to be accomplished by other means, by the development of understanding and co-operation, by the furtherance of cultural interchange in the Arts, the Humanities and the Sciences. An essential condition of peace is understanding, the sharing of knowledge and ideals.....Let us give to this world which has found itself as one body a world soul. Let us make the mechanical unity into a spiritual concord. ... To this end, India can make her signal and timely contribution. With her distinctive spiritual outlook, she can provide the world with the soul for which it is seeking.'

The book is a brilliant analytical survey of recent trends in world politics and is refreshingly frank and bold in the *expose* of the ideals and professions of the "democratic" countries of the West. Sir Radhakrishnan, India's philosopher that he is, constructs his politics on spiritual values of tolerance, sympathy and goodwill and exhorts the victors to enthrone *samavaya*, concord, as the supreme good.

The publishers amply deserve the gratitude of the readers for the good get-up and printing and more

for making this timely and constructive book available to the intelligentsia of the East and West.

The Parrot's Training and other Stories:

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE: VISVA-BHARATI, 2, COLLEGE SQUARE, CALCUTTA. PAGES 39+vi. PRICE RS. THREE.

To non-Bengali readers of Tagore these elegantly piquant stories serve as a window on the less familiar aspect of the poet's art, the allegorical satire. In these stories Tagore discharges the poet's noble duty to society of exposing its foibles with a view to banish them. He dissects our educational coquetties; he pricks the bubble of our self-complacent infallibility; he lays bare the cat-and-mouse philosophy sung by capital in the face of labour.

The Parrot's Training is a stinging satire—perhaps the finest ever known on mechanised education, of which the Indian child is a helpless victim. Big buildings, piles of dead books, experts from overseas, all these complete the costly cage in which the parrot of education is caged. All things are there except education. One day the bird picks up courage and pecks feebly at the bars of the cage with its feeble beak. 'What, impertinence!' growl the authorities. Blacksmiths are rushed in; the bird's wings are clipped and it is chained to the bars.....The bird dies.....Yet the experts return with bulging pockets.

In the second story, 'The Trial of the Horse' which in fact is the trial of Man, the poet deals another blow at the stupid, arrogant self-superiority with which man even defies the gods. Brahma at the end of his creation makes the horse; he puts enough air and ether into his composition and produces a harmless but very useful animal, a fulfilment of Brahma's disinterested enjoyment of speed. Man sees it and cannot tolerate this freedom. He interns him in his arrogant aristocratic stables. One day, the horse kicks at the walls and disfigures them. 'What ingratitude' howls man. The horse is educated and it becomes 'as still as ditch water, as mild as the religion we profess'. Brahma from above threatens to make the horse ferocious by giving it tiger's teeth and claws. 'That would be ungodly' cries man, 'to encourage ferocity'. Man disapproves all ferocity save his own!

'The Old Man's Ghost' which is obsession with the past and an unreasoning dread of change, rides on the shoulders of narrow nationalism. The last sketch, the Great News—is a modern parable and pictures the conflict between labour and capital through a fight that ensues between the oars of a boat that labour and the parasite, self-important sail that claims the credit for direction. How will the boatman settle the accounts between these two is the question of questions.

The highly suggestive and original illustrations from India's immortal artists, Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose add spice to the stories. The book with its dainty get-up and printing is a work of art and must be possessed not only by all lovers of Tagore but by all lovers of art.

Two Sisters: RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

VISVA BHARATI, 6-3, DWARKANATH TAGORE LANE, CALCUTTA. PRICE RS. 3 S 0. PAGES 111.

The poet paints for us here the poignant tragic-comedy of our every-day lives, the exhausting race

man runs between his two necessities, the wife of the mother-kind and the wife of the beloved-kind. These are two 'psychological types' and reminds us of Oscar Wilde's classification of women into the plain and the coloured. Man craves to get a woman who combines these two types. But the creator is adamant and puts the two apart. Man can have the two types as co wives; but society criticises him and even boycotts him. Sasanka, the hero, tries to solve this problem but fails; the failure is a success for the mother-kind.

Sharmila, the eldest of the two sisters, truly of the mother-kind is the wife of Sasanka. Her motherly care and affection is an obsession to him and he thirsts for the beloved kind. That type is given in Urmila, who stood charged with the late father's mission of rearing up a Charitable Hospital to perpetuate the memory of his son, Hemanta. Sharmi's protracted illness makes Urmila's presence in their house necessary. She at once takes the throne long waiting for her in Sasanka's heart. The poet makes use of the context to bring out all the motherly qualities in Sharmi, her forbearance and unsuspecting nature, her suicidal love for her husband and concern for the sister. What beautiful successes the poet wins here for the mother-kind! In a context, Sharmi thinking her last moment has come, calls Sasanka and entrusts Urmila to his care! But a Himalayan drug restores Sharmi to health and Urmila leaves for England to prosecute her studies and to redeem her promise to her father.

A very touching narrative. The poet has steered clear of the sentimentalism that characterises his early stories, *Mashi* and *Home-Coming*, where he kills his heroes in the end. The get up of the book is faithful to the high traditions of the Visva-Bharati.

Thiruppavai: (with an English rendering) BY D. RAMASWAMY IYENGAR: THE TEACHER'S PUBLISHING HOUSE, MADRAS. PAGES 42. PRICE ANNAS EIGHT.

Sri Andal, the jewel of a virgin-mystic is ranked amongst the Alwars of South India. She was the foster-child of Periyalwar. It is said that the garlands her father brought for the Lord were first used by her without his knowledge, for bedecking herself, just to see for herself how she will look as the consort of the Lord of Vaikunta. Periyalwar was shocked when he came to know of it and got other garlands for the Lord. But the Lord said he would have nothing to do with the fresh ones and demanded the ones used by His devotees.

Thiruppavai, a poem of thirty stanzas, from such a great devotee is indeed a treasure. It depicts the eternal bride, the one that was the author herself, who observes the required *vratas* (austerities) of Margali month, sings the praise of the Eternal Boy of Gokul and asks His blessings. The many excellences of the poem are testified to by the fact that Sri Ramanuja preferred the name of Tiruppavai jeer and chanted it every day.

Mr. Ramaswamy Iyengar has done a real service to the cause of Tamil Vaishnavite literature by making this wonderful poem available for the non-Tamil readers as also for those who prefer reading Tamil pieces in English.

Our Education: BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA, VIDYAMANDIRA, DHAKURIA, BENGAL. PAGES 159. PRICE RS. 3-8-0.

In these days of frantic planning when every one who happens to get into political power imagines he is competent to speak on Education, it is refreshing to read a brochure wherein the spiritual heritage of our ancient land is made the foundation for educating the children of India. It is sad to note the increasing spread of irreligion and unspirituality in our land, and in the days to come we shall need very badly the staying and balancing hand of truly inspired spiritual teachers. To the creation of such teachers, and to the spread of teaching in the right way Swami Nirvedananda addresses himself in "Our Education". Without decrying the current trends in naturalistic, vocational and industrial education, the Swamiji shows how they can be spiritualised. The three sections of the little book under review with their striking titles, *As it is*, *As it should be* and *How*, tell us how we can infuse the true spirit of religion into the most advanced methods of Western teaching. They in England are today hunting frantically for a sure spiritual foundation for their erring educational methods, and here is Swamiji telling them how it could be done. The Ramakrishna Mission has been running educational institutions of all types and grades for several decades past, and it is out of ripe experience that the mission strives to speak to us through this book. Empty ideals without sound practical basis are not preached here. It is easy spin theories of national education, and many have spun yarn of this type by the furlong. In education a grain of practice is worth more than a ton of speculation. A very solid golden grain of practice is presented to all educators in "Our Education". May this find a place on the shelves of all those who wish to nationalise education. —P. S. Naidu.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT THE MATH

The 111th birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was observed at the Math, Mylapore, on the 5th and 10th March. On the 5th the Tithi Puja day special service was conducted in the shrine and sacramental food was distributed to the assembled devotees.

On the 10th after Harikatha Kalakshepam in the afternoon a meeting was convened in the Math hall.

APRIL, 1946]

Mr. Varadarajan in a Tamil speech expatiated on the relation between the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the life of the world to-day.

Mr. B. Sanjiva Rao speaking in English observed that the message of the Master alone can save us from the two fears that are an incubus to-day, the fear of insecurity and the fear of destruction after the discovery of the atomic bomb. If the world were to understand aright the worship of Kali (the Goddess of destruction) as Brahman, the favourite worship of Sri Ramakrishna, it would gain a larger vision and steer clear of its corrosive fears.

Swami Kaileshananda, President of the Math, said that Sri Ramakrishna was a challenge to the modern world. His message would solve the many problems that face us to-day if acted upon by everyone. Prizes were then distributed to the successful students in the essay competition.

Mr. S. Ranganathan, the president, in his concluding remarks said that in Ramakrishna shone the same spirit that moved the Rishis of the past.

The function came to a close with a vote of thanks by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SARADA PITHA Report for 1945

The Sarada Pitha started in 1941 as a partial fulfilment of Swami Vivekananda's long cherished desire for a central educational institution imparts education both on general and technical lines. The Vidyamandira, or the college section which is affiliated to the Calcutta University is an Intermediate Arts College wholly residential. All these years it has produced uniformly brilliant results.

The Shilpamandira or the Technical section trains mechanics, fitters, electricians, etc. Nearly 150 boys receive training here, most of whom live in attached hostels as free boarders. A Tatvamandira or theological section is under contemplation.

The total receipts during the year came to Rs. 3,32,180-2-1 and total expenses to Rs. 3,30,464-1-11.

Both on the college side and the technical side much remains to be done. The management appeals for a sum of Rs. 50,000 for the Science section and Rs. 40,000 for the Hostel Block.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTH PLACE

The village of Kamarpukur in the Hooghly District is hallowed by the birth of Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of modern India. As with the passage of time the life and teachings of the great Saint are bringing solace to the hearts of innumerable people all over the world through the preaching of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, the village is slowly gaining in importance and is developing into a place of international pilgrimage. Especially now, with the end of the global War, the thoughtful people of every nation realise that on life, an outlook that in the course of nearly a quarter of a century could plunge the whole world into the blood-bath of the two most horrible wars ever witnessed. Naturally the eyes of the world are turned towards India for guidance and help. From the different foreign centres of the Order we are receiving indications that the life and message

of Sri Ramakrishna are making an irresistible appeal to the people of those countries.

In India also the wider public is showing genuine and unmistakable interest in everything connected with the Saint's life. So we feel that Kamarpukur will be gradually drawing more and more pilgrims in the near future. Moreover, it is high time that the nation paid its debt of gratitude to the Saint whose advent has raised India as a nation in the estimation of the world, by undertaking to improve the condition of the village where he was born, as also by suitably preserving the place of his birth and building a befitting memorial there.

It is with this intention that we have decided to open a branch centre of the organisation there, and have applied to the Government for acquisition of nearly 5½ acres of land, including Sri Ramakrishna's ancestral home, for starting a dispensary, a school, an international guest house, a museum, etc., along with preserving the place of his birth. Over Rs. 1,00,000/- is required to work out the scheme. We earnestly appeal to the generous public as well as to our friends and sympathisers to lend us a helping hand in materialising this object.

Contributions will be thankfully accepted by: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

SWAMI AMRITESWARANANDA

We record with deep sorrow the passing away due to heart failure on 26th March at the Lahore Asram of Swami Amriteswarananda at the early age of 55. He was on a tour to North Indian centres and was on his way to the ensuing Monks' Conference at Belur Math.

Swami Amriteswarananda or Paresi Maharaj as he was more popularly known, was a senior monk of the Order and had the good fortune to sit at the feet of Swami Brahmanandaji. Swami Amriteswarananda's intelligence and crystal purity drew appreciative attention from Swami Brahmananda himself who appointed him though young, as a Trustee of the Belur Math. Since then he filled many important positions and lastly in 1936 that of the Assistant Secretary of the Mission which he continued to be until the end.

The Madras Math recalls with deep and poignant pathos the days of his parental care and affection. Both when the foundation stone of the Math was laid and on its opening by Swami Brahmanandaji, Swami Amriteswarananda was present. From 1933 to 1936 he was president of the Madras Math and Mission and was responsible for its growth and all-round development. In 1936 he was called off to the Headquarters to look to the onerous duties of the Assistant Secretary.

The Swami's intimate knowledge of matters relating to the various centres of the Mission was unparalleled. This coupled with his administrative wisdom made him of inestimable value in guiding the work of the Mission during the difficult years from 1936 to 1945. His special affection for South Indian centres and South Indians only helped the validity of his all-India outlook. In his death the Mission loses one of its pillars. His loss is irreparable.

We pray for the eternal peace of his soul at the feet of the Master.

[VEDANTA KESARI]



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CONTENTS

	PAGES
WHY SHOULD GOD DESCEND AS MAN? ... <i>By Swami Saradananda</i>	1
HAVE WE IMPROVED? ...	3
THE WORLD ORDER AND WORLD RELIGION <i>By P. Chenchiah, M. L.</i>	7
THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE <i>By Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma</i>	11
SAYINGS OF KABIR ...	15
A LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND ...	16
INDIA'S ROLE IN THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS <i>By Sir S. Radhakrishnan</i>	17
MATTERS THAT MATTER ... =	19
BROTHER LAWRENCE: A STUDY IN MYSTICISM <i>By D. P. Lingwood</i>	20
INDIA AND A. E. ... <i>By Prof. Munojkumar Chatterjee, M.A.</i>	24
APPEARANCE AND REALITY ...	28
THE BHAGAVAD GITA: A UNIVERSAL GOSPEL <i>By Swami Ranganathananda</i>	29
THE COOK AND THE NRISIMHAVATAR <i>By 'Prahlada'</i>	36
REVIEWS AND NOTICES ...	37
NEWS AND REPORTS ...	38

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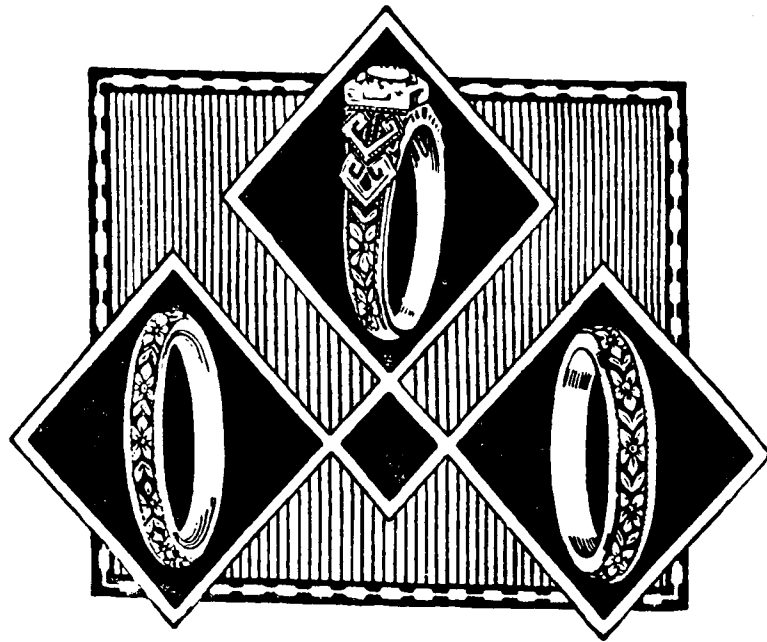
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WHY SHOULD GOD DESCEND AS MAN?

By SWAMI SARADANANDA

[Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the author of 'Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga' here stresses the need for presenting all the human facts about the Great Masters, even their imperfections in their biographies. These God-men come down as men to show to humanity by their struggles as men how to attain Godhood, so that by following their footsteps we can all reach the Ideal of Perfection.—Eds.]

It is well known to all students of religious history that with the exception of Lord Buddha and Sri Chaitanya, all other great Masters or Teachers, who moved the world and shaped the destinies of humanity, have left no full records of those periods of their lives when they were engaged in the spiritual practices. We cannot form an adequate idea, from reading the biographies of these great souls whom the world worships as the veritable incarnations of the Divine, how they advanced gradually, step by step, towards the realisation of the Truth,—with what attitude of mind, with what great thirst for the realisation and with what an unshakable faith and devotion they trod on the way. We do not know what great struggles they had to undergo, what difficulties they met with in their Godward journey, how they fought out their ways — sometimes with heart aglow with joy and hope, and sometimes again overcome with depression and despair, yet all the time persevering on with an unabated zeal and adamant faith for the realisation of the Truth. Neither are we able to trace any chain of cause and effect between the gospel they preached and the experience gained in

their earlier days. On the other hand, we see all at once before us a Christ, a Krishna, a Sankara—the ideal realised—the fulfilment of life attained. We see only a Christ who is healing diseases by his super-natural powers, who has become a 'fisher of men' showing the path to heaven, preaching the Gospel of Truth to humanity. How the boy Sri Krishna, the lover of the Gopis, became the preacher of the Gita and a preserver of the Sanatana Dharma, we do not know. The biographers give us only the picture of Sankara as a great teacher of the truth embodied in the Vedic dictum, "Thou art That" and preaching the same, from one end of the country to the other. Similar is the case with all other great incarnations.

It is indeed difficult to find out the reason for such gaps. May be, the devotees refrained from recording the history of struggles, due to the excess of their devotion for their Masters. They were too sensitive perhaps to think that the imperfections of man could ever possibly exist in the God-men like their Masters, and hence might have thought it better to keep the readers in ignorance about these facts. Or it may be that they thought it unnecessary to deal with the life

of Sadhana, having considered that more good could be effected by holding simply the lofty ideals of perfection by setting the examples of realised perfect lives, than by the enumeration of the struggles they had undergone to reach those ideals.

Howbeit, the plain fact is that the devotee wants to see his Master as a perfect being always. He deems it sacrilegious to think that his Master had ever any kind of imperfections, any human frailties, though he might have taken a human form. He is too eager to find the whole of the universe inside the mouth of a boy Gopala and not only does he expect to see the working of a developed brain in all the meaningless doings of the child but he finds in him an omnipotent, omniscient being from his very birth, and an embodiment of universal love and toleration. Hence it is nothing strange that he will at last conclude that all such struggles for the realisation of the truth, his physical and mental sufferings, are mere false assumptions to hide his divinity, his divine powers, his descent as a man, from the sight of ordinary mankind. In our own time even, we know how some of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna did not actually believe that he was suffering from any disease, though they saw him suffering before their very eyes. They thought it was a mere show.

The devotee who thinks like this is greatly mistaken; such thoughts come to him due to his own weakness. He is afraid to see any human struggle or human frailties in his Master, lest they might cause his faith to waver. But such a kind of weakness is to be seen only in the devotees whose devotion has not yet become firm. In the first stages of progress through the path of *bhakti*, a devotee cannot think of his Lord bereft of grandeur (powers). But as his devotion gets firm and steady and his love for the Lord becomes deep, he finds it rather a stumbling block if he thinks of His powers,

and so he tries to put away such thoughts carefully. All the great scriptures on *bhakti* give evidence in support of this. See how Yasoda, the mother of Sri Krishna, though every day she sees the manifestations of supernatural and divine powers in her boy Gopala, is yet scolding him for his mischievous spirit, is bringing him up just as a young boy, an ordinary child, her beloved son. Mark again, how the Gopis of Brindavan, though they knew in their heart of hearts that Sri Krishna was none else but God Himself, the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of the Universe, yet could not but think of Him as their lover, their husband. Many such other illustrations may be shown.

If any of his devotees showed an eagerness to get some sort of realisation of the wonderful powers of God, Sri Ramakrishna would say, "Well, my boy, you should not desire that sort of realisation. If you see His powers, you will get terrified and awestruck, and then that familiar loving relationship with Him will cease."

To those who believe that all the struggles and penances of the God-men during the periods of their Sadhana are mere feignings, we should say that we never heard Sri Ramakrishna expressing that sort of view about incarnations. On the other hand he firmly maintained: "When God incarnates as man, He has to work out the problems of life like a true human being, and like man enjoys and suffers, and ultimately He ascends to Godhood and reaches perfection by undergoing struggles, hardships and penances." The whole religious history of the world testifies to this fact, and our reason also affirms that unless that be so, why should God descend as man? Is it not that He comes down as man to show humanity by His own struggles *as man* how to attain to Godhood, so that by following His footsteps we can all reach the Ideal of Perfection?

HAVE WE IMPROVED?

*Wandering between two worlds—One dead
The other powerless to be born.*

If God has laughed loudly in modern times, (He having laughed in olden times twice: once, when the two brothers divided their land one drawing a line said to the other, 'thus far is yours and no further'; and the second time, when the doctor assured the mother that he will certainly cure her son) it was on that evening after the World War I when a new and improved World Order was promised to us through the radio.

It is not so much man's over-optimism that must have tickled God as his 'moral sense' that urged an improvement. In the promise of an improved order there lurks the implicit affirmation of our present degeneracy. In what age of history has not man declared his then present age corrupt and degenerate, pointed to the past as the age of perfection and indented—often without payment—for a bright future? Hindu Books have given currency to the theory that the Kaliyuga is the age of corruption (though chapters on Hindu Law dealing with sonship exposes the fallacy of this theory), and Christians date their Messianic decay even from the Middle Ages. This tendency to condemn the present and to glorify the past is a part of man's blood. But then is that not the guillotine of improvement? To say that every present age is decadent is to sign the death warrant of past improvement. Yes, every New Age worth the name, grows so brilliant in its individualism that it breaks away from the past, although the spiritual anarchy that springs from such breaking off the traditional order is a heavy price to pay for the new gains. No other age perhaps has paid a heavier price than ours for its new gains. And in our hurry for purchase we have forgotten the rates. We

have forgotten that progress is sure and continuous in proportion as it depends upon the principle of tradition, *i. e.*, in proportion as the gains of the past can be handed on and form a capital for advancing the operations of the future.

In such capital we are utterly bankrupt and still we want to build. We have guillotined both the present and the past. We have committed the Promethean sin of being 'unhistorical'; we have kicked off the ladder by which we gained our present height. And we have put off our New World into the Utopian Future instead of in the Eternal Now. These 'constructive sins' make us powerless to create.

Wandering between the two worlds—one dead and the other yet to be born—the modern man stumbled upon a stone. He pulled it out and found on it vaguely inscribed the word, 'Progress'; he swore to improve it and even to change its face. The vagueness of the idea of progress in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is one of its attractions. Since then how much has man improved! He has improved enough to declare improvement an illusion. He has improved his physique so much as to make him argue that bodily strength is secondary and the auxiliaries of civilisation primary. Even his religion has progressed to such a height as to make him declare religion an austere supernumerary. After gaining an eminence when one kicks off the ladder by which he climbed, we can rest assured that the idea of progress has become too heady with him.

If we are to strike a balance of our credits and debits in our improvement where are we? There has been no physical progress in our species for many thousands of years. In spite of the advance in medical science, the expecta-

tion of life after sixty in all classes together (in India twenty-six!) is much less than it was half a century ago. The ancient Greeks, we are told, were handsomer and better formed than we are; and some unprogressive races, such as the Zulus, Samoans, and Tahitians, are envied by Europeans for either strength or beauty. Mentally, we are now told that the men of the Old Stone Age, ugly though they may have been, had as large brains as ours. And he would be a bold man who would stand up and claim that we are intellectually equal to the Athenians or superior to the Romans. The question of moral improvement is much more intriguing. Until the World War I few would have disputed that civilised man had become much more humane, much more sensitive to the sufferings of others, and so more just, more self-controlled, and less brutal in his pleasures and resentments, less vindictive in his wars and conquests. The habitual decency, respectability and 'polish' of the civilised man is often contrasted with the rascality of inferior races, and a balance struck in favour of the civilised man. But then we forget that absence of temptation may produce an appearance of improvement. Put the civilised 'polished' man into the same 'jungle' environs as the inferior races and see how he behaves. We know how he behaved in civilised surroundings. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are immortal testimonies to his improved sensitivity to the sufferings of others and improved humaneness!

Is it as bad as all that? we ask. How can we claim then—as we do boldly to-day that we are the culmination of the human experiment on this planet? Have we not improved upon our forbears? Have we not proved that improvement itself is an idol we make, and so can be dismissed as an illusion? This is something spiritual. Contrariwise our for-

bears were idols in the hands of 'improvement' even as late as the nineteenth century. Popularised Hegelianism joined hands with christianity to give currency to the idea of a self-improving universe, of an evolving, progressing cosmos with a creator who is improving himself. In the nineteenth century everybody was swearing by the words, 'progress' cum 'improvement'. And to-day when we could have made most of our improvement because we have the maximum of it, we stand up and declare it a phantom. Is it not a march over our ancestors, and a march definitely spiritual. Again, when the all-powerful progress could have made us a toy in its hands, we have with something of a spiritual will forged the moulds into which progress has to pour its metal. For instance, we have fixed our own limit of change. 'With the advent of settled civilization, the unit of change soon became reduced to the century' says Julian Huxley. From a century we have still reduced it to-day to a decade. The process of digestion of a major change must now be accomplished within a decade. This is regarding improvement in the temporal sense. On the spiritual side our improvement is recorded by the unprecedented interest we evince in the study of our psyche, our Unconscious and the sub-conscious. At no time perhaps has man shown so much desire for the knowledge psychical. But that we have stopped there does not redound to our credit. We have shown enough unreadiness to dismount from the psychical to the spiritual, the greatest need of the times.

There is something in our evolutionary process that asks us again and again to dismount from the psychical to the spiritual, to turn our back once for all on this insatiable fire of external improvement. When evolution rounded off with man, admittedly the

highest product of the cosmic process, human consciousness and spiritual values like Truth, Goodness and Beauty emerged for the first time on the earth. The glow of these inner jewels, man's unique treasure was enough to awaken him to a sense of new responsibility and a change in the character of progress. But man ignored this inner voice. Before man improvement was extrinsic: with man it became intrinsic. For the Greatest Fact about man is the Spirit he enthrones, a value that is always absolute, Satya, transcendental. Satya is empirical only by courtesy or proxy. Man recognises it and knows it only by the absolute values of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. One day man in a weak moment found that the Absolute Spirit has overflowed into channels of manifestation; into science, philosophy, mysticism, morality, literature, and art. For a moment he forgot the primacy of his own Self in all creation, manifestation, and threw himself in the thrilling job of feeding these channels with the waters of his own unending discoveries. For a moment he forgot that the bricks in the imposing edifice science has built for him are but permutations and combinations of his own Mind, that after all the Mind gets back from nature what it has put into nature. And today this fatal forgetfulness of his own inner quality has pushed him beyond his depths in the roaring torrent of his favourite scientific civilisation. There is a saying, 'one who rides a tiger can never dismount.' Are we afraid that the tiger of our making will pounce on us if we dismount? Better that it feeds on the Old Adam in us and thus brings to life the new man who will tend the dying embers of the Spirit into a blazing flame. The dismounting from the tiger of civilisation calls for a great effort of the will in the modern man, the will to renounce the brute in him, the will to be born anew, to renounce extrinsic improve-

ment for the intrinsic. Here is a call for self-searching and self stock-taking. There can be no real advance without these, without the mortification of the lower self, without burning down the home of desire. This is the dilemma of civilisation: a call to jettison the physical and even the psychical for the spiritual, to leave behind the drear circumference for the Centre, his own Centre of peace, *santayam atma*.

Life presses into service its two banks, the transcendental and the empirical, the Satya and the Mithya (empirically true). We are partial to the Mithya bank and we walk along it always. Rarely do we look to the other bank and more rarely do we try to reach out our hands. Real *Man*-ly progress accrues to us when we wend our way along the Satya bank, for that alone is our reality. It is a matter of daily experience to us that when the real conquers the unreal, when the spirit wins a victory over the flesh and thus gives us a glimpse of Truth, we feel happy for having made some headway. What is true of the individual is also true of the whole herd. Only when we have the Satya firm in our grip can we invest eternity in a moment, can we incarnate Satya in the Mithya currents of our life. This is not simply progress, but progress of the soul, the highest meditation, Samadhi. The Yogi comes to his great experience, Samadhi when he allows the living Eternal Spirit to affirm its absoluteness and at the same time to overflow into newer channels of expression. The living absolute spirit freely chooses its empirical channels of expression and progresses; the Yogi fulfils the spirit and himself by allowing to be used by it. It is vital that the two principles of Satya and Mithya should cooperate to bring about such a growth. With insight into this essential condition of growth, Sankara stressed the

need of yoking the Vyavaharika (empirically true) view of Reality to the Paramarthika view. It is for the same reason that moralists in all history invested moral teaching with an eternal absolute sanction. In India the all-inclusive teaching of Dharma is Sanatana, eternal, perennial though with time and place it fulfils through changing patterns. That is to say, patterns of conduct while helping us in our daily needs must always remind us of our higher nature. For doing this duty of confirming eternal values we have accepted them. Wisdom from India and Greece teaches us that only a life in possession of eternal values is capable of initiating and maintaining real improvement. Real improvement flows from an undiminishing and hence absolute capital, Satya which is all the same dynamic. The life in possession of eternal values assures us these two conditions: it has an inner invulnerability and immunity from temptation which are its spiritual core; it has a dynamism that presses the transcendental and empirical into service and incarnates the former into the patterns of progress. But today we have pulled Dharma off its Paramarthic roots and transplanted it in the hot-house of expediency. The Dharma is the expedient and not the true, not the good and the moral. This has resulted in the poisonous growth of a huge Mithya.

Witness for instance, how we have ignored the great Satya of our unity and magnified the Mithya of our disunity and difference. In South India we have fomented the Mithya of the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin difference and in the North the Mithya of the Hindu-Muslim difference to such an extent that today this gigantic demon threatens to devour the whole nation. How unfortunate that we have fed this phantom of Hindu-Muslim difference and its child Jinnah with such

newspaper blazoning and importance that today this Mithya of a Jinnah imposes on us as a Satya, a stabbing reality! It is time that we simply ignore this Mithya of the Muslim menace. It is time India as a nation takes to the non-violent way of Satyagraha, the way Gandhiji has shown us to incarnate Satya in all our patterns, political, economic and social and thus combat this Mithya.

Again we have cut the umbilical cord that connects other patterns with their parent Satya. The Satya or the absolute truth about culture is that there is only one mother culture from which all have borrowed freely and to which all races have contributed liberally. But there are races today who stand up and assert their purity and superiority. The Nordic race myth is the most flagrant instance of this kind of anthropological atheism. The absolute truth about religions is that there is only one Religion, though there are many approaches to it. Today we have pushed this Satya to the limbo and have gone on nourishing the Mithya of variety of religions. No wonder that communal riots and inter-religious clashes have become the order of the day. What is true of culture and religion is also true of other patterns like morality, politics, art and literature. These patterns do not elevate us, do not illumine us; rather they pull us down by cheap satisfaction. It is time they are lifted from their narrow grooves and hitched on to their ideal archetypes which they were originally.

Can we acquiesce in W. R. Inge's conclusions who consoles us, 'the more things change, the more are they the same. Human nature changes very little. It is childish to suppose that such institutions as private property, the monogamous family and religion, which have thousands of years of

tradition can be uprooted in one generation.'? We cannot, as we see the very things being uprooted. He may assure us again: 'you may drive out nature with pitchfork. She will always come back. There is only one natural Communistic group: it consists of husband, wife and children'. It is not Communism that has exploded the institutions of family and marriage; it is the contraceptive. What a long distance these two institutions have travelled into the wilderness: From unadulterated monogamy through polygamy veiled and unveiled, to companionate marriages and thence to contraceptives! Contraceptives are justified today as a means of preventing the increase of tainted and weak stock, of dysgenic population. In the name of racial contamination even eugenic abortion is unofficially advocated. Instead of serving any of the two purposes, contraceptives have given a free rein for sexual promiscuity and indiscretion. Contraceptives can be harnessed to do good; but our age has twisted powers for good to do otherwise. The necessity of control must come from within with an inner conviction. When human mind is forced into control, it invents new pernicious paths of satisfaction and rationalises. We cannot blink this lesson of history. What a havoc the modern righteous defence of contraceptives has worked on our ideas of

sex! When sex ceases to be a mystery, to be held in sanctification and honour, it becomes poisonous. This is the wise warning from India.

What is the way out of this clogged improvement? Since we cannot cure 'original sin', the corruption of man's heart, we have to enquire why particular distortions of right judgment are prevalent at particular times. *There is no reason to think that human nature is becoming worse*, though we must not like the prophets of the nineteenth century suppose that it is necessarily and inevitably becoming better. Improvement is the law of life, *for man is not man yet*. From this discontent, the world's best progress springs. That the human type itself is capable of further physical, intellectual, or moral improvement, it is impossible to doubt. That is the faith of India.

Hindu scriptures whisper in our ears that our race when first it came on this planet was fully virtuous and wise in every limb, that it deteriorated by the actions of each member. Is it then too much to hope that we should go back to our original glory? Of our more worthy visions for our race, we, Indians have got to cherish the faith that a purer and better race will grow out its present roots.

THE WORLD ORDER AND WORLD RELIGION

By P. CHENCHIAH, M.L.

I am one of those who hold that the coming together of different major religions, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam in India has a divine purpose behind it. To divine this purpose and to further it, though by no means easy, has been the mission of those specially chosen for the task. Of such persons

to whom a pre-ordained role was prescribed Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa occupies a pre-eminent place. Before we can see the meaning of his message and its peculiar appropriateness to our times, it is necessary to review the history of religious relations in the past. For it is only against such a back-

ground that the value of Sri Ramakrishna's contribution can be measured.

History evolves under the twin conditions of space and time. The universal cannot express itself directly in the process. Nor can it express itself fully. The transcendental universal can only be seen dimly outside the time process. The imminent universal is the continuity spun by imagination behind the discrete elements of creation. The concrete universal—the true universal in creation can only be reached by bringing together aspects thrown up by evolution in the life-stream.

Hence the apprehension of God by men and of men by God takes place in the stream of time and reaches fulness not simultaneously but by manifestation of aspects slowly and gradually reaching a *finale* in the gathering of all the partial revelations. This explains why God effects His purpose of revelation in the measures of time by turning one side to light at one stage and another at another.

Every religion has its origin in time and place and necessarily grasps that aspect of reality which the conditions of the age render possible. What is involved in the evolutionary concept of religion is not merely that in history; eternity and eternal values perforce reveal themselves in part, but in the time schedule of evolution the implications of earlier revelations have to be exhausted before truth turns a new aspect for our apprehension. The time-space process which conditions all progress—not only limits and arranges the manner of our apprehension of truth but also determines and ordains the manner and sequence of God's disclosure of himself to men. So much is involved in the Biblical doctrine of 'fulness of times'. The doctrine postulates the conditions of religious development. Time imposes sequence but the primal difficulty of the universal and transcendent expressing itself at once in the process, imposes evolution as the only way in which God can express himself in history.

In other words the first lesson which the coming together of religions in India teaches and the last lesson we learn from a comparative study of religion is that the emergence of religions one after another revealing different aspects of truth one in each, never all in one is the very crux of evolution and the only possible means open to men to apprehend God who interprets himself in time and space. From this it follows as a corollary, inevitable and inexorable, that since religions can only reveal truth in one aspect or another, and since higher revelation depends on our understanding the earlier, every great historic religion must spread to all people before the keys that open the next turn in the locks of time.

The doctrine so popular in our country that all religions are essentially the same is fundamentally incorrect and not in accordance with the experience of Sri Ramakrishna. We have, I am afraid, detached the phrase from its context and rendered an illuminating and pregnant doctrine sterile and barren. For, all religions may be the same to a person who does not follow any and historically it would be a hopeless task to support it from the findings of comparative religion arrived at by impartial students and scholars. But by far the weightiest objection comes from the evolutionary conception of life and religions which forbids us from entertaining the hope that all facets of truth emerge simultaneously or in fulness in the stream of time at any given stage.

The creative evolution postulates gradual emergence of new factors for reaching fulness. The fragmentary processes that carry the labels of historic religions have to be assembled together to give us a full-orbed universal religion. The example of Sri Ramakrishna is against the facile assumption that each religion is self-contained and holds the fulness of truth. Sri Ramakrishna became a Mohamedan and a Christian and united

in himself the enlightenments of three religions, showing thereby that the world religion can never be reached if the followers of each religion entrench themselves in their historic traditions or seek to let in the sea into their creeks. The universal religion is localisable at the confluence of the triple stream or Triveni, *i.e.*, where the revelations of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism flow into the expanse of the sea.

This article is primarily addressed to those to whom the faith above indicated is acceptable. Religion of Man in the broadest sense is the synthesis of three historic religions that have come together in India. But the synthesis is not artificial or eclectic. Just as the citizen of the world, emerges out of welter of Nationalities, as a new creation, so does the religion of the world for the citizen of the world emerge out of the welter of religions as a mutative factor in history. We look forward for a new world religion which is neither a reconstitution of historic religions in the light of one another nor a mosaic of them all but a new faith broad as humanity in which historic faiths find full expression or realise their destiny.

From this standpoint history of religion has yet to be written. Comparative religion stops with comparison. It has never attempted to integrate the illuminations of historic faiths into a systematic whole. Such an attempt has to be made in India and it is difficult to foresee when it will be made. The material lies before us. The creative architect has to come. It will be too much even to indicate the lines of study in a short article. But I shall attempt to exhibit how from the standpoint above indicated our attitude to religion and its ministrations to us may take a new shape and appeal when we seek light for our national tasks not from one historic source but from all the main historic sources.

Religion, like other sciences seeks to arm man with power to realise his destiny in life.

As natural sciences arm man with correct knowledge and adequate power to understand a nature and react to it, as states endeavour to give citizens full liberty and guarantees fullness of development, so religion seeks to uncover and harness the deepest power in man for a full divine life on earth. The function of religion is to discover this power first and teach men to use it for his own happiness, salvation. Sciences utilise physical power, states the moral power of authority and religions the spiritual power of love. Leaving the doctrinal formulations of religions aside for a moment, we may say religion is primarily concerned with love and its main task lies in demonstrating that the power of love is really far greater and more efficacious than the power of authority and power of nature. Thus stated religion at once sets itself to the building of life in all its aspects. The value of Gandhiji's political message which bids us solve the political problems with the new power of love lies in its discovery that religion has a relevance and an adventure in the realms of politics. While others less wise or courageous are endeavouring to exclude religion from public life as a pre-condition for solving political problems, Gandhiji lets in religion into politics as the only hope of political salvation. But the religion that achieves this purpose is not the historic religions but the higher world faith available to all alike.

Let us see what religions have to say about love. Nature in its biological processes churns up love as a protective and saving power. The all-sacrificing love of the animal to its young, and of the mother to the child are protective factors in evolution. Love runs like a minor note in Nature but it is not for that reason, a less important factor in evolution. Writers who used to exhibit evolution mainly in terms of bloody competition and the survival of the strongest as the fittest are now modifying their views since Kropotkin showed in his *Mutual Aid* that the survival of weaker animal groups is as much

a factor in evolution as the survival of the strongest. It is not true that in evolution the strongest only survives. The weaker also survives. The lion and the lamb have both survived in spite of the fact that the lion exterminates the lamb in the struggle for existence. The lamb never eats the lion. The lion always eats the lamb. When they meet the stronger survives. Yet Nature by the operation of another factor—love, somehow saves the lamb. Else the lion itself would not have survived. It is a false evolutionary theory, unscientific in its over-emphasis, which exhibits life as an exclusively gladiatorial display. The killing and competition are there. But along with it there is also the loving and the saving. Both make up the evolutionary processes. In the fairly well advanced human state the family as an institution of Nature, illustrates the power of love to organise human creatures on a higher spiritual level of co-operation and self sacrifice, while society outside the family is governed by competition and survival.

Religion intervenes at this stage with the main object of turning human society governed by the law of the jungle into a large human family ruled by love by developing and exploiting the vital principles of the family. If we exhibit the progressive teachings of love in religions the story will run thus. The Upanishads have fixed the *summum bonum*, Ananda, as the inherent right of the soul and also affirmed that this Ananda is reached by identity—divine bliss by identity with God and human joy by identity with man. Sri Buddha stressed the fact that the prime incentive in religious search and realisation is the intense feeling that all life is sorrow. He placed alongside of the Ananda we seek, Dukkha which surrounds us at every turn in life and taught us that the aspect of love that moves us is Anukampa (compassion). It is Dukkha that makes us seek Ananda and it is compassion that makes us give Ananda to others. Judaism's main

contribution lies in linking the divine Ananda and human joy as aspects of one search—one to be attained through the other. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind and thy neighbour as thyself'. Jesus stressed and underscored the word, 'and' in the text and revealed the fact that we cannot love God without loving men or love men without loving God. They are not two pursuits but one. Islam further illustrates the truth by demonstrating that the Brotherhood of Man is a necessary corollary to the Fatherhood of God. Jesus turns illumination in two directions: one that joy cannot be achieved away from sorrow and that it is not those who withdraw from sorrow that reach Ananda. It is by courageously penetrating sorrow that happiness is reached and that love by identifying itself with Samsara takes sorrow to its bosom and transmutes it into joy. No cross; no crown. Joy still remains the goal; but the lesson is driven home that joy is not something apart and away from sorrow. The joy we attain is really a transmuted sorrow and the saint is a saved sinner. We can never get the saint if we seek him in a world other than ours. He is the stone rejected by the builder that becomes the corner-stone of the new structure.

It is a great subject to be dealt with in a short article. The advantage to social life by taking into heart the total teaching of love of all religions and applying it to society is obvious. State works on justice and fairness and uses authority and coercion and at best consent and co-operation. It seeks to limit evil and sorrow and not eradicate them, while religion brings to the same task of building society, love as the highest factor, a more potent power. Take the Hindu-Muslim problem. The State tries to solve it on grounds of expediency by devising just and workable formulae that contain the highest measure of common consent. Religion seeks to bring about a more enduring type of Brother-

THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE

hood by making Hindus and Mohamedans love each other. The contribution of Christ lies in the affirmation that light is involved in darkness and that the reformer has to go to the victims of our social order and have recourse to the use of love to transmute the suffering and sin into joy and unity. Naturally to the Christian, i.e. to all those who apply the teachings of Jesus to social reconstruction, the new order begins with the disinherited, disabled, sinful, broken victims of humanity. Here love will spring up like a mighty spring and change the desert into a fertile garden. To seek to establish heaven apart from life is Utopian. To seek to rear sons of God apart from sons of Men is a dream. To change the sons of Men into sons of God is Christianity. Was not Jesus himself the Son of Man who became the Son of God?

The task of religious men in the post-war world is to follow and develop the central message of Gandhiji, that love has really a great power to do good than force and so

seek to build the kingdom of God on love in every realm of life. In bringing to bear love on social construction let us remember what the Upanishads tell that love seeks oneness and what Buddhism proclaims that compassion for the suffering is the motive for love. Then with the Jew let us learn that love is double-faced like Janus but the two faces are inseparable. You cannot love God without loving Man. Islam comes in and teaches that love can and will build a human brotherhood on the eternal foundations of Fatherhood of God. Christianity gives us a new technique of love. True love seeks the lost and the suffering and transmutes darkness into light, and the sinner into the saint. Love is the power that alone can effect the transformation. What India needs today is a practical demonstration of what love can achieve in the economic and social areas of society. Why not men of different religions in Madras meet at once and work out a five-year plan of co-operation of religions for social reconstruction? This is my passion and prayer.

THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE

By DR. NALINI KANTA BRAHMA, M.A., PH.D.

[What is the relation between the Infinite Brahman and the finite world? If the Brahman is expressed through the finite, it leads to the supposition that a summation of finites would constitute the Infinite. If on the other hand, the Infinite is not expressed through the finite then creation has failed to serve its purpose. How to solve this dilemma? Sankara solves this dilemma by logically proving that the dualism is only apparent and not real. He shows us that the so-called finite is not anything separately real. It is nothing but the Infinite appearing as the finite. This is at the same time the strength of Sankara's system and the weakness of the western philosophers. Prof. Nalini Kanta Brahma of the Calcutta University uses very subtle arguments to establish the strength of Sankara and pertinently concludes that a high-sounding phrase, a rhetorical expression condemning the philosophy of Samkara without forwarding any logical basis in support of the condemnation is not only unfair but absolutely unworthy of any great mind and culture.—EDS.]

Is the Absolute expressed in and through the universe? While Hegel and the Hegelians think that the universe is an expression of the Absolute, Samkara holds that the absolute is not expressed in the universe and that Brahman is *jagat-vilakshana*. Brahman

is *satyam* (real) while *jagat* (world) is *mithya* (unreal). Brahman is *advaitam* (non-dual). Whatever characterises the world cannot belong to Brahman and whatever describes Brahman can never describe the world. This seems to be the fundamental point of difference between the typical western thinking and the typical eastern thought, i.e., between Hegel and Samkara.

The main argument of Samkara is something like this: If the finite world characterised by duality and difference be supposed to be an expression of the Infinite, of the one all-pervading, homogenous, (*ekarasa*), non-dual Absolute, then all distinction between the finite and the Infinite becomes lost and it also leads to the absurd conclusion that an addition or summation of finites constitutes the Infinite. If the finite expresses the Infinite, it ought to give us some idea of the Infinite. What does not give us any impression of the Infinite cannot be regarded to be its expression. But how can the limited (*paricchinna*) give us an idea of the unlimited (*aparicchinna*)? How can that which is characterised by duality and opposition (*dvaita*) give us an idea of that which transcends all duality and difference (*advaita*)? The finite cannot be regarded as a part of the Infinite, because the Infinite being unextended does not admit of any division into parts. Even those who think that the finite is a part of the Infinite will perhaps refuse to hold that any number of similar parts will constitute the Infinite, and this ought to prove conclusively that the relation of the finite and the Infinite is not that of the part to the whole. The Absolute is full and perfect (*purna* and *suddha*), is limitless (*aparicchinna*), is homogenous (*ekarasa*); how can the finite which is limited in space and time, which is *paricchinna* in every way and which is characterised by duality and difference to its core be supposed to be even a partial expression of the Absolute? Does the imperfect express the Perfect even in part? Is the impure a partial expression

of the Pure? Does the thing in limits give us any idea of the limitless? The faintest glimpse of the Absolute tells us that it is something very different from all that we have seen and heard, and that we have tasted and smelt, all that we have touched and enjoyed. We are transported to a different realm altogether where the story is different and where other categories are in vogue. It is not the world of our ordinary experience where opposition and duality reign supreme; but is a different world where the category of opposition and duality is wholly unmeaning and inapplicable, where happy harmony and perfect synthesis rule abidingly. It is a new experience, it is a new level of thinking, it is a new category, it is termed 'conversion' by religious people. This contrast between the finite and Infinite, the sharp difference between a jarring duality and a pleasing peaceful harmony, the strong opposition between a limited separateness and a limitless all-absorbingness, is the dawning of the religious consciousness in the human being, and one who has not felt this contrast sharply must be still in the outer regions and has not gained entrance into the inner chamber.

The Upanishads emphatically declare this aspect of the relation between the finite and Infinite because it is the duty of the seer to instruct the seeker in this way. That the world that is revealed to the religious soul is something very different in nature from the ordinary world must be told from the very beginning lest there be any confusion, lest something pertaining to this ordinary world be mistaken for an experience of the higher realm. Ordinary mortals are blind to the higher world—they are ignorant of its existence; it is the self-controlled, the seasoned soul that is able to perceive the glorious light of the upper regions which are hidden from the eyes of sensuous beings. The world of non-duality cannot be expressed through duality simply because

* Bhagavadgita, II, 70, 71.

one is the negation of the other and this negative relation between the Infinite and the finite is the essence of the Vedantic doctrine that while the Absolute is ultimately real, the world is unreal.

What, then, is the relation between the finite and the Infinite? If the Infinite is expressed through the finite, it leads, we have seen, to the supposition that a summation of finites would constitute the Infinite. If, on the other hand, the Infinite is not expressed through the finite, then creation has failed to serve its purpose. How to solve this dilemma? If the finite does not manifest the Infinite, why should the finite be there at all? That there is an appearance of the finite, that the finite things are perceived cannot be denied. On the other hand, the Infinite, which is without any limitation, cannot be supposed to be divisible into parts and thus to be related to the finite as the whole to the parts. The Infinite, as the permanent and the unchangeable, cannot be supposed to give rise to change and to be related to change by way of reality. That which is genuinely limitless and Infinite can find no resistance anywhere and as such cannot undergo any change. The permanent that undergoes change is not really permanent. It is only relatively permanent and in reality it belongs to the domain of change. The Samkhya clearly distinguishes between a *parinami nitya* and *kutastha nitya*, a permanent that holds changes within it and endures through them, and a permanent that is above the duality of rest and motion, of changelessness and change. The *parinami nitya* is *nitya* by courtesy: the permanent that includes all changes within it is only apparently permanent.

If the finite cannot be a genuine expression of the Infinite and if the finite cannot also be denied, it can only be explained as a spurious expression, a superimposition, an illusory appearance. This is the Vedantic view of

the relation of the finite and the Infinite. As the finite that appears as a fact of experience cannot be supposed to have originated from the Infinite, it must have to be explained as an illusion. That which cannot genuinely be real, but which still appears to be real is all that we mean by an illusion. The Infinite can in no way be supposed to be expressed or manifested through the finite, but still the finite appears as real. Hence the only way to explain the appearance of the finite is to say that it is an illusory superimposition as the Infinite. To hold the opposite view, viz., that the finite is an expression of the Infinite or that the Infinite manifests itself in and through the Infinite is to ignore all distinction between the finite and the Infinite and to involve oneself in flat contradiction. It is really surprising to note that the westerner or anyone trained in the western way of thinking should think that he is quite logical in holding the absurd view that the finite manifests the Infinite and that he should charge the Vedantist with absurdity for holding the only logical view of the relation of the finite and the Infinite. It is commonly held that the Vedanta does not offer any explanation of the finite and that as the Vedanta regards the finite to be unreal, it does not even attempt any explanation of the finite. This criticism, is, to say the least, childish. If the decision is in my favour, I say, a Daniel is come to judgment; if it is against me, I say no judgment is passed at all. If the Vedanta can hold the absurd theory that the finite (which possesses no characteristic of the Infinite) forms an expression of the Infinite and is real, then the Vedanta may be declared a good philosophical system; but if it holds that the finite is not real inasmuch as it cannot have arisen genuinely from the Infinite, the ultimately real, then it does not explain anything; it is not a genuine system of philosophy. The Vedanta holds that one finite thing may have been caused by another, and that by another and so on, but

this series of finites cannot be supposed to have proceeded causally from the Infinite. There cannot be any causal connection between the finite and the Infinite; there is no continuity, in other words, between the finite and Infinite in the ordinary sense. The greatest of the modern European philosophers, Benedict Spinoza, preached this high philosophy which could not be understood by his successors and his philosophy was condemned. All the great names in the history of philosophy, Parmenides and Plato, Plotinus and Eckhart, Spinoza and Leibnitz, Kant and Fichte, Buddha and Samkara have emphasised the distinction between the world of Being and the world of non-Being, between the world of Ideas and the world of sense, between the intelligible world and the sensible world, between Substance and Modes, between Intuitio and Imaginatio, between noumena and phenomena, between Being and Existence, between *paramartha sat* and *pratibhasika sat*, between *paramartha satta* and *sanirta satta*. The only difference between Samkara and the other great thinkers is that while in the latter there is no satisfactory explanation of the apparent dualism, Samkara takes up the problem critically and offers us the most logical solution. He shows that the dualism is only apparent and that his absolute unqualified monism is the best solution of the problem. He shows us that the so-called finite is not anything separately real. It has only a *pratibhasika satta*—it only appears. It is nothing but the Brahman or the Infinite. The Infinite appears as the finite;—the finite is in reality the Infinite. There are not two realities—the Infinite *and* the finite. There is only one all-pervading reality and that is the Infinite. The finite is no part or segment of the Infinite. The one, undivided, entire Infinite is present in everything finite. The finite being an illusory superimposition has its reality in the Infinite. It is identical with the Infinite not in the positive way as the

western thinker wrongly supposes but in an altogether different sense. There is *badha-samanadhikaranya*. The illusory snake is negated in the rope—it is not the snake, but a rope. From another standpoint again, there is identity. What so long appeared as a snake is now perceived to be a rope. The illusory presentation of the snake is now perceived to be identical with the rope. So the rope is the snake as well as not the snake. If we mean by the snake, a real snake, it is negated in the rope. If we mean by the snake, the false appearance of the snake, it is identical with the rope. The false snake is nothing but the rope. The world, the finite is identical with the Infinite in this sense. The duality that falsely appears is nothing in reality but non-duality. As a false presentation, it is identical with the underlying reality, the *adhithana*. If the world is taken to be real, it is denied, negated in the Absolute or Brahman. In one sense, the world is affirmed and in another it is negated in Brahman. As a false presentation it is affirmed in Brahman. The *mithya jagat* is nothing but Brahman—the two are identical. As a reality the *jagat* or the world is denied in Brahman. It has no reality. There is no opposition between *paramartha satta* and *pratibhasika* or *mithyapratiti*. The real, *paramartha* rope exists, and the false snake appears. One is real, the other is unreal presentation merely. Both cannot be real. The finite and the Infinite are two orders of reality; one is not continuous with the other. The correlativity that is supposed to exist between the finite and the Infinite does not hold between the genuine Infinite and the finite. The Infinite that is relative to the finite is only a spurious Infinite. The genuine Infinite is above the duality of the finite and the Infinite and has no finite presented to it as its correlation. What is Infinite in distinction to the finite is one member of the opposition and as such cannot be regarded as the Infinite that knows no limitation and finds no resistance. Correla-

tivity itself is a form of limitation and cannot be the category that is applicable to the limitless. The Infinite that is related to the finite is a relative or limited Infinite and as such is almost a contradiction in terms. A relative infinitude is no infinitude at all. It is the *parinami nitya* of the Samkhya philosophy and is absolutely different from the *kutastha nitya*, the genuine Infinite.

To say that the finite is only an illusory appearance is as genuine an explanation as to say that the finite is real. In characterising a thing, we have to say whether it is real or unreal. If we say it is unreal, we do describe its character. If it is unreal, it is a correct representation of its character. If it is real, it is incorrect. The finite is logically proved to be unreal by the Vedanta and hence it is characterised as unreal. It is false rhetoric to say that instead of explaining the world, the Vedanta explains it away. We should rather say that in explaining it away, the Vedanta offers the most logical explanation of the relation of the finite and the Infinite. Samkara has denied the ultimate reality of the finite, of

duality, opposition and difference on logical grounds, and the followers of Samkara have never fought shy of meeting the arguments that have been advanced against the theory. A high-sounding phrase, a rhetorical expression condemning the philosophy of Samkara without forwarding any logical basis in support of the condemnation is not only unfair but absolutely unworthy of any great mind and culture. The arguments proving the unreality of *bheda*, multiplicity and difference, are highly subtle and should be sought to be disproved by sharp counter-arguments. The Vedanta does not dogmatically accept any position so that it can be met by another dogmatic statement. It is a sublime system of philosophy and it eminently fulfils all the requirements of a genuine philosophical system judged by the highest standard. Those who think that the Vedanta is only a recapitulation of the Upanishadic texts and is not a genuine system of philosophy are either ignorant of the vast philosophical literature of the Vedanta or have no conception of the requirements of a philosophical system.

SAYINGS OF KABIR

Those who know the suffering of others are saints; those who do not know it, are butchers only.

Forsake me not, O Lord, though the whole world be arrayed against me. To Thee there are many like me; to me Thou art the only protector.

The holy Guru teaches that the way to God is one alike for the Hindu and the Muslim. Rama and Khuda are one, so says Kabir.

When I went out to see evil in others, I found nought. When I searched for it within my own self, I realised that there is no greater sinner than myself.

What availeth if thou hast passed thy life in muttering over beads if thy mind is not subdued; give up the crookedness of thy mind and the labyrinths of thy heart.

A LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND¹

Nov., 10, 1931, NEW YORK.

Dear Master,

At last I have read your *Ramakrishna* and *Vivekananda* both in French and English. In the English translation I have studied the notes with care. Now I can say without any modification that this book equals your Beethoven and Jean Christophe. This is not a book but the epic poem of the holiness of our time. You have traced the holiness of all mankind under every sentence. The Ramakrishna that emerges from your pages is not a Hindu saint only, also the agony of our modern soul for Godhood. The pain of man-God for God-man nowhere do I find so poignantly stated in the literature of the world since Tolstoy penned his *Confessions*! Now I feel I have earned my passport to Paradise because I introduced you to Ramakrishna. I had no idea that I was bringing Prometheus to the hidden source of the Flame eternal. Of course, the book goes beyond the limits of India and embraces the holy and the—(one word is impossible to be deciphered) in all humanity. That is what an epic of holiness should do. Your Ramakrishna is as simple and fierce as the one they, his apostles knew. I wish Vivekananda was alive to gaze upon the portrait that you have drawn of the Master. He alone could give you the praise that you deserve. As for Vivekananda yours is the only one that India recognises. Where you say "Ecce homo", we recognise of whom you speak. He was implicit in all of us; but you have made him explicit. If your Ramakrishna is the eternal India, your

¹Late Dhan Gopal Mukherjee was an Indian writer of eminence long settled in America. He was a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and a friend of the Mission. His master-piece, *The Face of Silence* is a moving picture of Sri Ramakrishna.

Vivekananda is the precipitation of that Eternal in our history. Ramakrishna IS, Vivekananda Moves. What a magical composition of holiness you have wrought in two keys! I have no criticisms to offer you. I am deeply flattered that you follow my version of Girish's relation to Ramakrishna. This makes me have faith in my sense of design. To confess the truth I personally feel deeply unsure of our modern designs, whether in music or in literature. Whenever a master of your stature indirectly blesses a young fellow's design he finds peace and assurance. When I read your *Michael Angelo* or your *Ramakrishna* the thing that carries me away is your fury of movement completely controlled by your design—the madness of Dionysos wedded to the silence of Brahma. In short your art is abundant and impeccable. A word about my physical self and I shall close this letter. I have been ill three years now. The last one was unhappily painful. Here in America people are so unhappy about finance that they care not a jot for India's political future, nor for Gandhi's moral grandeur. Naturally I, a sick man, feel all this more than the physically healthy people. It has a bad effect on one's psyche. In this mental anguish I read your Ramakrishna whose trumpet tones have filled me with moral optimism and spiritual joy. This earth is indeed holy now that you, Shivananda and Gandhi are still on it. I feel like saying "L'humanite, en avant!". With my love and most sincere appreciation, dear Master,

I remain,
your obedient servant,
DHAN GOPAL MUKHERJEE.

INDIA'S ROLE IN THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS¹

By SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

I am happy to be able to broadcast today to the American people a message on India's role in the present world crisis. Modern civilization, with its scientific temper and secular humanism, is uprooting the world over the customs of long centuries and creating a ferment of restlessness. The world has found itself as one body, but physical unity and economic interdependence are not by themselves sufficient to create a sense of universal human community. In spite of the external unity, the world mind is anarchical and unruly. More than ever before we are divided and afflicted by formidable evils of fear, of suspicion, and of misunderstanding. To remove these evils, which are the originating causes of war, to give a soul to the growing world unity, is the task assigned to our generation. In this great work of creating a new pattern of living, a new social mind, some of the fundamental insights of Indian culture may perhaps be found useful.

After the two wars which this generation has passed through, we are impressed by the utter inadequacy of a secular view of life and the urgent need for a renewal of faith, a renaissance of spiritual values. The war which has just ended with the wiping out of two cities by the atom bomb has disclosed the strength as well as the weakness of our civilization. It has given evidence of our intellectual penetration and marvellous endurance. It has also revealed our greedy and grasping nature, our fundamental insufficiency, our essential lack of self-con-

trol. What we suffer from is not intellectual error or even moral ignorance, but it is spiritual blindness. No amount of science and art, commerce and industry, obedience and discipline, can maintain whole an edifice whose foundations are unsound. The Kingdom of Man belongs not to the most intellectual or even the most disciplined, but to the most virtuous, the spiritually wise. The leaders of thought and science who enfranchise the mind, the poets and artists who persuade the heart, the moral heroes who serve humanity, have all their place, but the first place belongs to the seers, the convinced and inspired souls, the creative men of affirmation, who tell us that man is not simply body and mind, that our personal insufficiencies and social maladjustments are directly traceable to the neglect of the spiritual and the divine, and absorption in the pursuits of the physical and the animal, the instinctive and the intellectual.

From the beginning of her history India has looked upon religion not so much as a revelation to be attained by faith but as an effort to unveil the deepest layers of our being and get into enduring contact with them. Religion is spiritual life which is different from a vague religiosity or conventional piety. Religion is not a solemn routine or a superstitious faith. It is not submission to authority or subscription to a formula. Properly understood, religion is a summons to spiritual adventure, to individual regeneration, to a change of consciousness from the ordinary ignorant state, when we are cut off from our true Self, to a greater consciousness in which we find our true being. It is to rise from *vijnana* to *ananda*, from the order of thought to the order of charity, to use Pascal's words. To uncover

¹The above article is a radio talk given by Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan over the Columbia Broadcasting System, at New York City, on March 29, 1946, over its nationwide network.

the inner springs of regeneration we must turn inward, deepen our awareness, grow into completeness, develop a more meaningful attitude toward life, an attitude which will free us from bondage to the external forms and hardening of the spirit. Religion if authentic, means an illumined mind, a changed heart, and a transformed will.

Such an intensification of religious consciousness will naturally be accompanied by an intensification of social consciousness. The great Indian thinker Sankara tells us that we have first a consciousness of the Divine in oneself and next the consciousness of the Divine in all. *Adau brahmasmiti anubhava udite, pascad sarvam khalvidam brahma*. We first grasp the Kingdom that is within us all, and then it becomes manifest in our relations with the world. *Sarvabhutamake tata jagannaike jaganmaye paramatmani govinde mitramitrakatha kutah*. "When we realize the one Lord in whom we all dwell, how can there be any talk of friend and foe?" Oneness with our fellow-men becomes then the leading principle of our life, not merely a policy for economic co-operation and political unification. It becomes a principle of deeper brotherhood, an inner realization that only in the life of our fellow men is our own life complete. Such a feeling, which is not only an idea but the truth of our being, is the only secure base for human unity.

Science has put at our disposal potencies of universal force, but the human individuals who use them are little communal egos with nothing universal in the light of their knowledge or the life of their affections. The nationals of a country are prepared for the worship of their nations, for the immolation of the innocent by the affliction of subtle propaganda, blinding their vision and splitting their ears. Attempts to unite the peoples of the world, the Christians of the

world, the workers of the world, the capitalists of the world, have failed because of the armed and irrational exaltation of the nation-state. In pursuits of the mind and spirit there was hitherto an element of international collaboration. But to-day even the scientific workers are conscripted into the service of the state. Science and scholarship, whose essential purpose is to foster universal values, are being betrayed by their votaries, who are compelled to conform to the policy of the state and give to a group what is meant for mankind. We are bruised and bewildered, our deepest emotions are stirred, by the incredible forms of savagery in which even intelligent and sensitive men are required to acquiesce. If we believe in humanity, we must throw off our national disguises and develop a new social discipline.

The war has contributed to a coming together of the peoples and the mingling of races and cultures. No nation can keep itself in isolation. All will have to depend on all. The Eastern and Western worlds, which used to live more or less separately, have been brought into close contact. Civilization is ceasing to be European or Asiatic and is becoming of the world. Whenever East and West met in the past, a cultural renaissance was the result. The development of a world wisdom worthy of our time and place is in process to-day. The search for world peace—there can be no other peace—is not a mere moral aspiration but an urgent political necessity. The time is so short. The need is so desperate. If we are to live as members of a world community, a unity, if not identity, of spiritual outlook and aspiration is essential and we must do our best to develop it.

In the different religions themselves there are movements for the reunion of the sects within them. This attempt at reunion

requires to be extended to the great living faiths of mankind. In the sphere of religion, also, there is room for diversity and no need for discord. If the sects of a particular religion can get together, giving up their claims for the exclusive possession of the truth of that religion, it is not too much to hope that the religions themselves may modify their claims to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Belief in such exclusive claims and monopolies of religious truth has been a frequent source of strife and a formidable obstacle to co-operation in the world of spirit. The creeds are guides to the religious goal, bidding us to pass from words to the vision, which is the work of each individual soul. When they claim for themselves eternal and complete truth, they must in the name of love and reason seek to convert others who, according to them, are in error. Fierce fanaticisms, which fought and killed, tortured and imprisoned, burnt and persecuted in every way imaginable for the sake of dogmas and rites which did duty for spirituality, have marred the fair name of religion. If we reflect on the matter deeply, we will perceive the unity of spiritual aspiration and endeavour underlying the varied upward paths indicated in the different faiths. The diversity in the historical formulations of the fundamental

spiritual truths tends to diminish as we rise in the scale of spiritual perfection. All paths of ascent lead to the hilltop. It is immaterial what approach we take, "As the birds fly in the air, as the fish swim in the sea, leaving no trace behind, even so is the pathway traversed by the seeker of spirit." *Sakuninam ivakase jale varicaran iva, yathapadam na drsyeta tatha jnanavidam gatih*. This convergent tendency and the remarkable degree of agreement in the witness of those who reach the hilltop are the strongest proof of the truth of religion. To neglect this unity of spirit, to underline the diversity of religions, is philosophically unsound, morally unjust, and socially dangerous. Religion for the Indian mind is life in God, love of man, and charity for all.

If religion becomes unique and universal, a flame which cleanses mankind and so cleanses the world, then will the cry of St. Joan in Bernard Shaw's epilogue to that play be fulfilled: "O God, that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints?" Then will come a time when the world will be inhabited by a race of men with no flaw of flesh, no error of mind, freed from the yoke not only of disease and privation but of lying words and of love turned into hate.

MATTERS THAT MATTER

Try to copy the qualities which shine out so splendidly in the Masters, and do not fall into the mistake of thinking, as so many do when they lose their temper for a moment or speak some hasty angry word, that it does not matter; it matters enormously; it puts you back as the contrary puts you forward. It is these little daily acts which make progress so slow: years pass on, and comparatively only a few inches have been gained; it is these daily faults of temperament and character through which the life of man leaks away. The spiritual leaks away from us through all these little holes which we are continually leaving open for its escape.

—Blavatsky.

BROTHER LAWRENCE

A STUDY IN MYSTICISM: EASTERN AND WESTERN

By D. P. LINGWOOD

[Brother Lawrence, the author of the book, "The Practice of the Presence of God" was a French mystic of the 17th century.—Eds.]

His Conception of God: Whenever a devotee or a sect affirms the conception of God as person to be the highest ideal of the religious life, that devotee or sect must, correlatively with this ideal, endeavour to establish a relation with that God which is in its turn personal. Our approach to reality will vary according to our conception of it. One cannot, for instance, hold a conversation with the void of the Sunyavadi Bauddhas any more than one can with a table. The narrower the conception of God, the narrower will be the approach to Him. Those who insist that there is one path only to salvation, to the exclusion of all others, will usually be found to possess a very limited and insufficient idea of the Divine Being. But he who sees God as the Infinite will see that the approaches to Him are infinite also.

Within the conception of the personal god will be found many concepts of personality; for personality is always concrete and particular, not abstract and general. God as person is never *merely* a person, but always a king or governor, father, mother, son, friend or lover. When we think of Him as our king, for instance, we endeavour to behave as though we were his subjects. If theology is what God is, ethics is what we ought to do in order to be pleasing to Him. Even in mundane affairs we do not behave in the same manner to our king, our lover, and our son. And in affairs divine the same law obtains.

It is well known that in Christianity the predominant conception of God is as our

Father. This conception oscillates between the extremes of a stern and powerful father more akin to a judge or governor (a legacy from Judaism) and of a loving and forgiving father (the experience of the mystics). In some cases the idea of God is entirely divested of the attribute of paternity, so that only the lover is left. In the lives of the greatest Christian mystics we often find a striving after this ideal. Sometimes it seemed that the second person of the Trinity could more easily be brought within the orbit of love than the first; so that at times we find Christ, the God-Man as the exclusive object of the consciousness of the developed Christian mystic.

The approach of Brother Lawrence to God may be described as purely personal. In the extant four conversations and fifteen letters which are set like so many diamonds and rubies in the precious necklace of *The Practice of the Presence of God* we never hear of any reference to the Infinity (except once—a conventional expression), Eternity, Omnipresence, etc., of the Deity. Swami Vivekananda describes the similar attitude of the *gopis* of Brindavan as follows: 'They hated every adjective that was applied to Krishna; they did not care to know that he was the Lord of creation; they did not care to know that he was almighty, they did not care to know that he was omnipotent and so forth. The only thing they understood was, that he was infinite Love, that was all. The *gopis* understood Krishna only as the Krishna of Brindavan. He, the leader of the hosts, the King of Kings, to them was the shepherd and

BROTHER LAWRENCE

the shepherd for ever' (*Complete Works* Vol. III, pp. 257, 258, 4th edition). The adjectives applied by Brother Lawrence to the Partner of those celestial colloquies of his are all of them adjectives commonly met with in the literature of Christian mysticism. The epithet of father, with its corollary of himself as son, is easily the one most often met with. He also calls God his friend (*Letter X*); his physician (*Letter XI*); his creator (Supplement to *Conversation IV*); and of course his judge and king (*Letters I & II*). In addition he imagines himself a statue, of which God is the career (*Letter II*), to illustrate his entire dependence on the Divine Will. Furthermore he says 'Hold yourself in prayer before God like a dumb or paralytic beggar at a rich man's gate' (*Letter VIII*).

But at times it seems to us as though this language of respect and fear was but a poor medium of expression for the love which was continually welling up within him like a spring. In one place he says: 'My most usual method is this simple attention, and such a general passionate regard to God; to whom I find myself often attached with greater sweetness and delight than that of an infant at the mother's breast: so that if I dare use the expression, I should choose to call this state the bosom of God, for the inexpressible sweetness which I taste and experience there. If sometimes my thoughts wander from it by necessity or infirmity, I am presently recalled by inward motions, so charming and delicious that I am ashamed to mention them'. (*Letter II*) We opine that had Brother Lawrence been born in India instead of in France he would have been one of the maddest of the *bhaktas* of Sri Krishna.

His Sadhana: A seed infinitesimally small may produce a big tree. Great events often

spring from insignificant causes. This is particularly true in the case of religion, where the mind is sharpened to a fine point as it were, and can perceive the subtle interconnections of things. Brother Lawrence once related to a friend how at the age of eighteen he had seen a tree. It was then winter, and the leaves had all been stripped from the boughs. But suddenly he realized that such was the Providence of God that within a short space of time it would again be covered with leaves, that flowers would come forth and fruits appear. So deep was the impression made upon him by this demonstration of the power of God that it was sufficient entirely to separate him from the world (he embraced the monastic life) and kindle in him such an ardent love for God that he knew not (he said) whether he had been able to increase it during the forty and more years which he had since spent in the cloister. (*Conversation I*) Having applied himself to the practice of the religious life he found the various methods of devotion prescribed in various books to be of little or no use to him. For he desired only to belong to God.

It is sometimes thought that *sannyasa* is properly a condition of the intellectual rather than of the devotional approach to God. But in truth renunciation is as necessary to the attainment of perfect love as it is to the attainment of perfect knowledge. Narada, having occasion to refute the erroneous supposition that *bhakti* or *paraprema* was *kamayamana* (of the nature of lust) says that it is *nirodharupa*, (of the form of renunciation). (*Naradabhaktisutra I, 7*) The degree of renunciation which a person attains to is the measure of the depth and intensity of his love. It is obvious that we will make no sacrifice for that thing or that person, whether human or divine, for which

we feel no affection. If we are sufficiently attached to something we will be prepared to forfeit any pleasure or suffer any pain rather than lose possession of it even for a moment. Brother Lawrence realized this at the very beginning of his religious career. Love for the things of God and hatred for the things of the world are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. You cannot love God perfectly without first of all ceasing to love everything that is not God. So long as the spiritual aspirant sees God as one thing and the world as another he must concentrate all the powers of his mind on the former and utterly renounce the latter. Brother Lawrence says 'I renounced, for the love of Him, everything that was not He; and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world' (*Letter I*). Not only must the mystic be willing to forgo all bodily pleasures and material possessions, but even the very Presence of God, together with the joy and solace which he derives from it, if such be the will of his Heavenly Master. We should never be attached to prayer or meditation because of the pleasurable sweetness of it. All the great Christian mystics have warned against this mistake. In the Yoga Philosophy also it is emphasized that over-occupation with pleasurable states of consciousness retards attainment of the final goal. It will easily be seen that Brother Lawrence has approximated in his *sadhana* to the first two of the four requisites laid down by Sankaracharya (*Vivekachudamani* 19) as necessary qualifications for making the enquiry into the nature of Brahman—discrimination between the real and the unreal (*nityanityavastuviveka*) and the giving up (*vairagya*) of all possible enjoyments. Since the end or objective of love and knowledge is one it is indeed not surprising that their means should sometimes coincide.

Men will rarely make any sacrifice except for the sake of gain. Even so it is in the religious life. The spiritual novice is spurred on to give up the world in the hope of gaining Heaven. In Christianity this initial notion of the spirit is called faith, and made the first of the three theological virtues. In the Hindu religion it is called *shraddha*. *Shraddha* entered into the heart of Nachiketas (*Kathopanishad* I. 1, 2) and he risked even death for the sake of divine knowledge. In Christianity this faith takes the form of belief in the teachings of the Church and in Hinduism belief in the evidence of sages (Rishis or *mantradrastas*). It is not, or should not be, a blind credulity, but a tentative acceptance of the rationally possible held until definitely proved or disproved. (cf. Sankaracharya's *Vivekachudamani*, 25.)

Brother Lawrence made one sweeping and all-inclusive renunciation of all the things not only of this world but of the next also, and then addressed himself to the Practice of the Presence of God, by which he meant a continual dwelling upon Him in the innermost chamber of the heart, and holding with Him there the sweetest and most celestial converse. He had but little faith in physical austerities, saying of them: 'That all bodily mortifications and other exercises are useless, but as they serve to arrive at the union with God by love; that he had well considered this, and found it the shortest way to go straight to Him by a continual exercise of love, and doing all things for His sake. (*Conversation II*). Sankaracharya expresses the same opinion in *Aparokshanubhuti* 112: 'One should know that to be the real posture in which the meditation of Brahman flows spontaneously and without cessation, not any other which tortures one.'

The Practice of the Presence of God: It seems that we can distinguish a warp and a

woof in the fabric of the higher religious life of Brother Lawrence. The law which governs his whole being is admittedly the lawless law of love, for he says 'That he had always been governed by love, without selfish views' (*Conversation II*); but in that love we can distinguish two stages or strands. The first of these is that of absolute submission to the Will of God, who is here conceived in fear and trembling as the dreadful judge and governor. The second is the mystical speaking with Him in the silence of a prayer which is unity (the Prayer of Quiet). Here God is our lover, and we are on terms of intimacy, almost of equality, with Him. The Catholic Christian religion is such that within its framework (and Brother Lawrence of course remained within it all his life) it is difficult, if not impossible, to get entirely free, even at the most mystical altitudes, of the concept of God as a judge or governor who must be abjectly submitted to and obeyed. Doubtless Brother Lawrence did not consciously distinguish between these two stages, or deliberately separate these two disparate strands; but that does not invalidate the distinction. Devotional mystics go to God first and only afterwards look back and understand how they got there. Philosophical mystics, on the other hand, usually study every inch of the way before taking even the first step. The danger is that the former may sometimes go astray from the path; while the latter will procrastinate until it is too late to begin. Brother Lawrence belongs of course to the former class.

By endeavouring to conform in your life to the will of God you come by imperceptible degrees to feel His presence. And usually we make a greater effort to please a person when he is with us than when he is

away from us. Thus the two progressively augment each other. The more we do the will of God, the more we shall feel His presence. The more intensely we feel His presence within us, the more we will endeavour to do His will and please Him. The author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* says that we must strive to unite our will with the will of God. Then shall we feel His presence within us. For in a way we become God. Will may be considered as being in Christian theology the constitutive essence of Divinity. This is why mere *knowing* is not enough: we must *be*. And in order to be we must become; in order to become we must do; and in order to do we must will. Renunciation which is the initial step to the religious life, does not consist simply in knowing that (for instance) the body and one's possessions are only by way of a loan, as it were; but by joining to this knowledge the active demonstration of it by actually giving up our body and all our possessions to God. Brother Lawrence says 'That we ought to make a great difference between the acts of the *understanding* and those of the will; that the first were comparatively of little value, and the others all.' (*Conversation II*). Sankaracharya complains in one of his works that 'Few practise, while many understand'. We shall later on recur to the importance of practice (*abhyasa*) in the religious life.

The worship of God is to Brother Lawrence the supreme end and acme of all human endeavour. He tells us 'That the end we ought to propose to ourselves is to become in this life the most perfect worshippers of God we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all eternity.' (*Conversation IV*). The highest ideal to which we can aspire is to hold a continual conversation with Him in our hearts. In this conversation we are

continually holding'.....'a commerce of love, persevering in His holy presence: one while by an act of praise, of adoration or of desire; one while by an act of resignation, or thanks-giving, and in all the manner which our spirit can invent.' He speaks in another place of the 'habitual, silent and secret conversation of the soul with God, which often causes in me joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so

great that I am forced to use means to moderate them, and prevent their appearance to others.' (*Letter II*). This 'conversation' may be defined as a succession of supremely blissful states of feeling associated with God as the object and inspirer of them. The poet Rammohan sings of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. 'His states of feeling are always new'.

(To be concluded)

INDIA AND A. E.

By PROF. MANOJKUMAR CHATTERJEE, M.A.

[George William Russell, the amber-eyed immortal A.E. is a spiritual son of India on Irish soil. A.E.'s soul, the soul of his poetry hovers over India's Epics and Upanishads so that he can carry the milk of Indian Wisdom to the starved spirit of the West. Prof. Chatterjee has successfully pictured the success of A.E.'s mission and thus interpreted A.E. to India.—EDS.]

It is now gradually recognised that if the West is not to languish spiritually, she should, in her own interest, turn to the philosophy of the East for nourishment and sustenance. In Europe there is no longer that profound faith which once existed. The unity of spiritual culture which existed in the ages of Aquinas and Dante has broken up into sects; there has taken place, instead, 'a breakdown of mediaeval synthesis'.¹ It is a pity that the philosophers of Europe no longer tell us of the Way or the Life. They are absorbed in something they think of as the Truth, and if we read them, except for whatever sharpening of our wits may have taken place, we are exactly where we were before. William James, Bergson, Croce, their predecessor Spencer or the earlier Hegel, Kant and their contemporaries, all leave us with quickened intellects, but we are no nearer to the Spirit, than before. Unless we include the

too-fanciful visionary Swedenberg, we have to go back to Jacob Boehme before we find a great thinker who bases his philosophy of life on spiritual experience. Europe, brought to an intense objectivity by her materialistic civilisation based primarily on science, which concentrates the mind upon things outside itself, has ceased to produce mystics and saints and is on the verge of spiritual atrophy. Aldous Huxley in *Ends and Means* (Pp. 293) and *Grey Eminence* (Pp. 82) focusses our attention on this spiritual decline in the West and asks us to view this rapid decline with grave concern.

It is precisely this sad fall in the spiritual and cultural barometer in the West that has drawn the subjective visionary mind of A. E. to the precious heritage of India. In India's religion and culture and in two of her outstanding personalities of recent years, Tagore and Gandhi, A. E. finds an echo of his subconscious ancestral

self. In the supercharged spiritual atmosphere of India, A. E. is a denizen mostly at home. 'My intuition is with the Indian seers' says he, 'and I think we have always freedom of choice.'² Temperamentally, Irish imagination, the noblest exponents of which are A. E. and W. B. Yeats, is allied to the mind and imagination of India. Although sundered from each other by a distance of several thousand miles, India and Ireland are spiritual twins. Like the Indian imagination, the Irish imagination is little interested in normal humanity and its affections. Like it also, it deserts circumferences for centres. Both go adventuring in the Over-world, in Faery, in fantasy, in under-world, in the crypts and sewers of the soul, in the uncharted regions of the psyche. Neither it must be forgotten that the political problems of Ireland are somewhat similar to the political problems of India. Hence the appeal or interest of India for A. E. and vice versa.

It was at Dowdens' House, so we are assured by Mr. Earnest Boyd,³ that the impulse to the Theosophical Movement in Dublin was given. A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* and *The Occult World*, the publication of a monthly magazine, *The Irish Theosophist* in 1892, changed later on to the *International Theosophist* and Charles Johnston's translation, *From the Upanishads* in 1896, were destined to be the beginning of a new phase in the mind and brain of A. E. To Simon Tery he said: 'I have read all the sacred books which I could find, those of China, of Egypt, of India, of Persia, of Judaea as well as the mystic philosophers like Plato, Plotinus and Sankara, and I have found truth in all and a singular identity of belief; I have found however that the sacred books of Judaea are the least interesting of

all and contain less spiritual truth than the *Bhagavad Gita* or the Upanishads, for example. The Old Testament is a collection of poems and legends, far more than a collection of sacred texts which are profound.'⁴

A. E. would have resisted any claim which makes Christianity the sole and exclusive revelation. For him, as Norman puts it, essential Christianity was a path already trodden by the pre-Christian mystics. He was fond of saying that, as a religion, it possessed no cosmogony, no psychology, only a most perfect ethic, overlooking perhaps the profound psychology behind many of the parables.⁵ The seers of the Upanishads and the Vedas possessed—'God—like fullness wisdom' and had the power of experiencing enlightened mystification. 'When the exalted seers of the Upanishads cry out,' "This is the real, this is the true", or when another seer cries out that God is love, they utter words which guide the soul for generations'⁶ and if Europe is to have a new renaissance comparable with that which came from the wedding of Christianity with the Greek and Latin culture, it must, thinks A.E., 'come from a second wedding of Christianity with the culture of the East. Our own words to each other bring us no surprise. It is only when a voice comes from India or China or Arabia that we get the thrill of strangeness from the beauty and we feel that it might inspire another of the great cultural passions of humanity'. A. E. would always gracefully acknowledge his gratitude to those who turned his attention to the sacred books of the East, to the *Bhagavad Gita*, to Bhagawan Patanjali and the Upanishads. His deepest intuitions date back undoubtedly to the

¹ *The Sleepwalkers*: Hermann Brock.

² *The Avatars*, Pp. 140.

³ *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, pp. 213.

⁴ Quoted from the introduction by Monk Gibbon to the *Living Torch*—A.E. pp. 45 (Macmillan).

⁵ Reported by George Moore in *Salve*.

⁶ *The Avatars*, pp. 148.

⁷ *The Living Torch*, pp. 169.

period of this introduction. It was the time of his spiritual discipleship.

The depths and profundities of the philosophy of Yoga in Kapila and Patanjali made a deep impression on the all-comprehensive mind of A. E. Speaking about 'a Gold Standard for Literature' (stealing from Economics some of its assumptions or principles and applying them to literature) which has suffered so much from inflation, he prescribes a renewed interest in these outstanding saints of ancient India and says: 'One might brood on the aphorisms of Kapila, Patanjali or Lao-Tse for years without getting to the bottom of them. Indeed, if one comprehended a single aphorism fully he could almost make philosophies for himself. We would come back again to a gold standard in literature and Patanjali, the sage, who wrote a treatise on concentration, will be the most honoured philosopher in the universities'.⁸

The value of the technique of Yoga as a means of self-realisation and schooling the will by a modification of the ordinary, everyday consciousness, enjoined by Patanjali, is clearly seen by A. E. in the following passage:

Whatever reality is in us must be in the will. It is only when we will we find something real in ourselves, when we find we can stay ourselves against the stream of things, against our thoughts which bewilder us, even against love. The will only is the self-moving. When it is keen and burnished like a star it may become keen with or slip into, unity with the will that sustains all things. The ancients knew this.⁹

The idea enunciated above comes very near to the methods of Indian Yoga by which all agitations and distractions which try to

nullify the creative efforts of the higher self are carefully eliminated.

A. E.'s admiration for the *Mahabharata* was also profound. In a short article contributed to the Irish Statesman on 'Shakespeare and the Blind Alley' he points out the merits of the *Mahabharata* as an epic. Says he: 'We feel as we read that we are in the divine procession and know ourselves more truly by this envelopment native to the spirit, than by looking at a mirror which reflects only personal character'. Elsewhere, in a long letter to Van Wyck Brooks written while he was spending the summer in Donegal in March 1934, he maintains the same profound admiration for this great epic as ever. 'I brought nothing with me', he writes to his friend, 'except a twelve-volume translation of the *Mahabharata* which I got from India. It is marvellous, a whole literature in itself, Cosmic myths, two sacred books, endless stories, treatises on Government, magic philosophy and the great epic itself'.¹⁰

It is also a highly significant fact that A. E.'s views on Death and future life are similar to those of Indian seers, who believe in the doctrines of re-incarnation and pre-existence. Judged in the light of these views, death is not the end of human life, but a possibility that opens up the vistas of a new life more glorious than the past. When, therefore, a man dies, he merely is released from the shackles of the flesh and his soul, which is changeless and eternal, enters a new body:

Worn out garments
Are shed by the body;
Worn out bodies
Are shed by the dweller
Within the body,
New bodies are donned
By the dweller,
Like garments—the *Bhagavad Gita*

¹⁰ Quoted by John Eglinton in his *A Memoir of A. E.* vide Pp. 262.

The Hindu philosophers also emphasise that when the soul leaves the body, the body is dissolved into several component parts, which merge respectively into earth, water, fire, wind and void—the five elemental spheres.

A letter to Weekes of December 1932 gives A. E.'s views on Death. Curiously enough, they are the result of his knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Upanishads.

'Our nature what the Vedic seers called "True own being", in the prism of nature was dramatically sundered into many-coloured lives, yet all part of ourselves. The rays spread and then gather again. I believe I shall live hereafter because I have lived before, and I came upon knowledge of past religions, lives and loves in meditation—found others who knew the same things as I did and who remember the places where we lived'.¹¹ In another letter to his friend, Joseph O'Neill, a high official in the education department of the Irish Free State, who believed in the theory of ancestral memories and showed a singular power of entering the past, he showed his likeness for the Indian doctrine of pre-existence. 'Give the preposterous theory up' he writes to his friend, 'and believe with three quarters of the human race that you have lived before and will always live. If you want the finest logic and reasons brought to bear on the problem read MacTaggart, the greatest of English philosophers, upon "The Doctrine of pre-existence"..... You will be in good company with the great Avatars, Buddha, Krishna, philosophers like Plato and Plotinus, and in believing this you will have grown up in mind and will get an age in your thought. This is the "An-

cestral wisdom", which Keats said was in every man. You tap your past memories, my friend, what wells up within you as imaginations, and you will get stories innumerable'.¹² Knowledge and appreciation cannot go deeper.

Poems by A. E. on Indian subjects are also not rare. 'Krishna' is imitated from a fragment of the Vaishnavite scriptures; the epithets, 'King of Kings', 'Prince of Peace', 'Light of Lights', 'The Spendthrift of the Heavenly Gold' describe the Lord whom the Hindus worship as the supreme God. The last part of the poem would repay careful study:

'And yet He is the life within
the Ever-living Living Ones
The ancient with eternal youth,
the cradle of the infant suns,
The fiery fountain of the stars,
and He the golden urn, where all
The glittering spray of planets in their
myriad beauty fall'.¹³

In the 'Indian Song', Brahma, the God of Creation in the Hindu Scriptures, is described as rising in yellow splendour from the Lotus. He is seen at His work and His function is discussed:

Brahma, all alone in gladness,
dreams the joys that throng in space,
Shepherds all the whirling splendours
onward to their rising resting place,
Where in worlds of lovely silence
fade in one the starry race.¹⁴

On 'Om' the sacred syllable of the Hindus, he has also much to say:

And beauty, wisdom, love, and youth,
By its enchantment gathered grow
In agelong wandering, to the truth,
Through many a cycle's ebb and flow.¹⁵

⁸ A Gold Standard for Literature: *The Living Torch*, Pp. 287-89.

⁹ *The Avatars*, Pp. 87.

¹¹ Quoted by John Eglinton in *A Memoir of A. E.* pp. 170.

¹² *A Memoir of A. E.*—John Eglinton, pp. 268, to 269.

¹³ *Collected Poems*—pp. 62.

¹⁴ *I bid*, pp. 157.

¹⁵ *I bid*, pp. 155.

Lastly, his remarks on Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, the two outstanding representatives of the thought movements in modern India, may be of absorbing interest to any Western reader who wants to learn anything about them. Tagore is praised for his 'deep wisdom' and 'complete philosophy'; he has his heart 'fixed on life in its fullness on the complete man' and it is he who more than any other 'maintains in our Iron Age the dignity of poetry'. He has not starved life for the sake of the 'patriotic man':

'We call attention to the profound wisdom of the great Indian poet because it may strengthen those who wish to see a rich humanity here, and who have more love for humanity than for the triumph of some one logical abstraction which is acid to the heart'.¹⁶

No less suffused with imaginative sympathy is his portrait of Gandhiji. Speaking about Gandhiji and his Satyagraha, A. E. remarks:

¹⁶ *The Living Torch*, Pp. 166-67.

I am filled with wonder as I read his life, not wonder at such a character as Gandhi, for many men as spiritual and selfless could be named, but wonder that so exalted a teaching, making so profound a demand on the spiritual nature, could have affected so many millions I cannot recall in European History any popular movement of such dimensions as the non-co-operative movement created by Gandhi where there was such a superb reliance on spiritual law who justify and sustain it. While Europe had mobilised forty million men for slaughter, India had mobilised millions for passive resistance Tagore uses the gentleness of intellect where Gandhi uses the gentleness of will.¹⁷ Temperamentally indeed, A. E. felt more sympathetic with those who aim at the richest and most varied intellectual life than with the puritanical concentration on one idea exalted above all others.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid, Pp. 169-70.

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of the general characteristics of the poetry of A. E. and for some more points about his debt to India, vide my article in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*-May to July, 1944.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

There is the wisdom of the foolish,
The gracefulness of the slow,
The subtlety of stupidity,
The advantage of lying low.

—Tao.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: A UNIVERSAL GOSPEL

By SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

[The Gita comes as the culmination of a culture. Hence its universal appeal. Swami Ranganathananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission, Karachi, here presents the Gita in its widest cultural bearings. This is the first of a series of talks given at Besant Hall, Hyderabad, Sind.—ED.]

The Gita is not an original work in the sense in which we usually understand the term, though it is a supremely original statement of what Aldous Huxley calls 'The Perennial Philosophy.' It is a continuation of the ancient philosophy that you find in the Upanishads. The Gita summarises the essential teachings of Vedanta and presents them in a popular manner. That is why it has become the scripture of the vast masses in this country. When we study the Gita, we are not merely studying the Upanishadic philosophy but also the ethical implications of that philosophy. We want ethical guidance and the Gita provides it. A metaphysics which speaks of the highest Reality without reference to everyday life, will not be of much use to us. Therefore the sublime ethical implications of the Vedanta are elaborated in the Gita.

Apart from the ethics of conduct there is another element in the Gita which is Bhakti, devotion to God. The Bhakti of the Gita, is the expression of the religious mood at its highest and best. It is love of God out of the fulness of one's heart and not out of its emptiness as it is in its early stages. It is this that makes the devotee of the Gita an embodiment at once of fearlessness and gentleness. The twelfth chapter is a mighty saga in praise of the perfection of character through this path of spiritual discipline.

From all these considerations, the Gita has assumed an importance in our life and that importance is increasing day by day. In his

preface to the English edition of the Gita by Charles Wilkins, Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India, declared that 'the writers of the Indian philosophies will survive, when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist and the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.' Since these lines were written the Gita has been establishing an ever-widening empire in the hearts of men and women both in the East and the West. Its appeal to the thinking minds of the modern world, as its appeal to the thinking minds of India in the past, is in sharp contrast to the indifference and often hostility displayed by the modern mind to the scriptures and prophets of the world. The source of this power lies in the two important features of its message—its rationality and its universality.

Before going into the Gita proper, it is necessary to say a few words by way of introduction. Most of you must be knowing something of the Gita and its place among the scriptures of the Hindus. When I use the word Hindu, while studying the Vedanta, I use it for want of a better word. Because most of these scriptures and philosophies were elaborated long before there were any other religions in the world—Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or Muslim. These distinctions did not exist then. The great sages elaborated their concepts of religion with no such distinctions. It is necessary to keep this point in view. To-day when we use the word Hindu, it is to demarcate some

class of people from some other classes. But when I use this word with reference to the Gita this demarcation does not exist; only because, the sages gave their sublime thoughts not to any particular class of people, Hindus as opposed to all other people, but to all the people who wanted guidance,—without reference to any community or race. Keeping this point in view, we have to approach these ancient books and their teachings. It is the religion of man that is taught there and not of this community or that. Ethics, morality and metaphysics are propagated for the welfare of humanity and not of any sections thereof. This universality of outlook is thoroughly emphasised in all our ancient works; so much so, the great law-giver Manu develops his Code keeping in view the true welfare not of Hindus only but of humanity in general. It is the Manava Dharmashastra—the Ethical Code of Manu for the guidance of his progeny, Man. It is for man in general, any part of the world he may be inhabiting and to any race he may belong. If man wants to attain happiness and welfare, he has to follow certain ideals and certain methods and these ideals and methods are universal and these are promulgated in this book. Similarly in the Vedas and the Upanishads and later in the Gita; their teachings are not sectional or parochial in their import and appeal. Sects and creeds may use them with profit but cannot exhaust them, for they deal with human nature; their theme is man's aspirations and struggles after self-realisation. The division of humanity into various religions and sects is only a later story.

So, when we read through the Gita, we clearly find that its teachings are addressed to all humanity—to all men and women who are struggling to realise the higher expressions of their soul. This is what is given by this

philosophy and religion. This ideal is also emphasised in the nature of the dialogue which is characteristic of the Gita. This dialogue is between Krishna and Arjuna. In our ancient scriptures, Arjuna is considered as the incarnation of Nara—the Man, and Krishna of Narayana—the Supreme Lord. It is not that Krishna is imparting his teaching here to any particular sect but to man, through his disciple, Arjuna. In the Gita, therefore, God is face to face with Man—Narayana with Nara—and this is what constitutes its solemn and sublime setting.

In our country, for several centuries, the Hindu mind has been directed to narrower and narrower circles of thought; even the universal thought of the Gita has been sought to be limited in these narrow grooves. Even Sri Krishna has been sought to be imprisoned in a creed, be it Vaishnavism or something else. Sri Krishna was a universal teacher. He made no distinction between Vaishnavism or Shaivism or any other ism. To-day we require this rhythm of universality which transcends all creeds and classes, and embraces one and all and gives the same kind of inspiration to one and all. Therefore, the Gita is to be viewed in its own setting—as a commentary on the Vedanta given by one who was a universal Being, that is Sri Krishna himself. Universal teachings cannot be given by anybody but a universal man and they cannot be understood as well by anybody but a universal pupil. If one who is limited by creeds studies the Gita, he will find there only a narrow teaching—an echo of himself—and his conception of Sri Krishna will be conditioned by his limited mind. This has been done in the past; but what we now require is an open mind, a universal attitude to life; then alone will the Gita open out its best to us—its spirit of universality and practicality.

This accounts for the wide influence that the Gita exercises on the people of this country and outside. The people in this country and outside find in the Gita something which will strengthen their faith and their spiritual endeavour in their own way. Whether they be Christians or Muslims, whether they be Hindus of various denominations, the Gita intensifies their *shraddha* in their own faith. Its universality is of a special type. It is not an imposition but an invitation. The Gita belongs to everyone in his or her own way. Such a universal message we require to mediate between the various religions that prevail at present.

Sri Shankaracharya in the introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* gives us his views as to the nature of the Gita dialogue. There are various views as to how the Gita came to be taught. The very orthodox section holds that all these verses are as they were spoken between Krishna and Arjuna. They stick to the letter; but, as the Bible says, 'The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life'. It is most unreasonable to expect that in a battlefield questions and answers should go on for such a long time and that too in verses. Rational people do not accept this view. The great Shankaracharya, who is considered to be the fountain-head of the present orthodoxy, has not accepted this view. He says in his commentary that when Arjuna was confused with difficulties, Sri Krishna gave him some effective advice and this advice was put by Vyasa into 700 slokas. This is the view of Shankaracharya and this seems to be quite reasonable.

We find that a great teaching or a great ideology always takes its birth under the stress of circumstances and environments. This is true with regard to the birth of any vital idea in any part of the world. The birth of the great Marxist ideology in the 19th

century—one that is now moving men and women in all parts of the world—is an instance in point. The ideology took birth at a time when society was waiting for it. It is a development out of the accumulated previous conditions. It took shape in the middle decades of the last century. The idea of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which was the war-cry of the French Revolution took its birth during the stress of the mid-eighteenth century in France. Similarly, when we study the Gita, the conditions that obtained at the time of the *Mahabharata* and also the circumstances that made for the appearance of the teaching of the Gita, we find there were strong reasons for the promulgation of the ideas of the Gita. In the early days we have the Vedic literature and the ritualistic religion associated with it. So also we have the Upanishads and the philosophic religion taught therein. Both these come to us with antagonism. The Vedas promise happiness in this world and in the heaven after death. So much so, a person who wants the good things of this life and wants a place elsewhere after death tries to attain it by sacrifices to various gods as understood at that time. Later, there was a protest against this heaven-philosophy by the Upanishads. When we study the *Katha Upanishad* we find that by the first boon Nachiketas wants to gain something relating to this world. By the second boon he wants to know how to attain to heaven. But he is not satisfied with these. The protest in the Upanishads takes us to a higher purpose and function and that is why the third boon of Nachiketas relates to life's problems as viewed by a lofty philosophy and ethics. It is only by an enquiry into the Reality behind life that this problem can be solved. This is the special function of the Upanishads. Thus, for the first time, this question is brought to the forefront in the Upanishads. At the same time this disparity

between this-worldly life and the other-worldly life grew and there was a great need for a synthesis and this synthesis the *Bhagavad Gita* attempts in its teachings. The Vedas teach us Karma, sacrifices, etc., to secure a fine place in heaven after death. Coming to the Upanishads, there is a reaction and it has nothing to do with Karma, sacrifices, etc. The ideal is to realise the Reality by meditation; there is no place for action. But in the *Gita*, we find Sri Krishna's own reconciliation of the demand for action and the demand for thought. No life can be perfect without reconciling these two opposing forces. The man who says, 'I shall act without reference to thinking' will not succeed and the man who merely indulges in thinking without reference to action will not also be perfect. Therefore, the times demanded a synthetic philosophy and that is what Sri Krishna gave in the *Bhagavad Gita*. In every chapter of the *Gita* we come across the terms and concepts which were familiar in the pre-*Gita* age. Sri Krishna takes them up but gives them his own meaning and interpretation and presents a constructive philosophy which reconciles the claims of action and thought. This we find specially in his interpretation of action and inaction in the 18th chapter.

Secondly, the Upanishads speak of a Reality which is the fruit of a sustained metaphysical enquiry, and Sri Krishna wanted to bring out the ethical implications of this philosophy. Man wants a good deal of guidance. If philosophy does not give it, he looks for it elsewhere. We want the guidance of philosophy so that life may be lifted up to a higher level. The aim of the *Gita* is to lift up life from the ordinary to a high level of ethical and moral values. It placed life under the guidance of a sublime metaphysics.

The second chapter gives us the whole scheme of the philosophy of life as conceived by the *Bhagavad Gita*. This is how the Upanishadic thought developed and evolved till it found a new and original formulation by Sri Krishna in the *Gita*. As a friend, philosopher and guide of humanity, Sri Krishna gave his message of a lofty metaphysics and practical ethics which has sustained and will continue to sustain humanity through the ages.

The Upanishads contain the highest and the most sublime statement of Indian thought. Max Muller refers to the boldness of the thinkers of ancient India who built up a mighty edifice of philosophic thought led on by their love of truth and reason and undeterred by any fear of blame or lure of fame. When we are in the Upanishads we are face to face with a vast ocean of thought and the *Gita* is the attempt made for the first time to put this thought into a systematic form.

The *Gita* belongs to the *Mahabharata* which records events that happened in India about the fourteenth century B. C. This is the conclusion that modern scholars have arrived at. So far as the book itself is concerned, they put it at about 900 B. C. Whatever the precise date there is no doubt that it is very ancient. The chronology of ancient Indian history is uncertain and it is only from the period of Buddha that some sort of chronology is available; previous to that everything comes under ancient Indian history. The formulation of the *Gita* can be considered to be a few centuries before Buddha. There are great ideas in the *Gita* but these were not properly understood by the people and Buddha came and gave the thought a new form to make people understand the real spirit of the ancient teachings.

The formulation of every great idea has created an epoch in this country and there has been a mighty personality behind each such epoch. Every national epoch has been the result of the working out of a mighty idea preceded by a mighty personality who gave it to the race. We had Buddha in the 6th century B. C. and later Shankara in the 8th century A. D. and we are still living in the light of these great masters. Coming to modern times, in the 19th century, we have had great luminaries amongst us and we are to-day guided by them and their ideas. Anybody who studies Indian history is struck with this unique fact that every epoch has been preceded by the formulation of a mighty ideal of thought and life behind which there has been a great personality as the focal centre of inspiration. There is something unique in this historic phenomenon which has been responsible for the continuity and vitality of our culture. This phenomenon you find nowhere else except in China. 5000 years of history is behind us—we are the same ancient race—and the same ancient ideals are moving us today. What is it that makes for the permanence of this culture on the world's stage? So many civilisations came on the world's stage and vanished like ripples on water and in the midst of all these vanishing civilisations there are only two—India and China—which are permanent. This should make us think deeply as to what constitutes the source or sources of our cultural vitality. There was a time when Greece and Rome played with pomp and vigour on the world's stage; much earlier there were Babylonia and Egypt; and today, there is England, already down the road, and there are Russia and America. Those who once played mighty roles have vanished; the countries and their physical features are there but the continuity of culture is lost, the heritage is broken.

Facing ancient Greece and Rome was India, and India is there to greet the new comers on the world's stage without herself changing and she will be there to greet others that are to come in future. This is a fact of history, and, as students of Indian history, it is our duty to enquire into this fact and learn of the lessons that it holds for us. This leads us to an enquiry into the origin and sources of our culture. The thoughts proceeding from the Vedas and the Upanishads, reinforced by the ideas of Sri Krishna, Buddha and Shankara and others have provided the basic inspiration to our cultural values, loyalty to which has been responsible for the continued vitality of our race and our culture. As a race, we had our ups and downs—no progress is continuous—everywhere there have been ups and downs. But the peculiar fact about India is that whereas others fall and never rise again, we fall and rise again; whereas others live and die and never rise again, India only seems to die and rises again rejuvenated, more glorious than before. The Christian missionaries who came to India in the 19th century thought that India was dying, never to rise again. They made this statement on the analogy of the Red Indians, the Mexicans and the Incas who had once built up great civilisations in America but had perished at the touch of the white man. Even we seemed disposed to accept this judgment of the missionaries. But to-day we and they feel differently. Not merely are we not apologetic about our civilisation and culture, but we are facing the world in an aggressive way, aggressive used in the ideal sense. Any culture is said to be living when it overflows. Expansion is life and contraction is death. For the last thousand years we were greeting death: we were building narrow walls around ourselves. But, then, for the last hundred years we have broken through these narrow walls and

are facing the world and spreading our ideas in distant parts of the world. It is the same ancient race and the same ancient culture but rejuvenated and strengthened. This is significant. Whereas other countries make noise and die away, we but go to sleep and rise again to face the world with renewed vigour.

Take our history; what do we find there? We find a great man rising about every thousand years. Each one comes to renew the vigour of the same ancient ideals, may be with a little different emphasis according to the needs of the time. That is why there is an unbroken continuity of our culture. India has survived many a vicissitude. This must make us humble. Let it be constantly kept in view that our culture is preserved because of these great personalities, whom we consider as incarnations of God. Whatever the attitude we take with regard to these great men, whether as Avatars or otherwise, they come when the racial life is at its lowest ebb and their touch breathes a new life into the almost dead bones and muscles of the race. God alone can give life; call them God or men, they breathe life into the dead bones and muscles of the people. One such great man is Sri Krishna. In the whole history of India I do not find another such great personality so supremely dynamic as Sri Krishna. Those who have read the *Mahabharata* will bear this out. Sri Krishna is loved by one and all. When Krishna comes to Indraprastha you find thousands of people gathering to greet him. Even as we find our people welcoming their great leaders to-day, you find people crowding on the parapet walls and looking through the windows showering flowers on him as he passes through the roads of the city. Everyone, from the sage to the ordinary peasant, is full of respect for him. He is the greatest

of Kshatriyas and yet is humble. He goes to make his obeisance to the righteous before undertaking any major task. He is the friend of the lowly and the lost. When he comes to Indraprastha he stays with the poor Vidura forsaking the splendour of the imperial court of Duryodhana. He is mighty, and kings bow down to him, and yet he does not want any kingdom for himself. He is the *gopala* loved by the cowherds. He is loved by the young and old, men and women, the learned and the ignorant. In the India of his time everywhere you find the influence of Krishna. His presence was felt by every section of the population.

Sri Krishna was a dynamic personality and his teachings also are dynamic; they are a mass of strength-giving ideas. We have to understand this Krishna. Uptil now, we have had only the Krishna who evoked our tears and our softer sides. But the Krishna of the Gita comes to lift up a people and make them dynamic. There is a Bengali song which invokes the Krishna with the Sudarsanachakra to come to the succour of fallen India. This is the Krishna of the Gita.

He is a person who has impressed himself upon the culture of this country in every aspect. Take away Krishna and everything of value in our culture vanishes. His impress is there on our art, literature, music, painting, sculpture, folk-dance, etc. Many a foreigner is jealous of the rich cultural heritage of India. This culture took its rise as a little stream in the dim antiquity of the Vedas; during its unimpeded course through thousands of years of history it has received accessions of strength and richness from many a tributary. And today it is a vast swelling ocean of virtue, purity and power. Every Hindu can be justly proud of being a participant of this rich cultural heritage.

Krishna is one such who strengthened and enriched this culture. Long before the separation of humanity into the Hindu, Mussalman and Christian was dreamt of, he was there. Therefore, Krishna belongs to every child of this country, be he Hindu, Mussalman or anybody else. A time will come when everyone in this country, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, will recognise Sri Krishna, Buddha and Shankara as the architects of the nation's mind who handed down a rich cultural heritage to the people of India without any distinction. This culture is the common property of all communities. Just a few days back Dr. Soekarno of Java, in an article contributed by him to the "Hindu" of Madras, had said that in the blood of every Indonesian the culture of India is there. So it is not difficult to imagine a time in India when everyone will claim and look to the same ancient culture for inspiration and guidance.

When we realise our true condition, we realise the part played by Sri Krishna in the culture of this country. Sri Krishna of the *Mahabharata* is a mighty philosopher as well as a mighty man of action. Yet he was absolutely detached. He was respected by everybody—the mighty of the land, the sages, the women, children and the peasants.

The Gita is the teaching of such a mighty and dynamic personality; and he has infused his mightiness and dynamism into his teaching. Such a dynamic teaching can be properly understood only by those who have a little of that mightiness in themselves. When little people take to a great idea they bring it down to their own level, as they

cannot rise to its level. For the last thousand years we have produced nothing but soft literature. Swami Vivekananda says that the country preferred softening ideas with the result that most of the literature of the last thousand years, if squeezed, produced only tears. In the hands of such people the Gita also lost its mightiness. But Sri Krishna had no place in his teaching for any sort of weakness or sentimentalism. The very opening verse that he utters to Arjuna is '*Kutasva kashmalam idam vishame samupasthitam*'—'Whence has this weakness crept into you at this critical juncture?'. The Upanishads and the Gita speak only of strength. Swami Vivekananda says, Strength, Strength, is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page'. Weak minds can never understand or grasp mighty ideas. In their attempt they but dilute such ideas with their own littleness. But when we shall develop a little strength and vigour, we shall find in the Gita something that will stand us in every situation of life. For those who want merely a little soothing of nerves and are afraid to face the hard trials of life a lot of material will be found in the Puranas. But those who want stimulation for a higher life through hard struggle will find it in the Gita in ample measure. Only the mighty can understand the value of the Gita. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'only the elephant knows the strength of the lion and not the mosquito'. The Gita is not meant to soothe us and put us to sleep but to wake us up from our slumber and lethargy and goad us on to the highest self-realisation and self-expression. The Gita slokas have a power to invigorate us and to make us think in fresh terms; they will not let us move in the old ruts.

THE COOK AND THE NRISIMHAVATAR

By 'PRAHLADA'

Ramesh was getting sick of his cook's kleptomania—if that will give a Gladstonian status to his incorrigible habit of smuggling. Otherwise he was all right. Finish, polish, punctuality were his credentials. But the one vice drowned out the virtues. 'Oh, for a cook who will not steal' Ramesh would exclaim plaintively when a friend came home.

At last a cook appeared and the friend who sent him assured Ramesh that he was free from the vice of his forerunner. A month went by. There were no reports of stealing; but it was found that he had fallen ill thrice. Ramesh was optimistic and did not complain. The second month showed the same record and in the third month the sick leave had to be extended farther than that of the first.

It was an intriguing situation: Ramesh went in for a third cook. This time the cook did not steal nor did he fall sick; but he was disobedient. 'This dog's tail can never be straightened' murmured Ramesh. Nevertheless he insisted on a fourth change. And this time he got one who was awfully dirty. Nay, the old virtues now began to appear as vices; the present man always erred on the side of salt. 'Everytime I get what I ask for' said Ramesh to himself. But I also get something I did not ask for. Of course, I must stipulate. But I have to be prepared to face the inevitable unstipulated,' added he in a mood of resignation.

and severe penance he got Lord Brahma handy to grant any boon he asked. As Hiranya was afraid of death from his enemies he took all imaginable precautions. He asked Brahma the boon that neither man nor beast could kill him. It was granted. Then he wanted that he could not be put to death either during day or night. 'Yes' said Brahma. Next he stipulated that no weapon could kill him, that he could not be killed on earth or in heaven, inside the house or outside it. All these were granted. Hiranya felt himself so safe that he went about his wicked life with a vengeance, and with the persecutions of his God-loving son, Prahlada. At last when Hiranya was at the limit of his atrocities God had to fulfil himself in a new form, neither as man nor as an animal, but as a combination of both, for Hiranya had stipulated that neither a man nor an animal could kill him. So the Nrisimhavatar (Man-lion incarnation) appeared just at the *sandhya time*, the joining of the night and day to circumvent Hiranya's condition that neither during day nor night should he be killed. The Nrisimhavatar caught Hiranya, took him to the doorway (neither inside the house nor outside it) put him on his own lap (neither on the earth nor in heaven) and with his nails (not with any weapon) tore open his bowels. Hiranya stipulated everything but could not foresee the Nrisimhavatar! An unstipulated end of a much stipulated life, the death of all safeguards.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

COLLECTION: VANDE MATARAM
I: LA MEDITATION SELON LE YOGA
VEDANTA: BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARA-
NANDA.

'The Buddha-like dignity and calm of bearing which so impressed us were but the expression of his far outlook and serene conviction that there would yet be seen a great army of Indian preachers in the West, reaping the harvest that he had sown so well, and making ready in their turn new harvests, for the more distant reaping of the future' These prophetic words of Sister Nivedita referring to the great Swami Vivekananda's inspired spiritual ministry in the West rush to our memory as we contemplate the work of Swami Siddheswarananda. He went to Europe about ten years ago in response to urgent requests from earnest friends in France for a proper spiritual guide. Within a short time he mastered French in order to carry straight to the heart of the West, the eternal message of India.

The major part of the book is composed of intimate talks given in French to earnest and sincere aspirants in Paris during 1939 and 1940.

At the very outset of the first chapter the Swami emphasises the truth that in spiritual matters there is no standard teaching: 'Each must choose his own path.' It is shown that meditation helps us to fulfil better our duties as it increases the power of the mind and turns it to the Atman, the source of all power. This is the psychological and philosophical basis of meditation. The meditation on the Atman is not auto-suggestion but reaching to the Reality Supreme, the Atman. The second chapter deals with the psychological and metaphysical bases of Yoga Vedanta. Yoga has two aspects, practical and speculative. Both together constitute a coherent system. The Swami defines Yoga as the scientific utilization of emotion and reason leading to the mystic experience. The common characteristic of all religious experience is the annihilation of the ego. The Sankhya analysis of the mind is clearly expounded and it is shown that the discipline of Yoga and the method of discrimination employed by Vedanta lead to the same result, the freedom from the bonds of egoism. The eight steps of Yoga are then described. The social value of Samadhi, a question often raised by the moderns, is taken up and it is clearly pointed out that those who have reached that state, Buddha, Jesus, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and others have been the greatest benefactors of the world. The Sadhana or the purification of the individuality is the subject of the third chapter. According to Yoga, the first step to be taken by the aspirant is to establish a

perfect harmony between the body and the mind. The value of a guide, a Guru in the path to perfection is touched upon. His presence assures us of the absolute certitude of perfection. A few striking incidents from the life of Sri Ramakrishna are narrated to illustrate this perfect harmony between the mind and the body.

The fourth chapter treats of the important subject Japa and its power in awakening the Kundalini. Japa is effective only if the aspirant keeps constantly in mind the spiritual significance of the Mantra. The Mantra is the spiritual body of the Divinity. The Mantra takes us to the presence of the Lord. The Guru gives us the proper Mantra. By repeating it faithfully, we are purified and we live in God. The need of Brahmacharya for the safe awakening of the Kundalini is duly emphasised and the dangers attending the person who attempts to awaken that power without having purified himself are pointed out. Chapter V, treats of the object of meditation. It is pointed out that the object chosen for meditation plays an important part in transforming the inner life of man. The regular practice of meditation habituates us to concentrate more and more perfectly and to integrate, one after another, the discordant elements of our individuality. The Swami sounds a needed note of warning to some people of the West who select Mantras, Chakras, Yantras, etc., because of their exotic nature. This is due to an unhealthy propensity for strange and mysterious things. Every one must conform to his own tradition. Meditation is a real science and should be studied as such. It is the universal, monopoly neither of the East nor the West. We should not confuse the scientific teaching of Yoga which all can profitably follow with the particular aspects. The chosen ideal may be personal or impersonal. The metaphysical justification of meditation is in its leading us to unity, the Supreme Reality. There is the time factor which will in due time bring into fruition our earnest and regular work. But the Japa should not become mechanical. It should be living. Japa purifies our mind and knowledge manifests itself. 'The value of the Great Silence' is the subject of the VI chapter. The author shows that philosophy is no theory for the Hindu, but a *darshana*, an internal vision. The discipline of Yoga enables us to take stock of the interval between two thoughts, the Grand Silence. The declaration of the *Chandogyaopanishad* that it is only by continence and chastity that we can realise Brahman is quoted and the necessity of observing Brahmacharya to realise Brahman is emphasised. The Swami rightly remarks that our present individuality is but a knot of preferences and antipathies expressing themself-

VEDANTA KESARI

ves by resistances, as the diverse forces gravitate towards the sense of the I of which the dominant note is the attachment to life. Moral and religious discipline consist in reducing progressively and sublimating these primordial tendencies.

The two great ways of the spiritual life, Bhakti and Jnana form the subject matter of the VII chapter. The subject of discrimination is dealt with. And then the subject of inner purification is treated in detail. The Swami refers to the exaggerate importance attached by some to *pranayama* and shows that it often brings about an increase of the ego sense, whereas the essential of a spiritual life is the alternative of the ego. The real aim of *pranayama* should be to establish an equilibrium between the body and the mind. The essential thing is the purification of the mind. We should sublimate the instincts: that is, link those sentiments to the Infinite. The book concludes with the lecture of the Swami on the Integral Experience, which is the direct and complete realisation of God who is in us the merging of the finite in the Infinite. As long as we are in ignorance, we are prisoners of Maya. Mystic experience gives us our birthright, Freedom. The Grace of God must descend to work out our freedom. The glossary of Sanskrit words which is given in the end explains clearly and amply the significance of the terms and will be very useful to those who have no knowledge of Sanskrit.

The book is an excellent practical guide in the spiritual path and will be a constant source of inspiration to all sincere aspirants.

P. SESHADRI, M.L.
Travancore University.

THE LATEST FAD: BASIC EDUCATION: BY ACHARYA J. B. KRIPALANI.
PP. 107. PUBLISHED BY VORA & CO.,
BOMBAY. PRICE RE 1-8.

Here is a brochure attempting to explain in a nutshell the Scheme of Basic Education, another of the inroads of the 'Old man of Seagon', this time into the Holy Land of the orthodox 'Educationists'. That the attempt is from the pen of Sri Acharya Kripalani, some time an 'educationist' himself and subsequently one who has had a thorough schooling under Gandhiji, is sufficient guarantee that the exposition is both sound and faithful. With that marvellous lucidity which comes only from a thorough grasp of the point at issue, the author analyses the system of education obtaining in India at present exposing it in all its naked unnaturalness and upholds the Gandhian solution—a plant of

native growth—as the only remedy. Experiments that have been tried in different parts of Europe in the past by way of reform of education are set forth in some detail; considerable space is devoted to the examination of the entire philosophy of education as expounded by distinguished western savants like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Mark, Kropatkin and Herbert—decidedly the most brilliant and informative part of the brochure. That these experiments sound in themselves have suitably to be modified in order to fit in with present-day Indian conditions, is the author's thesis. The Gandhian scheme whose basic principles are (i) that basic education should be craft centred and (ii) that it should be economically self-sufficient, is now examined from different angles—social, ethical and economic—and its superiority established with a logic wellnigh irrefutable; and finally, the whole solution is assessed in its proper context in the Gandhian philosophy.

The remarkable success of the experiment in Bihar and Kashmir where it has been tried is referred to with facts and figures in the preface.

The work is, on the whole, a solid and challenging presentation of the scheme by one whose strength of conviction and merciless logic carries conviction to others.

The get-up and printing of the book maintain the high traditions of the Vora Publishers.

K. BALAGANGADHARAN.

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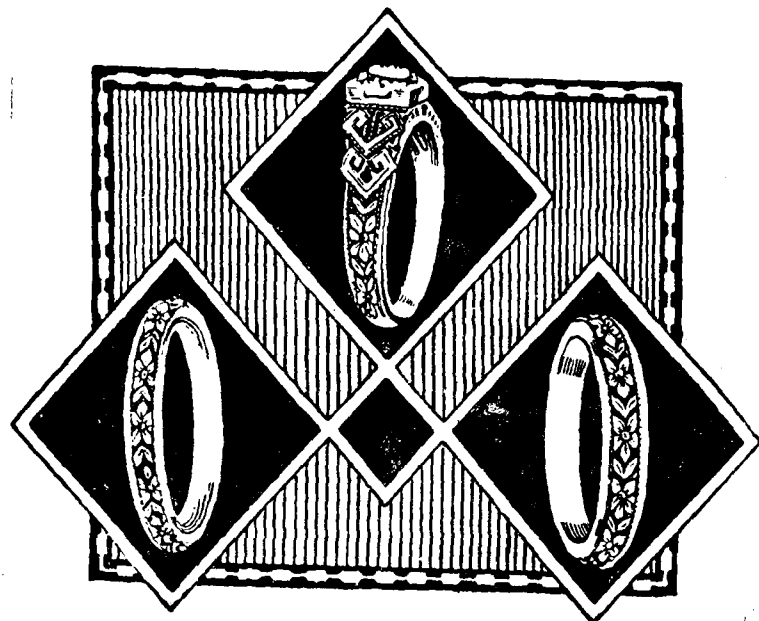
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CONTENTS		PAGES
HOW A GOD-MAN HELPS US	...	39
By Swami Saradananda		
TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF THE DEADLOCK ..	...	41
A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF NIKOLAI HARTMANN'S PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES	...	44
By Dr. S. K. Maitra, Ph. D.		
KULASEKHARA—A ROYAL ALWAR	...	49
By 'Sri Saila'		
THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD ...	...	52
By Swami Tyagisananda		
BROTHER LAWRENCE: A STUDY IN MYSTICISM—II	...	58
By D. P. Lingwood		
ARJUNA'S FIRST LESSONS IN DISCIPLESHIP	...	62
By Swami Ranganathananda		
MEN OR MACHINES?	...	69
By Nicholas Murray Butler		
ASPECTS OF ADVAITA	...	71
By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar		
REVIEWS AND NOTICES	...	75
NEWS AND REPORTS	...	76

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HOW A GOD-MAN HELPS US

By SWAMI SARADANANDA

Now, naturally arise the questions of divine grace and human endeavour. Can anybody struggle independently and reach perfection without the grace of God? Or, is the grace of God to be the only condition of reaching perfection? Sri Ramakrishna himself has some important sayings on the point. 'I have cooked the rice, you simply sit down to eat' says he. 'I have prepared the mould, you have only to throw your minds into it and reach perfection.' 'If you can't do anything yourself, give me the *bakalma* (power of attorney).' 'As dry leaves are blown about here and there by the wind, so resign yourself to the mercy of God.' In another context he says, 'give up all your desires one by one, for then only can you reach the ideal.' 'You must give up all attachment for lust and gold, and meditate on Him.' 'You will have to do at least one-sixteenth of what I have done' and so on.

Finding it difficult to reconcile the two opposed doctrines, I once had a discussion with Swami Niranjanananda at Dakshineswar on this problem of man's *free will*. When we could not reach any decision, we referred it to the Master. Sri Ramakrishna with his usual fun made us wrangle about it for some time. Then he gravely said, 'What do you talk of *free will*? There is no such thing as free will. Everything is happening according to the

Lord's will. Man comes to understand it ultimately. It is like a cow tied to its post, and she has a certain amount of freedom of movement within the prescribed circle. Man's free will is also like that. God has given man a certain amount of power and freedom too to act within that limit; so man thinks that his will is free. But the fact is that the rope is tied to the post! However, there is one redeeming feature in it. If one prays to the Lord from the depth of his soul, He may shift the peg, lengthen the rope, or remove the tie completely.' At this we objected, 'Then, Sir, one need not practise penance, meditation and all that; one can as well say, it is all God's will; whatever we do, is done by His will.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'O, to what effect, if you simply say that in so many words of your mouth? Any amount of your verbal denial of thorns can never save you from their painful prick when you place your hand on them. Had it been entirely with man to do spiritual practices according to his will, then everybody would have done so; but, no, every one can't do it, and why? But there is one thing; if you don't utilise properly the amount of strength He has given you, He never gives more. That is why self-exertion is needful. And see every one has to struggle hard even to become fit for the grace

of God. By such endeavour, and through His grace the suffering of many lives can be worked out in one life. But some self-effort is absolutely necessary. Let me tell you a story :

‘Once Vishnu, the Lord of Goloka, cursed Narada, saying that he should be cast into hell. At this Narada was greatly disturbed in his mind, and he prayed to the Lord, singing songs of devotion and begging of Him to show where hell was and how one could go to it. At this, Vishnu drew the map of the universe on the ground with a piece of chalk, representing the exact position of heaven and hell. Then Narada said pointing to the part marked ‘hell’. “Is that so? This is hell then!” So saying, he rolled himself on the spot and exclaimed he had undergone all the sufferings of hell. Vishnu smilingly asked, “how is that?” Narada replied, “Why Lord, are not the heaven and hell your creations? When you drew the map yourself and pointed out to me the hell, it became a real hell, and as I rolled myself there, my sufferings in it were intense and so it is that I say I have undergone the punishments of hell.” Narada said all this sincerely and so Vishnu was satisfied with the explanation.’

When God assumes a human form and incarnates Himself as man and plays the part of a human being, He has to endeavour to find out the way to freedom and to experience difficulties just as any other human being. He of his own accord, out of His great mercy for the world covers Himself with Maya, and like ourselves He has to search out the Way through light and darkness. But as He has not got the least tinge of selfish desire, He sees more light than darkness, and within a very short time arrives at the solution of the problem of life by a greater force of concentration. He then engages Himself in His

great mission, namely, the redemption of humanity.

So, it will do us a great good to contemplate on the human aspect of this God-man Ramakrishna with all his human faults and frailties; for through it alone we can understand his divine aspect clearly. If we do not accept him as *man*, if we do not regard him as one among ourselves, we shall not find any meaning in all the penances and struggles that he had to undergo during the period of his *sadhana*. Further the thought will naturally arise in our mind, ‘Why should He who is ever free and ever perfect struggle at all to realise the Truth?’ and all his struggles for the realisation of God will seem to us a mere feigning. Moreover, when viewed from that standpoint his very life instead of being a model to be followed, encouraging us at every step in our struggle, would, on the other hand, fill our hearts with despair and stunt all our prospect of salvation.

And indeed, so long as we cannot emancipate ourselves completely from all the limitations of human life and be established in that state of absolute consciousness which is the real self of the Deity, it is not possible for us, conditioned as our mind is, to comprehend fruitfully the Creator and First Cause of the universe and His incarnations in forms other than personal, or even human. In this sense becomes true the saying of the Sruti, *Devo bhutva devam yajet*. If you have ever attained to that transcendental state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, a consciousness free from all the trammels of relative life, then only you would have realised the true Self of God and can worship Him in the true sense. If you have not done so as yet, then all your worship is but an approaching to that real worship, a struggle to reach that high spiritual state and to be a fit worshipper of the Divine. God is bound to appear to you in His

TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF THE DEADLOCK

personal aspect, even as man, though with divine powers.

Rare indeed are such men who have reached Godhood and who can therefore truly worship God. Weak men as we are, we are far away from that state. And it is for this reason only,—to receive our homage of love and worship of devotion—that the all-merciful Being, descends as man, assumes a human form with human attributes and appears before us as a God-man.

In comparison to the task of investigating the period of *sadhana* of the previous incarnations who had blessed our land, the task of

knowing the history of the period of *sadhana* in the life of Sri Ramakrishna is far easier. For, many times had Sri Ramakrishna himself related to us his struggles and experiences of that period; and those pictures are still vivid in our memory. Moreover, we met many people at Dakshineswar who had been eye-witnesses to his life of *sadhana* and from their conversations we were able to glean valuable hints.

But before we begin to describe his life of *sadhana*, it is but proper that we first recall to our minds the general principles of *sadhana*.

TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF THE DEADLOCK

‘Our approach to politics has been medieval and not modern. Unfortunately we made religion the basis of our approach and not economics; and so we failed’, observed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in April 1942 when the Cripps negotiations fell through. What an irony that we have been somehow made to approach the solution of the political deadlock through religion and not through economics when the whole world of empires has developed so supremely the sixth sense, the economic sense!

Man is inevitably an economic unit, before he is a Hindu, a Muslim, a Parsee or an African. Food and the other primary wants of life constitute the first religion of man. That one is a man demands that his primary wants have got to be fulfilled and that his share of human happiness in general is insured. Where does religion come in here? Unfortunately such demands are put forward on the basis of unsound religious labels as

Muslim, Hindu or Scheduled caste. This is a sheer travesty. To attempt a solution of our problem along channels of race or religion is to miss the fundamentals amidst the accidents of life. Has not the Muslim League been caught up in this blind alley? No doubt, the League is economic in its approach with a vengeance. A Muslim leader with intimate knowledge of the Muslims of North India and their attitude to the Pakistan demand observed the other day that the Pakistan is a phantom built by and for the Muslim *bourgeoisie* and not for the proletariat. ‘The Muslim League consists overwhelmingly of large landlords’, writes Louis Fischer. ‘The Muslim peasants have no sympathy for the Muslim League. Pakistan would be another Iran. I can see why Muslim Feudals would desire it. I cannot see why Muslim peasants and intellectuals and businessmen would desire it.’ Wisely or unwisely the Hindu seems to share

little of this economic urge. It is a good augury that India tends to steer clear of the Scylla of the narrow economics of the Muslim and the Charibdis of the economic unrealism of the Hindu. Fortunately for India the Cabinet Mission has finally declared itself against the creation of Pakistan.

At no time in the history of mankind has the economic approach to life's problems gained such a universal and compelling sway over men's minds as today. Call it Communism, Bolshevism or any other 'ism'. We can't afford to blink this lesson of history, be we Muslim, Hindu, African or Anglo-Saxon. All the same we, Indians, cannot go the full length with Communism. For while Communism insists on an equal distribution of opportunities, it does not give us an inspiring philosophy that enthrones the individual as the *summum bonum* of society and thus smoothly ensures his share of the sources of happiness. This religion does. Religion begins and ends with the insistence on the dignity of man as divine, on his essential equality with his brother. So religion must see to the satisfactory distribution of opportunities.

All true religion must enjoin on all the practice of this wisdom of adequate distribution of the sources of happiness, as all true religion has as its core the truth that all men are of one family. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself; (and everyman is thy neighbour). And why? For in every man the same fundamental whole divinity resides, as it resides in you'. This is the teaching of all true religion. Hence it must be impossible for a Hindu to treat anybody as anything other than as an end in himself, as the highest end for which we are here on this planet. Hindu philosophy uses all rational argument to establish and validate the primacy of this highest truth, this Greatest Fact, in man; Hindu religion

lays down for every man the ways and means to realise this truth for oneself and to transfer the joys of education and plenty to others; Hindu sociology builds society in a way that will be conducive to the spread of the theocentric heaven, and Hindu politics formulates a government where the locus of sovereignty is deservedly in the individual, and individuals who manifest the presence of this locus by their transformed conduct and life, are put in charge of the affairs of the government. When the Upanishads after affirming the knowledge of the One, and every 'I' is that One, as the highest saving knowledge, relate the story of the Guru blessing his disciple with this knowledge, they suggest the building of an ideal democratic society where the cream of society is anxious to spread itself, is earnest in distributing the best things of life, where those with lesser opportunities and lesser command over the sources of happiness are afforded more, and are lifted up from ignorance, weakness and imperfection to an intelligent, intelligible perfect life. This is the business of Hindu religion and sociology: To equip one and all for an intelligent part in the affairs of their own governance and for the right exercise and discharge of social responsibilities, in short, to be wise and responsible members of an enlightened democracy. Such an ideal of society though not christened as democracy was realised in India long before the West appears to have dreamt in democratic lines. H. G. Wells admits that 'it was only by the 13th century that the first intimations dawned in the West of the moral ideal of an educational government in which the ordinary man is neither the slave of an absolute monarch nor of a demagogue-ruled state, but an informed, inspired and consulted part of a community. The Magadhas, the Vajjians, the Kosalas and the other five in the order of the eight democratic

principalities that flourished after the Buddha in the 4th and 3rd centuries B. C. bear ample testimony to the practical democratic genius of Ancient India. The democratic *elan* that issued forth in the garb of a religious gospel and united the whole of India into one had emanated from no less a person than the Buddha himself. 'Have you heard' Ananda, the Buddha is represented as asking his St John, 'that the Vajjians foregather often, and frequent public meetings of their clan? So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians foregather thus often, and frequent public meetings of their clan, so long may they be expected not to decline, but to prosper.' The advocacy of democracy cannot be louder through the accents of religion.

How can such a democracy be maintained today by India in a world of nations whose capital is force and not love, may be a perplexing question to the Westerner, but not to the descendant of the Buddha, the prophet of love and non-violence, which are the fundamental characteristics of genuine democracy. Will India offer non-violent resistance to a world combination of forces and maintain her hoary integrity? Is it possible for a modern state (which is based on force) to offer non-violent resistance? Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said: 'It is not possible for a modern state based on force to resist forces of disorder whether external or internal, non-violently. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be temperate and furious at the same time. It is claimed that a state can be based on non violence, i.e., can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a state was Asoka's. The example can be repeated'. Let us remember that the strength of the non-violent state lies in its simple recognition of the dignity of man as divine, man's equal

lity with his brother, implying his right to, and share in, life's goods and the sources of happiness.

Should not the leaders of thought and action in our country make up their minds to repeat the great experiment of our great ancestor, Asoka? Or are we to remain satisfied with travelling in the borrowed wagons of the Westerner with the Westerner ever at the steer ring? We have been quarrelling. In the rented house we are apt to be in an irresponsible mood. Let us come into our own tested ideals and that will be the dawn of a united, happy and harmonious home.

Today, fortunately, we are asked to set up our own home, to make our own constitution. Now and here let us be very mindful of invoking our Hindu patterns for giving us the wisdom to advance along new lines of action. It is not only in the matter of government that we have to mould our patterns. Have we not exchanged our earnest student with *shraddha*, our woman, the devoted mother-kind, our social ambitions for a spiritual society for cheap and glamorous ones? Let us bear in mind that our age-old patterns are the best for us and all that we have to do for fitting them into the international context is to give them a new orientation. Perhaps we may have to buy. But let us buy with discernment only those garments for the Man within us, for the Man above whom there is nothing, *purushat na param kinchit*, the perfect man for whom the world is a-seeking. May we never indent for other's wealth, land or power, scrambling for which the West has time and again dashed itself against rocks without learning any appreciable lesson. May we increasingly share in the consciousness which was so full in Swami Vivekananda when he declared: 'Be proud that thou art an Indian and

VEDANTA KESARI

proudly proclaim: "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother". Say,—“the ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother. The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good”; and repeat and pray day and night: “O thou Lord of Gowri, O thou mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness into me... and make me a Man.”

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF NIKOLAI HARTMANN'S PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES

By DR. S. K. MAITRA, Benares Hindu University

[Here is a brilliant comparative study of philosophy, Indian and Western. The Indian philosopher, says the writer, has always looked at the problems of philosophy from the standpoint of value, whereas the Western philosopher has done so from the point of view of reality. The saying of Maitreyi, 'what shall I do with that which does not give me immortality' gives the keynote of our philosophy. Saccidananda is not merely value, but also Reality.—EDS.]

I

The main weakness of Hartmann's philosophy: The higher values have authority but no power.

The chief weakness of Hartmann's philosophy is its divorce of ontology from axiology. The unfortunate result of this is that in his system the higher values have authority but no power. His whole theory of moral values is vitiated by this unfortunate result. It is because these values have no power to realize themselves that they depend upon human agency for their realization. And it is this which gives man his unique position as a semi-god invested with creative powers. Man is a creator, because it is he and he alone who can help the moral values realize themselves.

It is not clear, however, why there should be this dependence upon human agency for the realization of a particular class of values. If the lower values, the situational values, can realize themselves without the need of any such agency, why should such an agency be necessary in the case of moral values?

Why not the moral values themselves descend on earth? Why should they, require a third something, namely, a human agency, to effect their descent?

This whole theory of the need of a *via media* to effect a contact between the world of values and the world of reality or the ontological world, owes its origin to the fact that Hartmann has created a wide gulf between these worlds. He places the values, as it were, in a cloudland, to which only human beings have the privilege of getting access. He forgets that in treating the values in this way he is not doing justice to them, for he is really lowering their reality-status, if not completely annulling it. Values can only maintain their position as the highest metaphysical principles if their reality-status is higher than that of the other principles. With a low ontological status, such as Hartmann has given them, they practically lose all their value. I ask in all seriousness: What are those values worth if they are so helpless ontologically as to be incapable of coming down themselves into the world? A weak ontological position is

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF NIKOLAI HARTMANN'S PHILOSOPHY

not consistent with a high axiological status. Hartmann, in fact, is only paying lip homage to these values by giving them a high axiological position, while at the same time assigning to them a very low reality-status. Indeed, ontology still holds the palm in his philosophy, in spite of his loud protestations to the contrary. If we may make use of a political analogy, we may compare the position of Hartmann's moral values to that of the king of Nepal who, although regarded as semi-divine, has no power, while the position of the ontological principles in his philosophy might be compared to that of the Prime Minister of Nepal who, although not treated as Divine, still wields all real power.

Here we see a fundamental difference between his view of values and that of our ancient sages. The latter never gave a low ontological status to the higher values. The second *sutra* of Badarayana—जन्माद्यस्य यत् इति ('from whom the origin, etc., of the world take place')—makes this clear. Brahman, which is the highest value according to the Upanishads, is also the highest reality. There is complete union of the highest value and the highest reality in the conception of God. He is the highest value, for the realization of Him means salvation. He is also the highest Reality, inasmuch as the whole universe originates from Him. Indian thought has always kept true to this identification of Value and Reality. In recent times the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo has laid special stress upon this identification. As Saccidananda the Absolute is the triune Value. Existence, Consciousness—Force and Bliss. But Saccidananda is not merely Value, but He is also Reality, inasmuch as He is the creative principle of the whole universe, and is also that towards which the whole universe, is moving. The two things, indeed, are the opposite sides of the same principle. Saccidananda does not depend upon any human agency for His realization. His realization in this universe

takes place through successive descents of His as Matter, Life, Mind, etc. These descents take place through the Will of Saccidananda Himself and do not depend upon any human volition in any way. What is left to human volition is only to prepare the ground for the reception of the Divine Power when It chooses to descend upon the world. It has not got the power to force the Divine Will to descend.

This difference between Hartmann's view and that of our sages may be broadly said to be the characteristic difference between the Western and the Indian outlook of philosophy. The Indian philosopher has always looked at the problems of philosophy from the standpoint of value, whereas the Western philosopher has done so from the point of view of reality. The saying of Maitreyi, जेनाहं नामृतास्याम् किमहं तेन कुर्याम्¹

("What shall I do with that which does not give me immortality"), gives the keynote of our philosophy. Western philosophy, even when it professes to be a philosophy of values, has not been able to get rid of its fundamental bias in favour of ontology. This is what we notice in all the value-philosophers of the present day, such as Munsterberg, Windelband, Rickert, Royce. I have pointed this out elsewhere¹, and I need not dwell further upon it here. Hartmann also has not been able to shake himself free from this fundamental Western bias in favour of ontology, though it has taken a somewhat different turn in his philosophy from what it has done in the earlier philosophers. That is to say, instead of this bias leading him to a final absorption of values in reality, as it has led the other philosophers, it has had the effect of making him accentuate the difference between value and reality, giving the latter all power and the former mere authority. But what is authority without power? If history has proved anything,

¹See my two articles on *The Problem of Value* ("Review of Philosophy and Religion", Vol. I No. 2 and Vol. II No. 1, 1930-31).

it is that authority divested of power is a sham. If all that Hartmann has said about moral values is that they have authority but no power to realize themselves, we have to say that he is only deceiving himself if he thinks that he has been able to depose ontology and place axiology on the throne of philosophy.

Another reason why Hartmann regards human agency as a necessary condition for the realization of moral values is his view—no doubt very much mistaken, as we shall have occasion presently to show—that human freedom is only possible if man's independence *vis-a-vis* these values is maintained. Here we see the working of a fear-complex in Hartmann which is practically the same as the horror which Martineau and other theists felt at the very idea of man being absorbed in the Absolute. For Hartmann, as for Martineau, the freedom of man must be maintained at any cost, and therefore he does not hesitate to cripple the higher values by making human agency the *conditio sine qua non* of their realization. How disastrous the consequences of this have been for his philosophy, especially that part of it which deals with the status of man, we shall presently see.

Second great defect of Hartmann's philosophy: it has no proper theory of evolution

Hartmann's second great defect is that he has no proper theory of evolution. Like his great prototype Plato, he has a very inadequate grasp of the meaning of evolution.

Had he grasped the true meaning of evolution, he could never have committed those mistakes which we have already pointed out. He would have understood that evolution means nothing else than a continuous self-conversion of authority into power. That the world has evolved means precisely that the values which were latent in it have actualized themselves. It is the power which is latent in the values to actualize themselves which gives its whole meaning to

evolution. Self-generative, self-creative activity, therefore, is the essence of evolution.

The evolution spoken of by Hartmann is a bastard. It is disowned by both its parents. It cannot be said to be an evolution of the values, for the values cannot evolve of themselves. Nor can it be said to be an evolution of man, for man can only set in operation values which exist independently of him. It is therefore just a happening, a chance occurrence. If by accident some human being takes it into his head to bring down the values from heaven to earth, then only can the evolutionary process be set going. Even then, how long can it continue? Only so long as the momentum of the first rush of values into the world lasts. When this momentum is over, evolution will stop. It will begin again when another human being (or the same human being at a different moment) condescends to bring down a fresh batch of values. And so on. Can this be called evolution?

The thing is, Hartmann makes no use of the principle of evolution. The universe is there for him as a block reality, and the values are also there as a separate block. Somehow a connection is established between them through the agency of the human will. But the connection is neither a necessary part of the block called reality nor of the other block called values. It is just a chance occurrence depending entirely upon the sweet will of a third block constituted by human beings, which has its feet on the block of reality and its head in the block called values. If this is not a travesty of evolution, I do not know what a travesty is. Mechanical evolution is far better than this, for there is at any rate some principle which is at work there, however inadequate that principle may be, whereas here there is none at all.

How can the situational values realize themselves without any inter-

mediary if the higher values cannot do so?

Moreover, there is this great anomaly in Hartmann's theory, that the situational values can realize themselves without any agency, whereas the moral values require the human agency for their realization. Values *qua* values, therefore, do not require the intervention of a human agency for realization. Moreover, how do the situational values realize themselves? Are they always realized? From Hartmann's complete silence on this question, it seems that he takes the situational values to be eternally realized. But if this is so, they will be eternally real, and so far as they are concerned, the distinction between value and reality will cease. A part of the material world, therefore, will eternally consist of values. Whether there will be any part of the material world which will not so consist of values, is not clear. On the contrary, every material object can be said to be a situational value, and consequently, in the whole world of material objects, reality and value will coincide. The distinction between the two will only arise in the case of moral values.

This creates a most confusing situation. The obviously lower values, the situational values, have the power to realize themselves without the intervention of any agency, while the evidently higher values, the moral values, have not got this power. Moreover, in the case of the former, the distinction between reality and value disappears, only to reappear in the case of the higher values.

In a passage in the third volume of his *Ethics*³ Hartmann tries to belittle the ontological superiority of the lower values by stressing the 'freedom' of the higher ones. He says, 'Every higher type of existence with its own categorical formation is *eo ipso* "free" as over the lower. Its own superiority suffices for this; and all dependence upon the lower structure signifies in the

latter only the inevitably greater strength, not an admixture with its peculiar quality.' But this is really arguing in a circle. The question precisely is how the 'superiority' of the higher values can guarantee their 'freedom'. It is no answer to say that this superiority is nothing else than freedom. It is merely a jugglery with words. For the question here is one of ontological freedom. That freedom the higher values do not possess, but the lower ones do. This fact cannot be camouflaged by statements like these.

The important thing which Hartmann forgets is that if the superiority of the higher values is really to be preserved, this superiority must be an all-round superiority. Take the case of God. If the supremacy of God is to be maintained, then He must be treated not only as the Supreme Good, but also as omnipotent and omniscient. An all-good God who is, however, absolutely impotent or does not possess complete and perfect knowledge, cannot be called God at all. Similarly, the higher values, if they merely possess authority without any power, cannot be called higher values at all.

Is it to maintain human freedom that Hartmann has stultified the higher values?

Our suspicion is that it is for the purpose of exalting man and his freedom that Hartmann in this way has divested the higher values of all power. His repeated statements like the following:³ 'If there be a universal and real teleology of values in the world, then all reality from beginning to end conforms to valuational principles and is based upon them as constitutive. But in this case values are ontological categories and as such, are entirely actualized. And man with his sphere of action is entirely eliminated. He is superfluous',—support this view. They give one the impression that it is because of Hartmann's belief that human freedom can only be maintained if the higher values

³ *Vide Ethics*, Vol. III, pp. 244-45.

³ *Ethics*, Vol. I, p. 242.

depend upon human agency, that he has deprived them of all power.

But does freedom merely mean freedom to do good or evil? As we shall presently see, this is a very poor view of freedom. If the best thing that can be said about man is that he will have the power to do good as well as evil, then, does it not more or less confine man to the level which he has so far attained? Does it not for ever remove the possibility of his rising to higher levels? On this point, however, we shall have to say a good deal presently, and so we do not want to say anything more here than that this view of human freedom is not very complimentary to man.

Dualism of Value and Disvalue.

I now pass on to another important feature of Hartmann's theory of values, namely, the dualism of value and disvalue. Must we accept such a dualism? Does the recognition of a value necessarily mean the recognition of a corresponding disvalue? And is there no means of reducing a disvalue to a value? It would be a great pity if there were no means of getting rid of this dualism. A monistic philosophy would then be an impossibility.

Let us see how the matter really stands. When I say 'good', there is no doubt that I distinguish this good from the bad. But the question is: Do I thereby treat the bad as entirely different from the good, as an absolute antithesis to it, which can never be got rid of in any way? In other words, is it impossible to conceive the bad as itself a kind of good?

I venture to think it is not. A true theory of values must treat the disvalue itself as a value and must not imagine the world as ruled by the dual principle of an Ormuzd and an Ahriman, and I offer below some considerations in support of my view.

The distinction between value and disvalue is made, if we may do so, in the plane of values,

and not in any other plane. The disvalue, therefore, if it means anything, has a meaning in the realm of values. It is a value which runs counter to, or is opposed to, the positive or constructive value. It is the dissolving or disintegrating value. It is the value, if we may say so, of the disintegrating dance of Siva. In our ancient world-view, this disintegrating dance had its due place. It was the herald in fact, of re-integration. It was the birth pang of a re-orientation in values. It was a perpetual reminder to us of the inadequacy of the values that were current and helped to measure the distance that we should have yet to travel before our goal was reached.

But the disvalues are not in a position to suppress the corresponding values, such as truth, beauty and goodness. They serve only to indicate the present ontological inadequacy of the values, that is to say, their failure at present to raise the world to their level. But as I have already said, this inadequacy is only temporary, for values must have the power ultimately of realizing themselves. They must have a coercive power over ontological reality, the power of forcing it to accept them. It is for this reason that I have criticised Hartmann's theory of values, since it deprives them of this coercive power.

But if we do not accept the ontological weakness of values, the status of disvalues undergoes a complete change. They will then only live on sufferance. And evolution will mean a progressive elimination of disvalues. Or rather, it will mean the progressive transformation of disvalues into values. I say advisedly 'transformation', for the disvalues will change their character, modify their attitude of hostility towards the values and ultimately merge themselves into the latter.

It may be said against this view that it is a false reading of the evolutionary history of the world, that, for instance, if the world

shows now a greater perfection of goodness, it shows equally enormously greater depths of wickedness and depravity. It is no doubt true that the powers for doing mischief have enormously increased, but this is due to the realization of certain values, such as, for example, those connected with the acquisition of scientific or technical knowledge. Now it cannot be said that scientific or technical knowledge by itself is a disvalue. It becomes a disvalue only under the present conditions of the world, for which the values which are in vogue are themselves responsible. In other words, disvalues occur, because our so-called values are really not values, that is, are not complete and perfect values.

In fact, disvalues serve the purpose not only of reminding us of the imperfections of

our present values, but also of helping those values rise to greater perfection. This cathartic function of disvalues history has repeatedly demonstrated. Bad social customs or forms of government have, for instance, been cured by the emergence of the disvalue, called a social or political revolution.

Disvalues, therefore, do not form a separate class by the side of values. They are themselves values. They owe their origin to the fact that none of the values at present in vogue can be regarded as complete, and that consequently, part of their meaning is expressed through the disvalues. The disvalues, consequently, are part of the process by which the meaning of the values comes into expression.

(To be concluded.)

KULASEKHARA—A ROYAL ALWAR

By 'SRI SAILA'

[The fascinating pen of Sri Saila has been depicting for us the life and philosophy of the Alvars, the super-mystics of South India. This is the fifth in the series.—EDS.]

The palace was in a flutter. A costly pearl necklace belonging to the king had been lost. The executive officers of the royal household laid the blame for the theft on the Sri Vaishnava devotees who had always free access to the palace at all times. But the king's faith on the innocence of the devotees was so firm that he sent for a pot with a live cobra in it, and publicly thrust his hand inside saying that the reptile should bite him if the imputation against the Vaishnavites were true. It is said that the cobra shrank from biting the king, and the courtiers felt themselves small before the king. This story, which is probably apocryphal is attributed to Manakkal Nambi, a disciple of the famous Natha Muni of the

tenth century, and the credulous king was none other than Kulasekhara who has been included in the hagiology of the Tamil Alvars of south India.

The Vaishnava mytics (Alvars) have come from all castes. Four of them were orthodox Brahmans, two belonged to the great non-Brahman community and one hailed from a depressed class. The other four have been classified as 'Ayonijas' as their birth and parentage were not definitely ascertainable. There are however reasons to suppose that they also belonged to the Brahman community.

Saint Kulasekhara, the subject of this sketch, is said to have been a pious prince

VEDANTA KESARI

of the Kerala or Chera dynasty in the south-west corner of south India. Tradition says that his father was a Dritavrita who reigned at Kozhikkodu and that his birth took place at Tiruvanjikkulam in the twenty-eighth year of the Kali era. As usual, we do not know much about the early life of this prince. He seems to have been war-minded however and his titles such as 'Kollikavala', 'Kooda nayaka', 'Kozhikkone', 'Kongar Kone' etc. give us faint glimpses of his victories over the then princes in south India.

Historians relate that the conquest of the Kalinga country was the turning point in the life of Asoka the Great. Similarly with Kulasekhara. His numerous conquests seem to have brought remorse to him and he spent his after-years in devotional activities. He found pleasure in the worship of Vishnu and in service to his devotees. This activity resulted in his taking less and less care of his kingly duties and the story of the pearl necklace related at the beginning illustrates an attempt on the part of his ministers to wean the king from his religious bent of mind.

The king's abandon of the care of his kingdom became so great that he 'desired not to live in a world where purely physical existence is considered as the goal of life'. He wanted to go on a pilgrimage to Srirangam, join the ranks of the bhaktas there and to end his days in divine service and contemplation. It is said that preparations for the king's journey to Srirangam were many times ready, but for one reason or other the journey was postponed.

Kulasekhara's personal deity was Rama and the king's extreme delight consisted in hearing the exposition of the *Ramayana* by the court Pauranik. One day the Pauranik was reciting and explaining that portion of

the story where Rama was said to be fighting singly with 14,000 Rakshasas in the Dandaka forest. The king's devotion to Rama was at once 'lashed into frenzy'. He thought that his Rama was in peril and that he should immediately go to His help. He therefore ordered that his entire army should follow him on his forward march to Dandakaranya. Neither the Pauranik nor the audience realised the king's frame of mind at that time. They could not also stop the king's march. But there was a wise minister who understood the situation and devised a clever ruse: He sent a secret messenger, who coming from the opposite direction, met the king on his way to Dandakaranya and told him that Sri Rama had singly vanquished the 14,000 Rakshasas and returned safe to his Asrama. The king returned to his capital in all joy and gladness.

On another occasion the Pauranik was absent and his place was taken by his son who was unaware of the king's spiritual turn of mind. The incident of Sita's abduction by Ravana was the theme then on exposition. The king's wrath knew no bounds and he prepared at once to march to Lanka, to fight with and kill its ruler Ravana and rescue Sita. It is said that the king sallied forth to the seashore, plunged into the ocean and resolved to swim to Lanka. All this took place so quickly that the king's ministers had no time to think of any attempt to make him return to his capital. But at the critical moment, Sri Rama himself appeared before the king and told him of his victory in Lanka. The tradition is that Sri Rama caught hold of the king, brought him safe to the shore and accompanied him to his capital and then vanished out of sight. These stories, it is needless to say, illustrate the intense devotion to God by certain of His devotees. An analogous instance is

KULASEKHARA—A ROYAL ALWAR

furnish annappar, a Saivite saint of south He noticed that blood was oozing from the eye of the Sivalinga at Kalai. At once he plucked out his own eye and applied it to the eye of the Linga.

After, Kulasekhara abdicated the throne in favour of his son and went to Srirangam with his daughter. This new life at Srirangam was so pleasant and elevating that it created in him a desire to go on pilgrimages to other shrines, such as, Tirupati, Ayodhya, Chitrakutam, Tirukkannapuram, Malirunjolai, and Vittuvakkodu. He is said to have shuffled off his mortal coils in his 67th year in a tiny village known as Brahmadesam in the Tinnevely district.

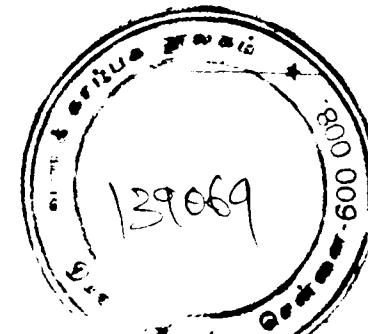
In his relationship to God, Kulasekhara considers himself chiefly as His servant (Dasya Bhava). But other modes of devotion such as, Sakhya, Vatsalya and Madhura Bhavas are also predominant. The common-folk seem to have considered him as a mad man. 'All are mad men to me; I am also a mad man to others. Why should one talk about this? I have become mad of my Lord' sings he in one of his verses. To him a bath in the holy Ganges was not as efficacious as smearing oneself with the foot dust of the devotees of God.

A Srivaishnava's goal of life is eternal service to his Supreme Deity in heaven, but Saint Kulasekhara seems to have been content with a lesser sphere. He desires to have a connection with his God but would be satisfied with birth either as a fish or stork in any of the ponds at holy Tirupati. Even an inanimate existence in that hill was wel-

come to him. He longed to be a door-step in front of the *sanctum sanctorum* of Tirupati so that devotees of God might stand on his body and offer worship to the Lord. A grateful posterity has fulfilled this pious wish, and in every Vaishnava shrine the door-step in front of the Garbha-griha is still known as 'Kulasekhara's step'.

Kulasekhara has left us a collection of 105 Tamil verses known as *Perumal Tirumozhi*. It is included in the first part of the *Divya Prabandham*. As usual, more than half of the collection is in praise of the shrines which the saint had visited. The two decades on Sri Krishna are full of chaste Madhura Bhava. One decade relating to Chitrakuta (Chidambaram) relates the chief incidents of the life of Sri Rama and is considered as the quintessence of the *Ramayana*. There is a fond belief that a repetition of this decade would confer as much merit as a reading of the entire *Ramayana*.

Another work in Sanskrit, namely *Mukundamala*, is also attributed to this saint; but there is no conclusive evidence to show that both the authors are one and the same. Kulasekhara of the *Mukundamala* is certainly a Chera prince observing the Marumakkattayam law of inheritance. But the tradition about the Kulasekhara of *Perumal Tirumohi* is at variance with this ancient custom said to have introduced by Parasurama himself. According to our Guruparamparas, Kulasekhara succeeds his father Dhritavrita, and in turn is succeeded by his son, another Dhritavrita. This is a point which has till now been not taken into account by historians.



THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE UPANISHADS: SRUTIPRAMANYA

By SWAMI TYAGISANANDA

To the cultures that live today, their respective Books of Religion, their *Pramanas* have been the arteries. The supremacy enjoyed by the *Pramanas* in Hindu thought is something unique. Swami Tyagisananda, author of the 'Sretasvataropanishad' and the 'Narada-Bhakti Sutras', while laying stress on the primacy of the *Pramanas*, pertinently draws our attention to their limitations: The word of the *Pramana* is not absolute. The *Vedanta* accepts its authority only when it is consistent with chaste reason and the highest experience. This makes *Vedanta* perfectly scientific.

The present article is by way of introduction to an English Commentary to the *Chhandogyopanishad* from the pen of Swami Tyagisananda. The commentary will appear serially in this journal—EDS.

Every religious community has its own Book of Religion. Those races of the ancient world who have had no such sacred books to guide them in their lives have all disappeared from the face of the earth, or have remained in the same barbarous stage as they were thousands of years ago. The Jews and the Parsees, the most persecuted among the ancient religious sects, though they were driven out of their homelands, were able to hold on together and preserve their continuity of life and culture, only because of their sacred books. This is because, says Swami Vivekananda, the book crystallises for them all that is good and noble in a most tangible form and presents them with the handiest and most elevating of idols. It is most natural for their votaries, therefore, to develop a kind of awe and reverence for these scriptures, their veneration often resulting in making them conceive of these books as a special revelation of God himself.

Book worship, however, has its own dangers. The superstitious and the unintelligent often cling to these with a tenacity that sometimes makes all progress impossible. They are also responsible, many a time, for many mischievous doctrines, and for much of the fanaticism and intolerance of their begot. ed followers that lead to persecution and bloodshed. While, therefore, we should pay our highest worship to these scriptures, we

should not allow them to be a clog on our spiritual progress, or to be a brake on our universal sympathy and love, or on the advancement of knowledge and culture.

Spiritual knowledge and experience is not the monopoly of any race or nation or individual, ancient or modern. There have been Rishis and Avatars, Prophets and Messiahs, in the past; there shall be in the future also. As the *Bhagavatam* puts it beautifully, Avatars are innumerable. अवतारः अमरुद्वेयाः Apastamba assures us that Rishis are not born nowadays only because people do not take the trouble of undergoing the necessary spiritual practice. तस्मादयं अवरो न जायन्ते निग्रमानिकमात् etc. Bodhayana promises that Rishis can be produced by spiritual and cultured parents even today, if they adopt the practice of Brahmacharya in their sexual relations. अथ यदि कामयेत् ऋषिं जनयेयमिति कामासनिवृत्तमाचरेत् etc. It is the glory of the Hindu scriptures to proclaim that their one aim is to produce innumerable Rishis, one after another in succession, nay, even to make every man a Rishi.

The Hindu scriptures are therefore not based on the teachings of a single individual. It is the record of the whole history of the spiritual struggles and experiences of the race. It presents us with the quintessence

THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

of the wisdom of the sages and saints of the past. Truth is always universal and eternal, otherwise it cannot be truth. Man himself is potentially divine and perfect, and all religion and education is for the manifestation of this divinity and perfection. Therefore there is no reason why a new revelation cannot take place in any epoch, if conditions are favourable. What one has achieved in the past, another also has the capacity to achieve in the future. If it is the proud privilege of the Hindu to aspire to raise himself even to divinity, it cannot be beyond his capacity to be a new Rishi, a fresh medium for another glorious revelation of the Eternal Truth, more suited, perhaps, to the needs of a newer generation.

These records of ancient spiritual wisdom fall into various categories such as *Srutis*, *Smritis*, *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Tantras*, etc. However much sectarians and fanatics may labour to find out differences in the teachings of the Rishis and prefer one to another according to their tastes and predilections, however easy it may be for modern scholarship and historical criticism to trace out some sort of growth and development in their doctrines, these differences are only on the surface. Those who are spiritually minded find an underlying unity behind all apparent diversities of language and imagery. 'All jackals howl alike' says Sri Ramakrishna. The *Suta Samhita* tells us that the Veda is one and its teaching is one.

एक एव द्विजा वेदो वेदार्थश्चैक एव तु ।

'The Vedas are considered as different only through ignorance' says the *Sanatsujatiya* :

एकवेदस्य चाज्ञानात् वेदास्ते बहवः कृताः ।

'It is the same Veda that appears as many for the good of mankind' says the *Devi Bhagavatam*

वेदमेकं स बहुधा कुरुते हितकाम्यया ।

'The one Veda is divided into four only to enable people of diverse temperaments to

worship god each according to his own capacity and desire' says the *Bhagavatam*

व्यदधात यज्ञसन्तत्यै वेदमेकं चतुर्विधम् ।

This sentiment has been echoed and re-echoed throughout the length and breadth of this land time and again, by a host of sages and saints, till it took deep root in the sub-conscious mind of all sincere spiritual aspirants. They do indeed recognise differences in form and expression, but in their hearts, they feel, in spite of their special attraction or predilection for any particular name and form, that, if only they search deep down below the surface, they can find the same spiritual gems in all scriptures, indigenous and foreign. This consciousness has taken shape in the doctrines of *Ishtadevata* or freedom of ideal, and *Swadharma* or individuality in practice. These twin doctrines vouchsafe to us a spirit of universal tolerance, a breadth of vision and liberality of outlook which is an effective safeguard against all narrow sectarianism and fanaticism. The Hindu is thus free to study all the available scriptures of the world, and has had the privilege of this comparative study from time immemorial. He has had the privilege of seeing the truths and principles of his own religion corroborated by the experiences of all spiritual men. He has, therefore, become a confirmed devotee of his own scripture, and this reverence is not dependent on his parochialism or patriotism, nor on hoary antiquity or ancestry or traditions. It rests on the fact that they give him everything that he could find in any other scripture. He therefore finds no necessity to give up his own for another and a better one.

Hinduism has the longest history of all religions. The teachings of the Rishis have been tried over and over again, each subsequent trial only corroborating the experience of the ancients. Such constant experiments have enabled the Hindus to separate the grain from the chaff. They have seen that

any blessed word of the text or superstitious doctrine of a bygone age that found imbedded in them as a fossil, does not deserve the name of Sastra or scripture. The fundamental theme of all religions and scriptures is the realisation of the Absolute Truth and they have found out that this is the goal, not only of scriptures, but of all science, philosophy, religion, art and morality. The whole of life is only a search for this Absolute Truth and an attempt at its realisation. Bhagavan Sri Krishna has therefore paid the highest honours to Adhyatma Vidya as the essence of all knowledge, by declaring that among Vidyas He is the Adhyatma Vidya. The same is corroborated by the *Mundaka Upanishad* in its very first verse, when it declares that Brahma-vidya is the foundation and acme of all knowledge. While this establishes the superiority of spiritual knowledge over all others, the Hindu has no prejudice against any item of true knowledge. He only knows that all roads lead to Rome, all Vidyas culminate in the realisation of the Absolute Truth. Each of the other departments of knowledge such as science, philosophy, religion or morality or art represent lower phases of the struggle for the achievement of this highest, the means for its realisation. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, we proceed in our search only from lower truths to higher truths and never from error to Truth. So the *Mundaka Upanishad* says that truth alone conquers and not untruth and that the pilgrimage to perfection is to be achieved by conquering one truth after another until the highest is reached.

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्यं पन्था विनतो देवयानः
येनाक्रमन्त्युर्यो ह्याप्त कामाः यत्र तत्सत्यम्य परमं निधानम् ।

Just as psychology is a superstructure on biology which itself is built upon the foundations of chemistry and physics, so the Adhyatma Vidya is only the dome that is

built on the top of the whole structure of knowledge. The Hindu only asks, in the language of Saunaka in *Mundaka I. 3*, what can give him that knowledge by obtaining which everything else become known. शौनको हवै महाशालो अंगिरसे विविवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ कस्मिन् । भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञानं भवतीति । Like Nachiketas in *Kathopanishad I. 26* he feels that knowledge which leads to worldly prosperity and satisfaction of desires are but transient and that they only wear out the vigour of the senses. श्रोमावा मर्त्यस्य यदन्तर्केतुः सर्वेन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः । Like Maitreyi in *Brihadaranyaka II. 4.3* he is in search of that truth which makes him immortal. साहोवाच मैत्रेयी येनाहं नामृतास्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम् । He feels no contradiction or opposition between the lower rungs of the ladder and the highest, the foundation and the roofing, between the means and the goal, between parts and the whole. When he looks at the ancient texts with this perspective, he marks a distinct superiority of one class of books over others. The higher one, he calls Paravidya and the lower one Aparavidya, in the language of *Mundaka I. 4 and 5*. इदं विद्यं वेदितव्यं etc.अथ परा यया तदधरमधिगम्यते ॥ Here Angiras tells Saunaka that there are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired as indeed the knowers of the Vedas have said—one a lower and the other higher. Of these the lower consists of the study of Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, phonetics, code of rituals, grammar, etymology, metres and astronomy, the higher knowledge being that by which the Imperishable is attained. This distinction is at the bottom of Narada's dissatisfaction with all lower sciences and his resorting to Sanatkumara for Atma-vidya. It is the absence of this Paravidya which makes Svetaketu conceited and which prompts his father Aruṇi to ask

him whether he had learnt that through which the unknown becomes the known.

मोहं भगवो मन्त्रविदेवस्मिन् नास्मद्वित् । Chhandogya
॥ II. 3. उत नमदिशमप्रश्यः ।

येनाश्रुतं श्रुतं भवत्यमृतं मन्त्रविज्ज्ञं विज्ञानमिति ॥

It is again in quest of this Paravidya that the six Rishis well versed in all lower knowledge become pupils of Pippalada as stated in *Prasna Upanishad*. It is the same higher knowledge King Asvapati imparts to the six vedic scholars in Vaiswanara Vidya, and Ajatasatru to Dripta Balaki. This classification into higher and lower is only to ensure that the unwary pilgrim does not mistake the milestones to be the goal of the pilgrimage; and thereby no disrespect is meant for any other kind of knowledge. In fact the Hindu does not deny the Natural Sciences their natural legitimate place in the scheme of studies; only he gives the highest place of honour to Adhyatma Vidya. The Adhyatma Vidya itself has its own scientific, philosophical, religious, mystic, scholastic and theological aspects. Much misunderstanding and confusion can be avoided if we bear in mind the distinctions between these various departments, without at the same time forgetting that in spite of these distinctions, they are not mutually exclusive or contradictory. The Adhyatmic science confines itself to the analysis of the self which is so patently known to every one as any other object of study. It is the scientific method that makes knowledge scientific. Every science may have its special technique and methods of enquiry. The Adhyatmic science only adopts the same scientific methods of enquiry common to all sciences, for the solution of its own special problems, according to a special technique of its own; and its discoveries are as much open to public scrutiny and observation as any other scientific discoveries. It deals only with facts of observation and experiment, as in any other science. Adhyatmic philosophy is, on the other hand, the result of

intelligent speculation on the foundation of facts provided by the Adhyatmic science as well as other sciences, subordinate to it. It is based on reason and experience. The truths of this philosophy is open to public criticism and it does not fight shy of the onslaughts of reason. In fact its own claim to acceptance is that it is the product of reason and that it can stand the test of reason at all times. Adhyatmic religion specialises in the processes and methods and experiments by which this superstructure of philosophy is brought into actual practice and experience. It deals with a way of life more than with theories. Adhyatmic mysticism deals in supernormal and supramental experiences which could only be experienced and not described objectively, and is not subject to the observation and scrutiny of others. Much of the matter dealt with under this head forms no doubt the field of Abnormal Psychology, but there is a core of inner experience or realisation of the Absolute Truth which is beyond the province of Psychology proper. Unlike other mystic experiences, the claim of Adhyatmic mysticism is that it is a universal experience open to all, and can be reached by all, and that it is not against reason or contradictory to other facts; all observation and reason make this highly plausible, but cannot produce it. Adhyatmic Scholasticism rests contented with the mere interpretation of the texts and intellectual understanding of their meaning with the help of grammar and dictionary and technical rules of interpretation. If a superstructure of speculation is raised on the findings of interpretation of texts and dogmas, we have Adhyatmic Theology as different from real philosophy. According to the nature of the approach of the student, we find varying emphasis being laid on the authority of scripture as a normal and approved means of arriving at Truth. Among these means known as Pramanas, Anubhava or experience is normally the highest proof of Truth. Next

VEDANTA KESARI

in importance comes observation or Pratyaksha. Inference or Anumana comes only as third in importance, as it cannot work except on the foundations provided by observation and experience. Agama or the words of an expert is also valid proof, provided it is based upon the former three, and is valid only in so far as it does not contradict them. A variety of views is held by different schools about the authority of Agama and its inter-relations with other Pramana. The scholastic view is that every other means of proof is to be made use of only for supporting the interpretations arrived at independently, or at best as a help to proper interpretation. The theologians hold that reason can also help the erection of a superstructure of philosophy on the foundations provided by scripture. In both these, scripture is regarded as of greater authority than reason or observation. The pure philosophers on the other hand give it only a secondary value, in so far as it corroborates their own philosophical conclusions based upon pure reason and observation and independent enquiry. The mystics have no use for reason at all, but rely entirely on personal experience, and all those statements of scriptures which do not tally with their inner experience they consider as non-essential. The religious man tests the teachings of the scriptures in the light of actual life and accepts only those which are found satisfactory in actual life. We thus find Manu asserting that he who would understand the teachings of the scriptures in their pristine purity should be well versed not only in the Shastras but also in observation and inference, and that it is only he who understands the scriptures with the help of reason that can know real Dharma. Brihaspati warns us against blind acceptance of the authority of the scriptures and points out the possibility of our going astray if we do not have the help of reason. Jaimini admits the necessity to fall back

upon reason when one finds apparent contradictions in the scriptural teachings. The *Mahabharata* also asks us to take the help of reason to find out our Swadharma in any particular context. It goes even to the extent of saying that any prescription consistent with reason and public good must be considered as good Shashtra, even if it does not find a place in scriptures and that any statement inconsistent with these cannot be Shashtra even if it finds a place in scriptures. The *Yogavasista* says that the word of even the creator have to be rejected if it does not tally with reason, that the word of even a child is fit to be accepted if it agrees with reason and that we need not invest the words of the Rishis with any higher authority than those of an ordinary expert. Aniruddha on Sankhya Karika points out that in all discussions about the import of scriptures, the final decision should be based upon reason. The great Acharyas also have given a high place to observation and reason in relation to understanding the teachings of the scripture. Thus Sankara says in his Gita Bhashya that the authority of the scripture holds good only in matters which do not fall within the province of observation and reason. According to him a hundred texts cannot be accepted as authority if they speak of such patent absurdities as that fire is cold or that the sun is dark. Even if we were to find such statements we must understand their meaning to be different. And even where a different interpretation is thus called for, we should see that such interpretations are not inconsistent with other recognised teachings of the scriptures themselves or with reason and observation. In the Upanishad Bhashya he makes it clear that Sruti cannot be brought in to prove the truth of what is patently absurd and unreasonable. Madhvacharya echoes the same view when he says in his *Vishnu Tatva Nirnaya*, that though ordinarily scripture is con-

sidered more authoritative than observation and inference, such authority vanishes if it is found opposed to the latter on which it depends, and that if it is opposed to Anubhava, Agama cannot be true. Again in his Bhashya on Brahma Sutras 1.1.1, he argues that without *jignasa* or enquiry based on reason, Veda is useless as a Pramana, and that only sound philosophy can be the teaching of the scripture. Echoing these views Tikacharya says in his *Nyaya-Sudha* on 1.4 Brahma Sutras that only that meaning which is consistent with reason should be accepted as the teaching of the scripture and on 2.2-7.8 he observes definitely that observation is superior to inference and that both these are more authoritative than scripture. Similarly Yamunacharya is found in his *Siddhi Traya* to adopt a thoroughly rational view in dealing with rival dogmatisms. He declines to accept the assertions of his opponents with the remark, 'All this teaching may carry weight with believers; as we are not credulous, we require logic to convince us.' Ramanuja says in his Bhashya on Brahma Sutra II, 1-12: 'scripture is only a guide in supersensuous matters, though reason may be employed in the support of scriptures. It is common ground among all Acharyas, however, that the final authority of the scriptures rests on each one's own inner realisation or Anubhava.

Thus Swami Vivekananda exhorts the Maharaja of Khetri in the following words 'Follow, therefore, noble prince, the teachings

of the Vedanta, not as explained by this or that commentator, but as the Lord within you understands. Above all follow this doctrine of sameness in all things through all beings, seeing the same God in all'. He also tells us that mere book learning is rather shaky ground and that we have to take what appeals to the inner spirit. (Vol. II 356.) This approach to the study of scripture has the support of Sri Ramakrishna himself. On page 700 of the Gospel, we find Narendra questioning him about the contradictions and absurdities in the scriptures, and the master replies in the following words, 'There are two interpretations of scriptures, the literal and the real. We should accept the real meaning alone, what agrees with the words of God. There is a vast difference between words written in a letter and the direct words of its writer. The scriptures are like the words of the letter. The words of God are direct words. I do not accept anything unless it agrees with the words of divine mother.' Again on page 170, we see him remarking thus, 'The scripture contains a mixture of sand and sugar. It is extremely difficult to separate the sugar from the sand. So one should learn the essence of the scripture from a teacher or a sadhu.' Again on page 656, "Books, scriptures and things like that only point out the way to reach God. How long is a letter written by a friend necessary? As long as its contents are not known. When the contents are known one proceeds to carry out the directions.'

ARGUMENT AND ANUBHAVA

Once a dispute arose among the learned men in the Court of the Maharaja of Burdwan, as to who was the greater deity, Shiva or Vishnu. Some of the courtiers said Shiva was greater, the others gave preference to Vishnu. When the dispute grew hot, a wise pandit remarked: 'Sire, I have met neither Shiva nor seen Vishnu, how can I say who is the greater of the two?' Similarly, do not try to compare one deity with another. When you will see one of them you will come to know that both are the manifestations of the same Brahman.

—Sri Ramakrishna.

BROTHER LAWRENCE

A STUDY IN MYSTICISM: EASTERN AND WESTERN

11

By D. P. LINGWOOD

In the earlier stages of religious life it is possible to distinguish between what in the theology of the Church are called the active and the contemplative lives. Martha and Mary are the Biblical prototypes of these two ideals. But on the higher spiritual planes it is not possible to make such a distinction; for all work is worship, as the Swami Vivekananda has said. Before entering further into this matter we shall deal a little with the means by which we attain to supersensual conversation with the Elect of our heart.

Brother Lawrence exhorts us in the following manner: 'I say again, let us enter into ourselves. The time presses: there is no room for delay; our souls are at stake'. (Letter IV). And in his last letter he says, 'He is within us; seek Him not elsewhere'. Jacob Boehme says the same thing at the beginning of his dialogues on *The Supersensual Life*. Christ said 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'. It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that the whole burden of the Wisdom of Ancient India is that the Brahman is to be sought in the Atman, and that the two are one (cf. the *mahavakyas*: *Chhand.* 6, 8, 7; *Brih.* 2, 5, 19; *At.* 5, 3; and *Brih.* 1, 4, 10). The anonymous author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* says that he who knows himself is near to knowing God.

This entering into oneself is only the preparatory stage of religion. It is a discipline which must be pursued, finished and given up. For the goal is to see God in everything. But in the interim period this withdrawal of thought into the heart is of inestimable value. Indeed it is indispensably necessary.

The *tamasika* man sees everything as evil; the *rajasika* man sees it as a mixture of or as

a struggle between the evil and the good; but the *sattvika* man sees it as entirely good. 'To the pure all things are pure' says St. Paul; and two thousand years later we find the Holy mother saying 'The pure mind sees everything pure'. Thus are the words of truth echoed from century to century, and prolonged from age to age. So long as the *rajasika* nature of the spiritual aspirant compels him to make any distinction whatever between good and evil, just for so long must he grimly cling on to the former and fiercely reject the latter. In one word, we must discriminate. This is not at all times easy. Brother Lawrence says, 'that to arrive at such resignation as God requires, we should watch attentively over all the passions which mingle as well in spiritual things as those of a grosser nature: that God would give light concerning those passions to those who truly desire to serve Him' (Conversation I). A tender growing plant requires the protection of a fence. But when it has reached maturity it will not be affected by things which might easily have killed it when young. A man with long experience of the spiritual life will not be shaken by temptation; but a novice would be wise to keep away from it. Only an ascetic as great as Shiva can safely swallow the poison of sense-pleasures. We become good only by thinking, speaking and doing good. 'One indeed becomes good through good work, and evil through evil work'. (*Brih.* 3, 2, 13. Cf. Aristotle on the value of habit in the *Nicomachean Ethics*). Brother Lawrence proposes to himself the practice of the presence of God as the end and consummation of his life. Obviously there are many things which divert the mind from this laudable employment. Hence the necessity of constant practice (*abhyasa*). The

BROTHER LAWRENCE

transition must be made from that state of mind in which it requires an effort to concentrate, to that in which such concentration flows spontaneously and without impediment. In the language of *Patanjali yogasutras* (III, 1 and 2) we must endeavour to make the transition from *dharana* to *dhyana* (intermittent to constant concentration). For this, practice is indispensably necessary. Brother Lawrence says 'that in order to form a habit of conversing with God continually, and referring all to Him, we must at first apply to Him with some diligence: but that after a little care we should find His love inwardly excite us to it without any difficulty'. (Conversation II). All wandering thoughts must mercilessly be rejected, and the mind brought back to God. Dogged, unremitting persistence is the secret of success. He tells us 'That we should not wonder if, in the beginning, we often failed in our endeavours, but that at last we should gain a habit, which will naturally produce its acts in us, without our care, and to our exceeding great delight'. (Conversation IV) He writes to a correspondent 'Be not discouraged by the repugnance which you may find in it from nature; you must do yourself violence. At first, one often thinks it lost time, but you must go on, and resolve to persevere in it to death, notwithstanding all the difficulties that may occur. (Letter VI). Krishna in the *Gita* (XVIII, 37) defines the bliss arising from goodness (*sukham satoikam*) as 'that which in the beginning is like poison, but at the end is like nectar. In his *Fourth Letter* Brother Lawrence gives one most important reason why it is necessary for us to continue in an unrelenting practice of our ideal. Speaking of his correspondent's religious practice he remarks 'I commend you for it, it is the one thing necessary: we must, nevertheless, always work at it, because not to advance in the spiritual life,

is to go back. But those who have the gale of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep. If the vessel of our soul is still tossed with winds and storms, let us awake the Lord, who reposes in it, and He will quickly calm the sea'. One is reminded of the Purvamimamsaka doctrine that the non-performance of *nityakarma*, such as *sandhyacandana*, produces positive harm to the person neglecting this group of rites; and does not, as some Vedantins hold, merely negative the merit which would have been produced had they been performed. It is undoubtedly a fact (supplemented perhaps by Dunne's discoveries) that our waking activities of body, mind and speech supply, as it were, the seed from which we reap the harvest of dreams. The man who meditates on God all day will naturally dream of Him at night, and 'He giveth wisdom to His beloved in sleep'. The recitation (*japa*) of the *mantram* is ideally supposed to go on day and night, regardless of sleep or wake. Practice is the tap-root of all religious progress. Practice makes perfect, as the English proverb says. 'We cannot escape the dangers which abound in life, without the actual and continual help of God; let us then pray to Him for it continually. How can we pray to Him without being with Him? How can we be with Him but in thinking of Him often? And how can we often think of Him, but by a holy habit which we should form of it? (Letter IX). The keenness of his psychological observation is shown in a passage such as this.....'Let it be your business to keep your mind in the presence of the Lord. If it sometimes wanders, and withdraws itself from him, do not much disquiet yourself for that; trouble and disquiet serve rather to distract the mind, than to recollect it; the will must bring it back in tranquility; if you persevere in this manner, God will have pity on you.' (Letter

VIII). By means of this practice a change will gradually be brought about in the mind. Brother Lawrence does not often refer to that obscure phenomenon of mysticism which has been aptly termed the Dark Night of the soul. But there is no doubt that he had some experience of it before winning through to the goal. It is perhaps possible to trace a parallel between this state and the Sunya of Mahayana Buddhism (of course from the Advaitic standpoint); and also with the Nirguna Brahman of the Advaitavada from the standpoint of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Vaishnavism (*Cf. Siksasatakam* 7). In all three systems, one Christian and two Hindu, the identical element is that a false idea has been given up, but the true one not yet gained. One is poised, as it were, in a void between the positive and the negative. In the language of the Vedanta the Vikshepa-Shakti (projecting power) of *rajas* has been removed, but not the Avriti-Shakti (veiling power) of *tamas*. Until such time as both veils are rent from top to bottom we may have to suffer severely. Brother Lawrence says that spiritual pains and pleasures are far more intense than physical ones. We should not be discouraged if sometimes we fail. *Gita* and Brother Lawrence agree that we should dedicate even our failures to God. 'Thus by rising after my falls, and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I am come to a state, wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of God, as it was at first to accustom myself to it'. (*Conversation IV*) It has been said of Sri Ramakrishna that it was as difficult for him to detach his mind from God and think of the world, as it is for ordinary people to detach their minds from the world and think of God. But when a man has thus laid his head in the bosom of divinity, what must follow after? How, for instance does he look, if at all, upon the world?

One of the first observed effects of all truly deep religious realization, to whatever sect or denomination it may belong, is the bursting of all bonds of relativity and the annihilation of all sense of difference. The yogi lives in perfect freedom, and sees all beings with the eye of absolute equality. He makes no distinction between good and bad, right and wrong, the pure and the impure. He is not bound at all by any of the dual fetters of love and hate. Often it seems to his contemporaries that he is a revolutionary, a subverter of the existing order of things. As Christ, he seems to set the Mosaic Law utterly at naught. As Buddha, he seems to throw overboard all the rites and time-honoured religious practices of an entire nation. As Sri Ramakrishna, he flouts convention and worships at the feet of a prostitute. Brother Lawrence says 'it is, however, necessary to put our whole trust in God, laying aside all other cares, and even some particular forms of devotion; though very good in themselves, yet such as one engages in unreasonably; because those devotions are only means to attain to the end; so when by this exercise of the presence of God we are with Him who is our end, it is then useless to return to the means.....' (*Letter VI*).

The distinction between sacred and profane, work and meditation, at this stage disappears. All work is worship. We can pray as well, with our hands as with our hearts. The great St. Teresa, when asked why she continued to work in the kitchen, replied 'Pots and pans are my instruments of prayer'. Why should we seek to confine God inside the oratory, the temple, or the church? The whole world is His tabernacle. He exists pervading it all with only a quarter of Himself.

A great anonymous Christian mystic has said 'He who sees the inward in the outward

is more inward than he who sees the inward only in the inward.' This is the whole secret of performing work. Brother Lawrence makes reference to it in several places. He tells us that, 'He was more united to God in his outward employments, than when he left them for devotion in retirement'. (*Conversation III*). And 'that with him the set times of prayer were not different from other times; that he retired to pray, according to the directions of his Superior, but that he did not want such retirement, nor ask for it, because his greatest business did not divert him from God'. (*Conversation II*). He says in his *Second Letter* 'As for what passes in me at present, I cannot express it. I have no pain or difficulty about my state, because I have no will but that of God, which I endeavour to accomplish in all things, and to which I am so resigned, that I would not take up a straw from the ground against His order, or from any other motive but purely that of love to Him.' Only in such a spirit can work be perfectly accomplished. It is perhaps not necessary to point out the similarity between this doctrine of Brother Lawrence and those inculcated by Sri Krishna in the *Gita*.

In the realization of the highest spiritual truth all sense of difference is obliterated. Difference of race and caste is obliterated, and we have the brotherhood of all mankind. Differences of belief and practice are wiped out, and we have sympathy, understanding and tolerance. All differences of time and place and person are utterly abolished, and we have the un-interrupted realization of that God whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. We find that true religion invariably makes for unity, never for diversity. We have just seen how the difference between internal prayer and external work disappeared for Brother

Lawrence. Another difference which disappears at this stage is that between the intellectual and emotional approaches to Reality, the approaches through the head and the heart respectively. We are accustomed to think of the philosopher and the devotee as two very distinct types of men. We forget that they are like the two Indian travellers who went to England one of them *via* the East and the other *via* the West. They will surely meet in the end and shake hands in the same country. Similarly with *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. The height of one and the depth of the other make an immense sweep round and ultimately meet, coalescing in the full circle of perfect spirituality. Brother Lawrence brings them together in his own way when he says 'Let all our employment be to know God; the more one knows Him, the more one desires to know Him. And as knowledge is commonly the measure of love, the deeper and more extensive our knowledge shall be, the greater will be our love; and if our love of God were great we should love Him equally in pains and pleasures'. (*Letters XV*). These solemn words were among the last he wrote.

It is perhaps to be expected that a man who had gone almost to the limit (if limit there is) of religious experience, like Brother Lawrence, should be a riddle and a mystery to his contemporaries, perhaps even to himself. There are a few indications in extant records that the noetic ineffability of his experience baffled the understanding of his correspondents. But he himself could entertain no doubt whatever about it. In the language of the Hindu Scriptures his realization was firm and unshakeable like Mount Meru. He says '.....I am assured beyond all doubt, that my soul has been with God above these thirty years'. (*Letter II*). Further on in the same epistle he says, 'I

know that some charge this state with inactivity, delusion, and self-love. I confess that it is a holy inactivity, and would be a happy self-love, if the soul in that state were capable of it; because in effect, while she is in this repose, she cannot be disturbed by such acts as she was formerly accustomed to, and which were then her support, but would now rather hinder than assist her'. He continues in the succeeding paragraph, 'Yet I cannot bear that this should be called delusion: because the soul which thus enjoys God desires herein nothing but Him. If this be delusion in me, it belongs to god to remedy it. Let Him do what He pleases

with me: I desire only Him, and to be wholly devoted to Him'. (*Letter II*).

In these few notes on the divine life and inspired teachings of a Carmelite lay-brother of France I have made but scanty and insufficient reference to Hindu approximations and parallels. But the few I have given will doubtless enable the interested reader to pursue the matter further. It affords me great satisfaction to think that there is such unanimity of religious ideals in East and West. It is the sincerest wish of my heart that such sympathy may be extended and enlarged until it embraces all interests and every sphere of life. (*Concluded*)

ARJUNA'S FIRST LESSONS IN DISCIPLESHIP

By SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

[*This is the second in the series of the Gita discourses. The trends of the second chapter are featured here.—EDS.*]

Last time we discussed some of the aspects of the Gita in relation to the context in which it was delivered, as also its place among the scriptures of the Hindus. In that connection I referred to the special quality of the Gita teaching and the personality of its teacher, Sri Krishna. That was by way of introduction to the study of the Gita. Today we shall enter into the subject itself, but, we tarry for some time in the first chapter.

In the first chapter we get the environment in which the Gita was taught. It is a dramatic setting that we get there. In that great battle of Kurukshetra, famous in ancient Indian history, between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, the greatest hero Arjuna, with Sri Krishna as his charioteer, stands between the two arrayed armies and views the warriors both sides. Suddenly a piquant situation develops: seeing his own kith and

kin facing him Arjuna is overcome with grief. His nerves fail him. He lays down his mighty bow, Gandiva, with the resolve not to fight against his own people. A sort of revulsion comes to him and he determines that he will not fight; he thinks that it is better and more ethical to give up the attempt to fight and conquer his enemies: better it is to be defeated and slain by the enemy than to go forward in this line of resistance and war. It is a moving scene that is thus depicted in a telling manner in the first chapter of the Gita. It is a conflict of emotions and ideals, love and duty, all in an environment of conflict and war: war within and war all round.

Whenever such a situation obtains, it becomes fraught with momentous possibilities. A crisis is the precursor of a creation: greater the crisis, better the creation if the persons involved are of stern stuff. It sees

ARJUNA'S FIRST LESSONS IN DISCIPLESHIP

the birth of a creative affirmation or a dynamic idea. This explains the perennial dynamism of the Gita thought.

It is very rare that common people get occasions to experience such intense conflict of emotions. We hardly get an occasion to be violently pulled in opposite directions—'to do or not to do'. But in the case of those who are born to achieve true greatness, there are several occasions when they are placed in such circumstances, when there arises a conflict of loyalties: and it is a hard thing for them to decide as to what is to be accepted and what rejected. This kind of conflict of duty comes with varying intensity to every sincere aspirant of the ethical life. On such occasions the human mind needs and demands some sort of effective guidance; it is such guidance that Sri Krishna offers us, from the 2nd chapter onwards in the Gita.

When we take the first chapter, it is such a historic presentation of the ethical problem—the question of the nature of duty and the problem of the conflict of duties. This problem and its discussion is there in our ancient thought and it is there in every type of ethical thought in the world. The Gita discusses this subject in the second chapter in the light of a lofty metaphysics; and it comes in for a more varied treatment in subsequent chapters when it deals with such topics as action and inaction, renunciation and action, Sanyasa and Karma Yoga. The presentation of the subject of duty in the very first chapter of the Gita provides a basis for the building up of a mighty edifice of metaphysics and ethics in the subsequent chapters. We have in the first chapter a dramatic element that furnishes so much of beauty and sublimity to the Gita teaching. It adds an air of reality to the message of the Gita; it imparts a touch of earnestness to the discussion. The discussion is not simply academic, in which case it would have become ineffectual and unrelated to practice. But, being born out of the fire of conflict and struggle, it issued forth in a message of

permanent value to man. Here is a sincere seeker in a crisis, face to face with a great teacher. The seeker asks for practical guidance. Naturally, such a situation does not warrant a merely academic solution of the problem. It must take all the facts into consideration and give guidance there and then. It is this that the Gita proceeds to do through the great teacher Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna is in a sense a party and not a mere spectator who has nothing to do with the battle. This realism imparts to the Gita a greater philosophic depth and moral sweep than what partakes of a mere academic discussion of ethical problems. This is its special appeal.

So in the first chapter we have this picture of Arjuna facing an army of relations and friends and teachers. He is moved to pity and grief and says, 'What is the use of fighting such a battle? I would rather be a mendicant than engage in this fight.' In moving words Arjuna presents his case and even takes Sri Krishna to task for inducing him to fight: 'Do we not know the misery that is going to be caused? Since we know it, it is better that we desist from such a battle.' Arjuna then declares that he would not fight. There is so much conflict of feeling in Arjuna that he breaks down; his bow and arrow fall from his hands; his voice gets choked and he sinks.

This kind of situation comes to us whenever we are faced with conflicting things. In all such situations, when we are unable to decide our duty, and the circumstances become puzzling, we exhibit a type of behaviour similar to that of Arjuna. Our nerves fail us; but we do not detect it. We bring in arguments to support our behaviour: but they are false arguments which cannot stand the scrutiny of reason and philosophy. Philosophy with most people is, according to Bradley, the finding of bad reasons for opinions which they hold by instinct to be true. This is bad philosophy, the product of rationalisation but not of reason. This is the

case with Arjuna; his nerves and judgment fail him at a critical time owing to an excess of attachment, delusion and grief; it is rationalisation that is seen at work when he invokes the aid of 'non-violence', 'non-resistance', and 'humanity' for withdrawing from the battle. The great virtues of non-violence and non-resistance are brought in to help the tired nerves of Arjuna when he says that it is better to withdraw or die than to fight and kill. He appeals to Krishna for support in his arguments. But, strangely enough, he does not get that support. Philosophy cannot support rationalisation for it is based on reason which takes all the circumstances and conditions of a problem into account before offering a solution. So when Arjuna says 'I don't want to fight' and seeks the support of Sri Krishna for his act he is startled to find that he does not get it. Here philosophy is typified by Sri Krishna and the moral conflicts and the confusion resulting therefrom are typified by Arjuna. The one is calm and collected whereas the other is all confusion, shaken in his resolve to fight and nerve-broken. Thus ends the first chapter entitled, in the very telling words of Vyasa, "Arjuna Vishada Yoga"—"The Grief of Arjuna". The calm Reason of Philosophy is face to face with the confused unreason of dynamic life. The product of this encounter is the philosophy of life contained in the seventeen subsequent chapters of the Gita.

When we come to the second chapter, we are at the very dawn of true philosophy. The very first task for philosophy is to bring steadiness and confidence into the mind of the student. That is what Sri Krishna does to Arjuna. This is the significance of the verses 2 and 3 of the second chapter.

'Kutastva kasmalamidam vishame samupasthitam,

Anaryajushtam, asvargyam, akirtikaram Arjuna' Ch. II. v. 2.

In such a crisis, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Arya-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of heaven?

'Klaibyam masma gamah Partha naitatvayyupapadyate'

Kshudram hridaya-durbalyam tyaktostishta parantapa' Ch. II. v. 2.

Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies!

In these two verses we have the application of a mental tonic by Sri Krishna to Arjuna; and that tonic is necessary before any teaching could be fruitful. When a person is grief-stricken and his nerves are shattered no amount of teaching or advice whatever can bear fruit; and much less philosophy. Intense calmness is necessary, a calmness that is dynamic and not merely passive. The spirit of the whole teaching of the Gita we can derive from the latter of these two verses. Says Swami Vivekananda, in his thoughts on the Gita, 'If one reads this one sloka,—"*Klaibyam..... Parantapa*"—he gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one sloka lies imbedded the whole message of the Gita.' It is not merely for Arjuna, but for every person who is at his wit's end, that this teaching comes to rouse him up. We require to be roused up again and again, for the mind has always a tendency to sink and slumber but there is also the other capacity to rouse up the mind and apply it to the battle of life, which capacity is practically dormant in the majority of people. But this capacity is to be developed. If we cannot do it ourselves, we shall require somebody else to do it for us; that is what a great teacher, a scripture or an ideal does for us. Sri Krishna played this part in the case of Arjuna. We require some great man to do it for us. The Vedanta says that infinite resources are there in every individual: man

is divine; but he has to tap the resources: and a great teacher has the power to bring out this potential capacity from out of himself as well as from others. By the mere touch of a great teacher we begin to manifest great energy and power of which we were not even conscious before. Sri Krishna gave that magic touch to Arjuna by the words '*Naitatvayyupapadyate*'—'Ill doth it become thee.'

In the sentiment contained in that famous short sentence we have the appeal through psychology to every individual to rise higher and higher, and to find new sources of strength within himself. The educational value of this appeal is supreme. How to help another person, how to make him stand on his own feet, is a great educational problem. How to undertake the task of making that person rise higher and find ways and means to develop his own life and power? In this larger context this consideration becomes relevant, because Sri Krishna's appeal is a general appeal. It has a positive content. The earliest method of inducing behaviour in another was through fear. This appeal to fear was to one's social and religious emotion. But the appeal to fear is fraught with danger, it entails much that is bad along with a bit that is good. In all religions you find this appeal to fear in the theories of hell and judgment, etc. designed to induce good behaviour in the individual. This is a primitive conception in religion: that through the hope of heaven or the fear of hell men do good or abstain from evil. Coming to the social sphere, we find people desisting from evil for fear of the police and social boycott. This is what obtains either in primitive society or religion or even in civilised society. But these appeals do not serve to bring out the best in the individual for it is only a negative way. Corresponding to the appeal to hope and fear is the appeal to vanity. These have played their part in the evolution of humanity. Probably at some stage humanity has need of their services. This is

the utmost that we can say of them. But the least that we can say of them is that they are not the best means available for inducing correct behaviour. We may not be able to give them up for the reason that humanity is at varying stages of evolution. Behaviour based on fear is all that most people are capable of understanding as also behaviour based on the prospect of enjoyment. But when you come to educational psychology, when you come to the question as to what is really beneficial to the individual, the best is what Sri Krishna does when he appeals to the sense of self-respect of the individual. In all cultured families influencing the behaviour of children is done through this appeal to their self-respect and not to their sense of fear. In uncultured societies, parents resort to the fear appeal either through ghosts or through darkness which are sources of fear. But in all such cases what we seek is not the education or development of the individual but merely the temporary influencing of his outward behaviour through methods that tend to leave permanent scars on the inner man. That proves their worthlessness as an educational appeal.

If we want to institute an appeal which is constructive and positive, which will help one to develop his or her capacities more and more, that must be based upon the notion of the self-respect of the individual. When we tell a child 'this conduct of yours is not fit for you; I expect you to be better; this is not up to the mark', we are appealing to a positive element in the child. It is positive and constructive and not negative and destructive. Modern psychology throws much light on this problem.

Modern psychology recognises self-regard or self-respect as the foundation of character-building. According to McDougall, it is the master-sentiment and character is the product of the organization of sentiments and emotions round this master-sentiment

of self-regard. No character can be built without self-regard as the basis. Take away whatever self-regard a man has and you can never make him a man or help him to develop his character. The difference between a man and a brute is this self-regard or self-respect. Men have been reduced to the level of brutes as a result of the taking away from them this precious quality of self-regard by social tyranny and social neglect. Take a slave: there is little of self-regard left in him: for, society by continued oppression has all but destroyed this quality in him. The instilling of this fundamental virtue in such a person is a difficult process. It will have to be done by those who are themselves free. That we can rekindle in him this virtue is because in becoming a slave he has only forgotten but not forfeited his real nature. A slave must, therefore, first develop self-regard as the very first-step in self-development. The greatest harm that one can do to another is to touch his self-respect. Whatever you do, do not destroy another's self-regard, for, by that we pave the way for his ruin. This maxim is a sure and wise guide in all social relationships. Unfortunately, this is observed more in its breach, than in its observance, for, we are not capable of informing action with thought. We see the masters treating their servants as if they are lifeless property. The servant works for the master but he has not sold his soul to him. The master, through his thoughtlessness, injures the servant's self-regard. That is why sensitive servants complain to the master 'you may beat me, but please don't abuse me', for abuse touches the very sensitive part of an individual—his self-respect. If we want to educate a man and do real good to him we must preserve and develop this priceless quality in him. Modern theories of education are based upon this supreme psychological fact.

Psychology teaches the great value of this master-sentiment in the formation of character. Teachers and parents who destroy

the self-respect of their wards through their thoughtless dealings are enemies of society. The modern theory says that we are not dealing with pots and pans when we are dealing with children. We are dealing with delicate, vibrant, living personalities. We are dealing with unformed minds and whatever we do sticks on and hence the need for expert care.

In this lies all the essence of the Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda put it in his own memorable words: 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.' In our dealings with an individual, we are dealing with a vast reservoir of power which at present is lying dormant. But given a proper training, it can develop into an immense flood. One who is rightly trained is a powerful personality and one who is badly trained is a truncated personality.

This great psychological truth is embodied in the appeal contained in Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna: *Naitat trayyupapadyate* 'This does not befit you'. The world knew who Arjuna was—one who had fought many a battle victoriously. Should he now be subject to fear and despair? Should he not rather try to pit his inborn heroism against the challenge of a trying environment, bringing out more and more of his inborn power and perfection in the process? This is true education in the hard school of life. And Sri Krishna is the guide of Arjuna in that profound educational process. It is education based on a profound philosophy. Vedanta and modern educational theory are in full accord here.

We shall come to the ethical implications of this Vedantic teaching in the course of our

discussion of the verses of the 2nd chapter. Vedanta holds that if we express our real nature we can never be criminal or wicked men. In committing sin or wicked acts we are not expressing our real nature, which is pure and perfect, but only our apparent nature which is centred round the ego. Ethical conduct, according to the Vedanta, is the expression of one's own real nature. Man lives the true life when he expresses the divinity within him. Selfishness is not our real nature; it is only on the surface. When you express the surface nature you are not expressing your real nature. When I am all perfect, I am living the true life, that is, I am expressing my true self. That is highest ethics according to Vedanta.

Arjuna's action has to be viewed from the context of the ethics of duty, the ethics of duty from the context of the metaphysics of the Real. Ethics leads us to the problem of Reality; that is metaphysics. The Gita has tried to place ethics under the guidance of metaphysics. In modern times many thinkers ask us not to bring into ethics the question of Reality. That is what certain sections of positivists tell us. But in this country we discussed it long back and found that no problem could be discussed in thoroughness without bringing ultimate questions. About any action, if you ask, 'Why should I do it?' you enter into wider spheres of thought and discussion. The Gita places ethics under the guidance of a metaphysics which deals with life in its totality. The second chapter of the Gita deals with the subject of the true nature of the individual and of the Supreme Reality and studies the nature of conduct and action in the light of this knowledge and wisdom. It weaves round the immediate problem of Arjuna a philosophy and ethics of action which in turn becomes a guide to other men in all situations of life. This applicability to one and all is the fruit of philosophy. If philosophy was not at the back of the advice to Arjuna, that advice could

not have become applicable to others. The Gita's advice, therefore, was not meant for Arjuna only. Its scope is universal; that is why, even after four thousand years, it appeals to us. If it was a mere matter-of-fact advice and guidance, it would not have appealed to one and all. It might at best retain a literary appeal but not a philosophical appeal. But when you put the literary in the context of the philosophical it becomes universal. That is what Sri Krishna has done in the case of the Gita.

The Gita lights the lamp of wisdom in the hearts of men and leaves them to solve their own problems. In a later chapter, Sri Krishna would say that what he does to every individual is to light a little lamp of wisdom in his heart by which he would see truth and avoid error. He does not give the final decision for us. Philosophy does not decide things for us; it only offers to guide us. The Smritis do prescribe what we should do every minute of the twenty-four hours. It becomes soul-killing. It makes us serfs and slaves. Philosophy releases mankind from these bondages. It gives only stimulation; it places a light in our hands by which to find our way. Anything more would take away from our initiative. But man is weak; he says 'I want all help; I want some one to come and take me by the hand'. Then come the Smritis. Here is no true ethics but only routine ethics. It is a kind of complacency of mind which requires something to hang on. True philosophy does not burden us with a huge lumber of books or a rigorous set of rules. It is like the light of a lamp. It just imparts wisdom. Philosophical guidance is the simplest guidance. Philosophy does not require us to elbow out other contents from life. We can understand philosophy without the aid of many books. Some people say 'Action and thought cannot be done at the same time. If I have to think of philosophy, I have to stop work. But you ask me to combine philosophy and action. This is impossible.' Sri Krishna wants us

VEDANTA KESARI

to combine both philosophy and life, for it is life that needs the guidance of philosophy. When there is no life there is no guidance required. How shall we solve the problem? Some say, 'Cease from acting; congeal life to a point; that is the best solution of the problem. Take away the world, for it is the cause of all problem.' But if there is no problem, what is the use of the solution. A solution is no solution in the absence of the problem itself. Another comes and says, 'There is no solution; so don't worry about the problem at all, but just go on acting and living with whatever faith you can muster.' It is here that Vedanta comes to our help. In all boldness it dares to face the problem and give us a solution. Unfortunately, even our people have not understood this aspect of Vedanta. What we understand is the Vedanta of books, the Vedanta of leisure. But this is only academic Vedanta. Sri Krishna did not teach this Vedanta. He taught the Vedanta of and for a battle-field. It is not a pursuit of leisure hours. It is a pursuit of excellence in the midst of difficult situations and struggles of daily life. This aspect of Vedanta has been mostly neglected, in the later developments of religious ideas in our country. We have now to bring out this aspect of the Gita in all its practical bearing.

The Gita has a simplicity which we very often miss. We are accustomed to complicate things. We cannot appreciate simple things. The human mind wants, in the name of philosophy and religion, something striking in the form of books, dress, rituals, etc. Simple character or simple ethical beauty is not much appreciated. Simple beauty is not understood by ordinary men. Truth which is simple is clothed in a variety of ways and we get not the naked truth but a clothed truth. When you come to the Gita, we have the presentation of this simple truth which helps to take us across life's problems. It frees us from all attachments to joys and sorrows, and good and bad. It

gives us absolute calm, and a freedom from all conditions—external and internal. We want this independence and freedom of the individual to be maintained at all costs. This is what philosophy seeks to confer on life. If we have this, what else do we require? One who attains this remains fresh in spite of life's ageing and retains the freshness of a new-born babe even unto death. He has philosophy to guide him. This is the true test of philosophy—a philosophy which helps us to pass through life's struggles without getting scorched, which helps us to remain as fresh at the end of the journey as at the beginning.

At the very beginning of the second chapter, Sri Krishna has given out these life-giving ideas. Those who have the requisite courage and strength of mind can understand the true teaching of the Gita. A mind which is grief-stricken and attached cannot understand these mighty ideas. A tired mind cannot understand truth; it has to be made calm and strong before the advice can take root. Grief-stricken Arjuna is first calmed and steadied and then is taught the wisdom of Truth. In a grief-stricken state we see things in a narrow perspective; when we are calm we see things in their true perspective. That is why Arjuna says, 'My mind is confused as to what is really to my welfare; therefore, tell me clearly what is to my welfare, teach me now that I have taken refuge at your feet.'

In the eighteenth chapter, after all the teaching was over, Krishna asks Arjuna, 'Are you satisfied; is your mind calm and doubt cleared?'

Katchidetat srutam Partha tvayaikagrena chetasa

Katchidajnanasammohah pranashtaste Dhananjaya? (Ch. XVIII. v. 72)

Has this been heard by thee, O Partha, with an attentive mind? Has the delusion of thy ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?

MEN OR MACHINES?

Arjuna replies:

Nasto mohah smrtirlabdha tvatprasadanmay-achyuta

Sthitosmi gatasehah Karishye vachanam tara. (Ch. XVIII. v. 73)

"Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through Thy grace,

O Achyuta. I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will do Thy Word."

The Gita brings light and removes the umbra of confusion. The Gita removed Arjuna's confusion; that is its originality and power. In the case of all of us also, it will have fulfilled its purpose only when it will have removed our confusions and doubts and enabled us to see life steadily and see it whole.

MEN OR MACHINES?

By NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

The widespread discussion of the educational process which is now going on throughout the nation gives evidence of much misunderstanding and confused thinking. The truly educational process in any form is and must be one and the same in respect to its ideals and the guidance which it offers toward achieving them. It may, of course, be multiform in respect to its methods and its content.

Liberal education takes precedence over every other form of instruction. It must always be dominant. Vocational training or instruction, which is something quite distinct from education, should always follow the ideals and methods of liberal education and be subordinate to them. If, on the other hand, liberal education be even crippled, much less abandoned, then no matter how successful vocational training may be, its products will not be men but machines.

The factors in carrying on a liberal education are the home, the school and the church. It is because the home is so often overlooked and neglected as a fundamental educational influence and because excessive responsibility is put upon the school without

the aid and co-operation of the family that there are so great and so many shortcomings in the education of to-day. What is now popularly described and discussed by the grandiloquent term juvenile delinquency is, in fact, chiefly the result of the lack of home training. Good manners and sound morals on the part of the young must have their foundation and their beginnings in the discipline offered by the home. It is only under such conditions that the school may, when the time comes, take on and successfully establish its share of responsibility for the strengthening and continuance of this necessary discipline and training.

No more reactionary influence has come into education than that which is oddly described as progressive education. This plan of action or rather non-action would, in its extreme form, first of all deprive the child of his intellectual, social and spiritual inheritance and put him back in the Garden of Eden to begin all over again the life of civilized man. He must be asked to do nothing which he does not like to do. He must be taught nothing which he does not choose to learn. He must not be subject to discipline

in good manners and sound morals. In other words, he must be let alone to do what he likes in this amazing twentieth century world in order that what has been called his individuality may grow naturally and without guidance or discipline. It is just such fantastic doctrines as these which explain so much of that which goes on day by day and which both shocks and alarms truly civilized human beings.

We are unfortunately brought face to face almost daily with convincing evidence that skillful training in some specific vocation is often assumed to be an acceptable substitute for liberal education. Nothing could be farther from the fact. In the Middle Ages the constructive thought of Europe chose the Trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—and the Quadrivium—arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy—to be the instruments with which to lay the foundations of liberal education as it was then understood. Centuries later these subjects were superseded by the study of languages and literatures, of history and of philosophy. Afterwards the fundamental principles of natural science were added as well as the history and basic thought of the world's economic organization and life. It is not only, however, the subject matter of instruction which constitutes liberal education, it is still more the spirit in which this subject matter is presented and the lessons which are drawn from that interpretation. Of outstanding excellence in presenting the foundation of a liberal education are the three courses offered for years past by the Faculty of Columbia College—Contemporary Civilization, Humanities, and Science, the like of which should be offered in substance, at least, to every college student in the land.

The rise of democracy has greatly increased the problems of liberal education as well as

the difficulty of making sure that its point of view and underlying principles are at least the basis and guidance of vocational training. No matter how skillful in his calling a vocationally trained human being may be, he will remain merely a machine unless there is added to his skill some conception of what civilization means, and of the part played in the world's intellectual life by the liberal arts and sciences as well as by the subject matter of his own occupation.

It is customary to focus all educational discussion upon the problems presented by the school, the college and the university, but this is not enough. Full account must also be taken of the influence of the circumstances under which life is carried on, of the conditions of gaining a livelihood and of the opportunities which are offered by personal growth and development in the social and economic order of our time. It remains perfectly true, as has often been said, that the liberally educated human being will look backward for understanding and guidance and not merely for purposes of imitation. The power of science is producing day by day amazingly perfect machines which appear almost able to take the place of human intelligence. Of this the recently completed "automatic sequence-controlled calculator" is an outstanding example. It is of vital importance to remember that machines however excellent are only machines, and that the human being who copies them or endeavours to imitate them in any guise is preparing for a machine-made life. The man who is not a machine will read and reflect. He will reason and ask questions. He will turn to the world's wisdom in order to get help for the elevation of the plane on which his own life is to be passed. If a practical plan can be worked out by which all training shall rest on liberal education even though limited, as

a foundation, then we shall be opening the door toward progress in the world such as we have never yet been able to achieve. We must not turn from the education of men to the making of machines. Assurance must be given that our educational system will do all that is possible to make liberal education in

some form, however limited in time, the foundation as well as the ideal of all training of any kind. This will reduce to a minimum the number of skilled human machines who have never risen to be really men. Our constant aim must be men and not machines.

ASPECTS OF ADVAITA

In the Light of the Realisations of Sri Ramakrishna

By PROF. P. N. SRINIVASACHARIAR

One aspect of Advaita that is of inestimable value to the student and follower of Vedanta is the direct spiritual realisation by Sri Ramakrishna of Brahman as *saguna* and *nirguna* and the practical unity of the *sadhanas* and *siddhi*. It was his unique mission to demonstrate to the present age by practice and precept the truth that behind the varieties of religious experience there is an underlying unity and that Vedantic *darsanas* are not contradictory but complimentary. Traditional philosophy, eastern and western, favours the method of constructing a new system by the destruction of the old or establishing a *siddhanta* by the refutation of other theories which are called *purvapaksha*. It applies the law of excluded middle to rival or opposing systems and arrives at a conclusion by eliminating other alternatives. But Sri Ramakrishna had a genius for intuiting truth directly and not inferring it by laborious logical thinking. It was an epoch-making period in the history of comparative Vedanta when he showed a middle path by avoiding the ambiguous middle between the extremes of theistic fanaticism displayed by his guru, Bhairavi Brahmani and the monistic rationalism insisted on by Totapuri, his Advaitic guru. He lived on the borderland between

the two States and discovered the value of non-dualism as the meeting ground between dualism and monism. It is the aim of this article to bring out the affinities between *Tantricism* or *Shaktism*, Bengal Vaishnavism and monism as expounded by Sri Ramakrishna and the philosophic implications of this triadic movement, namely, *Bhedabheda*, *Achintya bhedabheda* and *Advaita*.

Initiated into the inner meaning of *Tantric sadhana* by his guru, Bairavi Brahmani, Sri Ramakrishna who was the very pattern of purity began to practise the *satvic* state of *divyabhava* without any taint of sensuality or tinge of selfishness. The underlying principle of this *sadhana* lies in the yogi transcending sensibility by satisfying its demands and not by renouncing them as in *jnana yoga*. Sublimation and not sublation is its main aim and it is transmuting the animal instinct into instinct for the infinite. Every woman including his own wife was worshipped by Sri Ramakrishna as an emblem or embodiment of the Divine Mother. Kundalini Sakti is coiled up in the lower extremity of the spinal cord and as the result of a consciousness ascends from the animal planes to the human and the spiritual and finally to the seventh

plane of *sahasrara* or Divine state of super consciousness. It is a progression from consciousness to the more of itself till it expands into infinity.

Shaktism is the philosophic form of Tantric worship and it is a variety of *bheda-bheda* between theism and absolutism. Its method is realistic as well as idealistic and it accepts identity as well as difference as the two moments of Reality. Reality is the one in the many as Sivasakti which can be distinguished but not divided. The former is the static absolute and is impersonal and the latter is dynamic and concrete. *Maya* is not an illusion that infects Brahman somehow, but is the energising *sakti* that is immanent in it and becomes the cosmic source. It is the finitising principle of the infinite like the icebergs in the ocean and like sparks from the blazing fire. By adoring *sakti* as the Divine Mother, the *sadhaka* rises by her grace from the sundered state of consciousness in *samsara* to the seamless state of Siva. Sri Ramakrishna relying on the experience of Sivasakti insists on the truth of the *bhedabheda*, teaching that Kali the Mother is the same as impersonal Brahman.

Sri Ramakrishna's devotional ardour was manifest even in his childhood, and under the guidance of his teacher, Bhairavi Brahmani he dived into divinity and was immersed in the immortal bliss of *bhakti*. The *bhakta* seeks no boons from God and he loves God for the sake of love and even *mukti* without *bhakti* has no charms for him. *Bhakti* grows from more to more and it is a ladder of love in the increasing order of intimacy ranging from *santa*, *dasya*, *sakhya* and *vatsalya* culminating in *madhura bhava* or *maha bhava*. Love of God develops into a longing for Him or *rahi* and deepens into *prema* or mad frenzy like the *mahabhava* which Radha and Chaitanya had for Sri Krishna. Love of God

is at first *vaidhi bhakti* which insists on conformity to rigid disciplines; but as it gathers momentum, it bursts all bounds and the soul is caught up in the furnace of love. Krishna *prema* burnt itself into the heart of Sri Ramakrishna and consumed his very being. The Brahmani discerned in him all the nineteen symptoms of *mahabhava* like the flow of tears, bodily tremour, trance and the superconscious rhapsodies of God-intoxication. For six months he was lost in frenzy and spiritual agony. He felt a strange burning sensation all over the body and minute drops of blood began to ooze out from the pores of his skin. The joints of the body seemed at times to be loosened. The senses stopped functioning and he looked like a corpse. At long last he had a vision of Sri Krishna who merged himself in his inner nature and he was lost in the bliss of Divine communion.

Owing to this experience of transcendental love of *mahabhava*, Sri Ramakrishna is regarded as a supermystic. The philosophy of mysticism is a coherent exposition of the intuition of the *bhaktas* who claim to contact God, commune with Him and enjoy the eternal bliss of such union. It is, however, rejected by the metaphysician as a feminine philosophy that favours emotionalism with its elations and depressions and by the medical materialist as a mental aberration arising from psychophysical disorders and self-hypnotisation. Philosophy as a rational enquiry into experience as a whole is not determined by the psychology of sex or by genetic accounts and just as in metaphysics reality is different from appearances, in mysticism spirituality is distinguished from its semblances. The heart has its logic which constrains us to think in a coherent way. Mysticism dealing with transcendental love in terms of *achintya bhedabheda* is as philosophic and theistic as an identity philosophy. Every variety of Brahmanu-

bhava is supra-rational but not irrational. In the highest state of *prema* or *parabhakti* dualistic thought expires in the bliss of union, and though the lover and the beloved are different existentially they become one essentially in the unitive experience. As the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* puts it, just as in conjugal felicity the idea of inside and outside is swallowed up, the sense of the finite infinite is lost in the bliss of Brahman and Sri Ramakrishna's experience of *mahabhava* is true to the type.

Sri Ramakrishna's entry into *nirvikalpa samadhi* was the consummation of his spiritual experiments and divine experiences. Initiated into the meaning of the *mahavakya* of Advaita by his guru, Totapuri and equipped with four *sadhanas*, the Paramahansa had no need for laborious thinking and theorising and he attained *nirvikalpa samadhi* beyond the plane of duality. The following are his immortal words describing the indescribable state. 'For six months at a stretch I remained in *samadhi*. I was not conscious of day and night. Flies would enter my mouth and nostrils just as they do in a dead body, but I did not feel them. The hair became matted with the accretions of dust and the body would have perished but for the kind ministrations of a monk.' Then he came down to body-consciousness at the command of the Mother that he should for the sake of humanity remain at the threshold of relative consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna attained Brahman which is not *jnana* of Brahman but *jnana* that is Brahman and became a *jivanmukta* who realised freedom in embodiment. He was divinely commissioned to be in the world and communicate his spirituality to others.

Though Advaita is experience of the identity of *jiva* and *Isvara* and therefore logically

indefinable in terms of genus and species and differentia, the philosophic intellect seeks to go beyond its own phenomenal realm and explain the noumenal state in a negative way. The terms *sat*, *cit* and *ananda* are employed by the Advaitin—philosopher as negative definitions of Brahman that is really *niravayava* (formless) and *nirguna* (indeterminate). The transcendental state is sought to be explained by the empirical categories of space, time, causality, quality, quantity and relation. Finite intellect transcends itself and commits suicide at the very entrance to the supra-intellectual state of *samadhi*. This process of explaining the inexplicable is described in a variety of ways though the final result is the same. The three terms, *sat*, *cit* and *ananda* serve as convenient intellectual devices and may be considered in some detail.

The term *sat* refers to the eternal beyond the temporal; the temporal series, past, present, and future is swallowed up in eternity (*Trikalabadhitam satyam*). *Sat* refers to the spaceless space of *cidakasa* and the causeless cause of bare being. The categories of space, time and causality have empirical views and are not applicable to the absolute which sublates them. *Sat* is the scendless one (*ekamevadvitiyam*) beyond the mathematical ideas of the one and the many and the metaphysical concepts of unity and diversity. *Sat* is being beyond becoming and the cosmic process of creation, preservation and destruction. It is the change which knows no change (*nirvikara*) and is therefore beyond the dual concepts of being and becoming. Reality is different from existence and *sat* is the real in itself and it transcends the world of *namarupa* consisting of an infinity of existences varying in structure and function. *Sat* is Reality beyond the appearances which exist but are not real. The three bodies, the three *gunas* and the

three states of consciousness are phenomenal and fictitious and are *asat*.

Sat alone is real and *asat* is unreal and non-existent. The term *cit* brings out another aspect of the nature of Reality or Brahman in terms of absolute idealism. Brahman is equated with *jñāna* or pure consciousness (*nirviśeṣa cinmatra*). *Sat* is *cit* as being and knowing are identical. In Advaita, the theory of knowing is the same as the theory of being. Brahman is beyond the logical way of thinking and the theorising activity itself.

Every process of thought in the different levels of sense perception, reasoning and scriptural knowledge is a subject-object relation. It involves the three factors of the knowing subject, the known object, and knowledge. Every such relation is self-contradictory and points beyond itself to the real in itself. A relation is a relation between two terms, external or internal and in either case it betrays self-discrepancy. It cannot be external as the terms are related; it cannot be internal as the relata are outside the relation. It cannot be both external and internal. This self-contradiction can be removed only by transcending relational knowledge. *Cit* is pure consciousness beyond this *triputī* or logical thinking and it is self-realised in *nirvikalpa samādhi* beyond all thought including the relation between the absolute and the relational. It is not even the 'I' in *Aham Brahmasmi*. I am Brahman as the moment the 'I' posits itself, it becomes the opposite of non-I and is caught up in self-contradiction. *Cit* is not a substance having the quality of Chaitanya as the relation between the two is a fissure between the 'that' and the 'what'. It is therefore *nirviśeṣa* or *nirguna*. *Cit* is not self-determined or determined by anything outside it and it is *akhandā cinmatra*. It shines

by itself as *svayam jyotiṣ* in *cidākāśa* in which there is neither the shining *cit* nor the illuminated object or a *cit*. Sri Ramakrishna's trance is thus beyond the thought plane.

Brahman is not merely *sat*, and *cit* but is also *ananda* or bliss absolute. *Brahmananda* is pure bliss beyond the duality and dualism of pleasure and pain. *Ananda* is not to be regarded as supreme happiness, rapture or ecstasy as it is different from sense enjoyment, mental happiness or contentment and does not admit of calculus or evaluation. It is not even the blissful quality resulting from divine communion as every quality implies a subject and involves a relation and a dualism between the enjoying subject and the object of enjoyment. *Brahmananda* is not the bliss of Brahman but the bliss that is Brahman and is thus ineffable and absolute. It is the *santi* or peace that passeth understanding in which all doubts are solved and all conflicts are dissolved. In *ananda*, thought is dissolved in enjoyment and like the salt doll immersed in the sea and the iceberg melting in the sunlit ocean the limitations of personality are lost in the infinite and eternal bliss.

The traditional schools of Vedānta like Dvaita, Viśiṣṭadvaita and Advaita differ in their exposition of the nature of Brahman and the means of realising it. The chief points of controversy are whether Brahman is *saguna* or *nirguna* and whether *bhakti* or *jñāna* is the means to *mukti*. The opposing attitudes of the two gurus of Sri Ramakrishna, namely Bhairavi Brahmani and Totapuri were clearly traceable to their extreme views on these two problems. As a staunch dualist and Vaishnavite, the former refuted and rejected Advaitic monism as dry-as-dust intellectualism dealing with arid abstractions without any emotional warmth. Totapuri was equally strong in his

condemnation of theism as anthropomorphism and in his rejection of *bhakti* as an emotional effusion. He scoffed at the devotion of Sri Ramakrishna when he clasped his hands in chanting the names of God, by the remark that he was flattening dough for making bread. It was the rare mission of Paramahansa to avoid the extremes and to show by his life and teachings that the absolute of Advaita is the God of religion and that *bhakti* and *jñāna* lead to the same goal. *Maya* is *vidyā-maya* and is real *śakti* and not *avidyā-maya* which is illusory and she is Kali the Divine Mother by whose grace duality can be self-transcended. He practised the *tantric sādhanā* and its philosophy of *bhedabheda* and insisted on the unity of Brahman as both personal and impersonal in the twin aspects of Siva Śakti like the *bhedabheda* relation between the snake and its coils and the ocean and its waves. *Saguna* Brahman is *sat-chit-ananda* concretised. Consciousness which is now sundered can become seamless

when it reaches *śaṣrara*. *Bhakti* of the dualistic type becomes a non-dualistic experience in the mysticism of *mahabhava* when the lover and the beloved become one and when thought expires in bliss. They may be two in philosophical thinking but they become one in mystic experience or *unio mystico*. In monistic experience *jīva* and *īśvara* are identical and *jñāna* is Brahman and not attaining Brahman. To Sri Ramakrishna, the only proof of the existence of Brahman is the direct experience of Brahman and whether *mukti* is union or identity there is no doubt that it is release from suffering. In the state of union the *ahankāra* of the self disappears and in identity *ahankāra* as the self passes away and the distinction between the two is without any practical difference.

Thus Sri Ramakrishna proved by the varieties of his Vedantic experience that there is unity in variety and that the *sat* is the same though it may be experienced in different ways.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

KATHA UPANISHAD AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ATMAN (Hindi): BY SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, ALMORA. PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY MADAN-MOHAN AGARWAL, INDRA PRINTING WORKS, ALMORA. PAGES 264. PRICE RS. 2.80.

This is a valuable addition to the existing Hindi literature on the Upanishads. The author has brought out a learned edition of the Kathopanishad, combining the orthodox way of writing commentaries with the modern way of critical analysis.

In a sense the Kathopanishad embodies the essence of all the Upanishads answering as it does, the 'ultimate doubts' of man regarding life after death. The Commentator has availed of this opportunity to stress the philosophy of the Atman. He has based himself mainly on Sankara's commen-

tary and discussed the problems in a way easy for the general reader. This, we are sure, will make the book popular among the Hindi knowing readers. The notes and the scholarly introduction add to the value of the book.

The book is printed on good paper and is moderately priced. The Publisher and the author deserve congratulations for this noble attempt of popularising the Upanishadic wisdom among the Hindi knowing population.

VASISHTA VAIBHAVAM: OR THE LIFE OF VASISHTA GANAPATI MUNI (Sanskrit): BY SRI KAPALI SASTRI. PUBLISHED BY S. P. PANDIT, ADVOCATE, SIRSI, N. CANARA, PAGES 156. PRICE RS 2.

Vasistha Ganapati Muni is one of the eminent sages of South India who combines rare originality of thought and expression with mystic experience.

VEDANTA KESARI

We had occasion to review in these columns the *Umasahasra*, a Sanskrit poem where he has given ample evidence of his poetic talents and spiritual insight. In the present book is told in simple, elegant sanskrit prose interspersed with poetry the life-story from birth to death of Sri Ganapati Muni by his disciple and great scholar, Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry.

Though Sri Ganapati Muni spent the major part of his life at the feet of Sri Ramana Maharshi, he

had occasion to come in contact with other sages like Sri Aurobindo. Sri Ganapati Muni had extensive travels throughout India and did hard *tapasya* for many years. He had rare mental powers and was an Avadhani, one who attended to many things simultaneously.

Sri Kapali Sastry has placed the readers under a debt of gratitude by chronicling together the great events of a great life lived for knowledge and realization.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION Report for the year 1945

The Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math on the 22nd April. The following is a brief report of the work done by the Mission during the year 1945.

Centres:—There were altogether 134 Centres, including 67 Math Centres. Besides, there were 11 Sub-Centres. These Centres served all sections of people and preached religious principles on non-sectarian lines.

Relief Work:—The Distress Relief work started in June, 1943 was closed in March, 1945. A report of this work will be published shortly. Out of its balance, over Rs. 25,000 was distributed as pecuniary help. Besides, a sum of Rs. 10,000 was donated to the Boys' Home at Rahara (24 Parganas) an orphanage which sprang out of the ravage caused by the distress of 1943. Surplus medicines, vitamins, some pieces, of cloths etc. were also distributed.

Famine Relief work was conducted in 73 villages of the Bankura District, and on a small scale around Kamarpukur, in the Hooghly District. In Bankura 913 mds. of rice, 923 blankets, 519 chaddars and 483 pieces of clothes and Rs. 1,730-15-0 in cash were distributed. In the Kamarpukur area, Rs. 2,500 was spent.

Medical Work:—The Mission conducted 6 general and 2 maternity hospitals with a total of 449 beds. The total number of indoor cases was 12,895, and that of surgical cases including those of the Eye Hospital at Brindavan was 5,030. The 50 outdoor dispensaries including the T. B. clinic at Delhi and the Eye Clinic at Karachi treated in all 13,70,410 cases during the year.

Educational Work:—Work under this head included one residential college, 4 residential high schools, 34 secondary schools and 7 M. E. schools with a total of 9,952 boys and 2,484 girls, 70 Primary Schools with 7,143 boys and 3,666 girls, 12 Night Schools with 366 students, 4 Industrial schools with 311 students, and 2 Centres for technicians training 461 mechanics and electricians. The Mission also ran 31 students' Homes with 1,007 students, and the orphanage at Rahara had 158 boys. The total number of students in all these institutions was 25,548.

Work for Women:—The Mission conducted the women's department of the Home of Service and the Women Invalids' Home at Benares, the Maternity Hospitals at Calcutta and Taki, the Widows' Home at Puri, the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras, the Sister Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta, the Sarada Mandira at Sarisha (24 Parganas) etc.

Foreign Work:—In U. S. A., Argentina, England, France, Mauritius, Singapore and Fiji the Swamis of the Mission carried on its cultural and philanthropic activities through 17 Centres.

Finance:—The total receipts of the Mission in 1945 were Rs. 33,94,694-10-5 and the total disbursements Rs. 30,14,417-14-8.

PREMIER OF ASSAM VISITS THE R.K. MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, CHIRRAPUNJI

Sri. Gopinath Bardoloi, Premier and Minister of Education, Assam, expressed great appreciation of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission all over India, while giving away prizes to the pupils of the Ramakrishna Mission High School at Cherrapunji on 2nd May last. "I have no love", he said "for the present education in our country which is merely a teaching system. Life would be meaningless if it were not utilised for the real good of man. The Ramakrishna Mission was cutting new lines in the system of education here by the introduction of vocational training which should find place in all schools in the rural areas in co-relation with academic studies".

Swami Sambuddhananda, President, Ramakrishna Ashram, Bombay, presided over the function.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE, MYLAPORE

The University of Madras has been pleased to accord recognition to the above institution. The college will begin functioning from the 21st of June. We need hardly state that the college could not have started under better auspices. We fervently pray that the elevating spirit of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda may ever permeate the institution, and an increasing number of generous benefactions to the college cause would be steadily to meet its needs present and future.



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