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CONTENTS

	PAGES
CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA	191
RELIGION AND SOCIAL SERVICE	193
NICOLAS BERDYAEV AND MEANING OF HISTORY	197
<i>By Dr. K. C. Vayadachari, M. A., Ph. D.</i>	
PROPOSED ACADEMY OF INDIAN ARTS AND LETTERS	200
<i>By Prof. B. S. Mathur, M. A.</i>	
FAITH AND FUNCTION OF A WRITER	203
<i>By G. M.</i>	
GITA AND PROGRESS (SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL)	205
<i>By K. Kallana Swami, B. A., B. L.</i>	
BIO-DYNAMICS	209
<i>By Villager</i>	
THE CONDUCT OF AN IDEAL WIFE	219
<i>From the Mahabharata</i>	
SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S SADHANAS	220
<i>By Swami Saradananda</i>	
RELIGION WITHOUT PRAYERS	
<i>By Christopher Isherwood</i>	
THE UNSEEN FLOWER	223
<i>By S. C. Sen Gupta M. A.</i>	
ARTISTIC INDUSTRY	224
REVIEWS AND NOTICES	226
NEWS AND REPORTS	228

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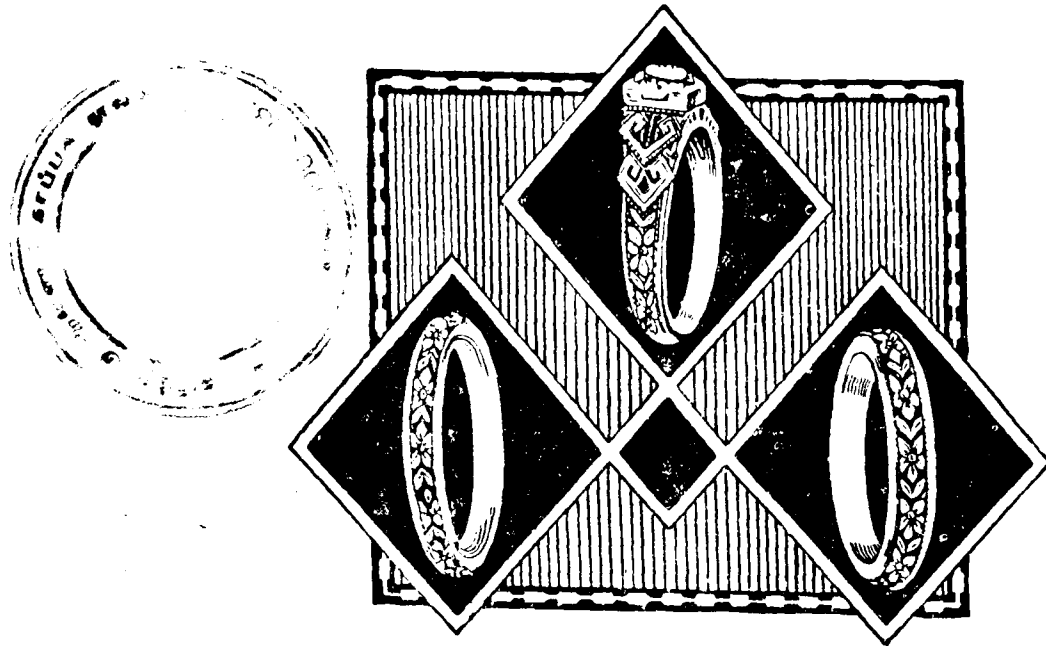
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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

Place : Balaram Mandir, Calcutta.

Swami Adbhutananda was seated in the company of devotees. One of them, Bihari Babu by name began the conversation.

Bihari Babu : Maharaj, we read in the scriptures that God directs the jiva. Even when the jiva is having Satchidananda as its director why does the jiva suffer? Why is the jiva enveloped in sin even when the eternal ever-pure God is at its back?

Latu Maharaj : You have answered your own 'question'. (He could not pronounce the word question properly) Evil and good (papa and punya) can never taint the essence of jiva which is pure and eternal.

Bihari Babu : Then, do you mean to say that jiva has two parts : one bound by papa-punya and the other free? Or do you say that there exists no such thing in the world as papapunya?

Latu Maharaj : Look here : He (Sri Rama-Krishna) used to say that papapunya do exist, and again they do not. So long as the Lord keeps the 'I' in the jiva, He keeps also the idea of difference (Bhedabuddhi) and also of papapunya in the jiva. Again, when the Lord effaces the 'I' of the jiva, he removes fully the consciousness of difference and of papa punya. As long as the jiva is bound by Karma there is papapunya. When by the Lord's grace karma is dissolved then all papa

punya cease. Indeed papa punya is the fruit of karma. The jiva reaps as it sows. This law of moral cause and effect has come into existence by the Lord's grace. By this law the good of the world and the jiva operate. It is by His law that the sense of individual will (Latu Maharaj used to refer to individual will as Purushakara) is born in the jiva ; and it is by His law that karma works. Both individual will and karma are there and the jiva can choose as it likes. If it chooses that in which there is less of real happiness and more of suffering, then the jiva alone is responsible for the result. How can the Lord be responsible for that?

Bihari Babu : But the scriptures declare that the Lord directs the jiva. Hence the responsibility is the Lord's. How can it be ours?

Latu Maharaj : Yes, what the scripture says is correct ; indeed it is the Lord's responsibility. But then, kindly tell me who directs the deluded jiva? It is Maya alone that directs. Maya likes to play and never wants to close the game. She derives pleasure in the rise and fall, in the creation and destruction, in the happiness and misery that is all the mode in the phenomenal world. She likes to create waves in the mind of the jiva and never calms them. God takes the full responsibility of leading the jiva to its goal in case the jiva accepts His leadership and

refuses to be bound by the meshes of Maya. Under His direction, happiness, peace and bliss overflow in the jiva. In such a jiva all vrittis cease. It is like a deep sea and the waters are perfectly calm.

Bihari Babu: Maharaj, I know that the scriptures compare the supreme Lord to the deep sea and the Maya to the waves in the sea. But I ask where is the difference between the sea and the waves? When both are only water, what wrong is there to say that Maya's works are the works of God?

Latu Maharaj: Yes, from one point of view both are one only; but all the same the difference exists. He (Sri Ramakrishna) used to say, 'Indeed, the waves do belong to the sea, but the sea does not belong to the waves.' Similarly Maya belongs to God but not God to Maya. That is why Maya's direction cannot be considered as God's direction. But at the same time bear this in mind: the ultimate

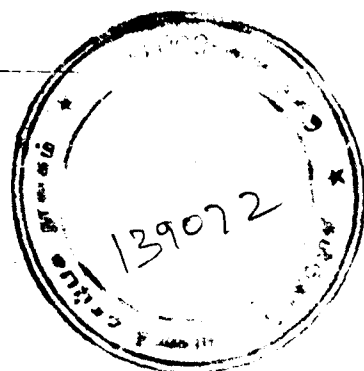
purpose of Maya's direction is to take the jiva to the Lord.

Bihari Babu: But everyone says that Maya envelops the jiva and leads one in the wrong direction.

Latu Maharaj: It is because Maya likes the play and does not like to end it. In this play of Maya the jiva is not able to realise the goal of life. This makes the jiva feel convinced that Maya gives the wrong direction. After all, tell me, where can it take the jiva in the wrong direction? The Lord is everywhere. He pervades the whole creation. Maya has come into being by His will. So even she works for the Lord.

Bihari Babu: Even Maya works for God, Maharaj?

Latu Maharaj: Yes, if not, why should it work? With an end in view only she has begun the work, with the final end in view, which is none other than God.



THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Evil, Theodorus, can never pass away: For there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good. It has no place in heaven, so of necessity it haunts the mortal nature and this earthly sphere. Therefore we ought to escape from earth to heaven as quickly as we can: and to escape is to become like God, as far as possible; and to become like Him is to become holy, just and wise.....God is never in anyway unrighteous—He is perfect righteousness—and those of us who are most righteous are most like Him.

—Theatetus.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL SERVICE

It did not take long for the Communist's verdict on religion that it is a dope, the opium of the people, to come back on himself as a boomerang. Communism was born after the Russian Revolution in 1917, and in the same decade the Russian Communist Party, aiming at the complete elimination of priestcraft, made itself a priesthood. Writes G. B. Shaw, 'In Russia declared militant atheists only are admitted to the Communist Party (the only tolerated Party) which virtually nominates the Soviets. There is nothing new in such exclusion: it is the system of the Catholic Church, and indeed of all Churches. Its effect was that the Russian Communist Party, aiming at the complete elimination of priestcraft, made itself a priesthood. To eliminate orthodoxy it set up the most intolerant orthodoxy in the world. To get rid of the religious orders it instituted the League of the Godless, with medals of its emblems just like the medals of the Seven Sorrows or the Sacred Heart.'

But this verdict of Communism came to religion as a blessing in disguise. The new century wanted religion to get the social fever and religion, stung into a utility mood by Communism could meet the demand. Religion had to dance to the popular tune. Witness for instance religion's unreal hunger for institution-making, its shifting of emphasis from spiritual discipline to social activities towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The Trappists, and the great propaganda Missions in the West and the reform movements inspired by Neo-Hinduism in India are but a few of the symptoms of this new social zeal. Thus the most irreligious service of Communism to religion was to sting it into a utility-cum-humanitarian mood, was to transfer its fever for social service. Communism, shorn of its newly-earned political *upadhis*, is nothing but the hunger for the creation of a classless society where all will have an equal right on happiness and the sources of happiness and each individual will take the minimum from society and give

back the maximum. These ideas brought about a revolution in the existing conception of ideal society and social service. Not that these ideas of society and social service were new to religion; still when the new religion said the words, 'religion without social service has no fruit', Old religion chanting the words, 'social service without religion has no root', turned pale. Thus religion was reborn as social service. This is the greatest birth of the century, greater than Communism, which is claimed as the greatest birth. For Communism is only the cry of the newborn babe, the free individual in the remodelled and equal society. It is not a birth by itself, but the *modus operandi* of the new social religion. What is religion but the rearing up of the spiritual quality of the individual and the increase of such quality-men in society. To help this process is the highest and best social service. The greater the number of spiritual men in a society, the higher is that society. In its pristine purity Communism furthers this process. Seen in this light, religion is individualised social service and social service, socialised religion. Thus it may appear that religion has not lost much by being born in its new garb of social bhakti. Yet religion has lost, has lost something that can be easily redeemed.

If Communism had been of service to religion for shaping itself into its new adaptation to answer modern needs, it has been a disservice to social service. Communism in its current form cut social service off its moorings of religious inspiration. The religious institutions to-day instead of following the golden rule, 'for self-realization first and world-welfare next, *Atmano mokshartham, jagat hitaya cha*, have reversed it. They place the improvement of the world first and self-realization next. And they argue that there is so much to be done that there is little time for meditation and spiritual sadhana! And these are to give ideals to social reformers and to guide them! Reformers who owe no allegiance to religious organiza-

tions, naturally argue that God is a supernumerary. 'Why should social service be put on the pedestal of religion? Social service is quite happy and efficient without it. Do good to the people. That itself brings you the bumper harvest of happiness. Why worry about personal discipline and all that'. These people forget that without *being good*, none can do good. *Be and make*—that is the message of religion. Without oneself having light and peace how can one illumine or elevate others. We know of enthusiasts in Harijan uplift work who, without a high level of culture and knowledge of the purpose of their mission, go into the ranks of the Harijans, mix with them freely and instead of lifting them up to a high standard and civilising them, go down to the Harijan standard, marry Harijan ladies and become Harijans. What a tragedy: those who went to uplift the Harijans themselves becoming Harijans. This is the fate of persons who start on social reform without sufficient spiritual capital. 'It is highly hazardous', observes Sri Ramakrishna, 'for ordinary jivas to attempt to do good to the world'. Relevant again to the point is his utterance in another context, 'you talk glibly of doing good to the world. The world to which you desire to do good—is it so small a thing? In the next place, pray, who are you to do good to the world? First, go through devotional practices and see God. Then it is that inspiration and power will come to you, and you may talk of doing good. Not till then'. So true social service must begin with one's determination to take the road of spiritual transformation. Internationalism and Communism begin at home; they begin for the individual by a ruthless sacrifice of the ego. People want a world revolution without a moral revolution in themselves. All talk of social upheaval is sheer bunkum without the improvement of the individual. Society is an abstraction. All religions are agreed that improvement of the world must begin with the spiritual transformation of individuals. One self—realised soul who sees the All in himself and himself residing in everything, though apparently

inactive, does ten times more real social service than hundred social reformers.

It may be an enigma to us how and with what alchemy these silent 'inactive' realised souls work up a spiritual change in the hearts of men. Let Swami Vivekananda who has witnessed the working of such alchemy speak: 'Suppose we have realised the Oneness of the universe, that we are that One infinite being, what becomes of us after that? If all mankind today realise only a bit of this great truth, the aspect of the whole world will be changed; and in place of fighting and quarrelling there will be a reign of peace. This indecent and brutal hurry which forces us to go ahead of everyone else will then vanish from the world. With it will vanish all struggle, all hate, all jealousy, all evil will vanish away for ever. Gods will live upon this earth. The very earth will become heaven. Everything that you see in society will be changed and transfigured then. So then, an apparently inactive Ramakrishna or Ramana who live, move and have their being in such Oneness *by their mere presence* causes more spiritual transformation in society than what all social reform Samitis can ever dream of. Sri Ramakrishna did not start any reform movement. He simply lived the life of the spirit, living face to face with God and stressed the need of placing God realization before everything. His disciples irrigated his teachings into practical channels and inspired movements of social service. Sri Ramakrishna is reported to have asked an ardent social reformer who was financing many dispensaries and poor homes, 'If God appears before you, will you ask for more hospitals for the poor and orphanages or will you ask for more of Divine love?' Answering the question himself Sri Ramakrishna said, 'No, these are realities to us so long as we do not see God. But once brought face to face with the Divine vision, we see them as they are—transitory things, no better than dreams. And then we would pray for more light—more knowledge in the highest sense, more divine love.'

Though Sri Ramakrishna was thus immersed in his one reality, God, and gave to social service the status of a dream, what an amount of social service is being done in his name. The Ramakrishna Mission started by his disciples commands the unqualified confidence and unstinting financial support from the public on all occasions when relief works are to be initiated. The Mission has become a by-word for maximum quality and quantity social service. The reason is not far to seek. Sri Ramakrishna's disciples while engaging themselves in social service time and again confirm their faith in the Master's teaching that God realization is to be placed before everything else, that the best social service is achieved only by a man on the path of realization. When they serve the poor, the sick and needy, they do it as a worship of the God in man, as Nishkama karma, as a spiritual sadhana. This is the secret of their success. Their end is God-realization and social service is done as a means to that end. By this kind of spiritual social service they not only elevate themselves but elevate those whom they serve. They also hear of the Lord and begin to worship Him. To the Swamis of the Mission social service is both the end and the means, the *sadhya* and the *sadhana*: for did not Sri Ramakrishna after attaining self-realization continue to live and help others to climb up to his heights? And did he not ask his disciples to see Shiva in every jiva and serve it as he would worship the Lord? Yes, this is the distinctive mark of all purely spiritual paths; they are both the means and the end. Is not knowledge both the means and end? Is not supreme bhakti, divine love, the means as well as the end, the seed and the fruit. Even so is divinely dedicated action. The aspirant starts surrendering his actions to the Lord and after reaching Him, continues to serve Him in his children with the ardour of divine worship. Such were the saints and mystics who after tasting of the Ultimate worked incessantly so that others may enjoy the same. Men of God-realization by their very presence, by a look, a word or an exhortation transform sinners into saints and

achieve far more in the direction of social betterment than a Niagara of advice from learned pundits. Those God-realised souls are the salt of the earth; their presence sanctifies the earth. Their service to society is like that of the spring that serves the happiness of the world, or like the flower that opens unnoticed but yet spreads its sweetness all round.

Let us linger a while on the social service as *sadhana*. 'Take this world as a moral gymnasium', says Swami Vivekananda. It is our privilege to be charitable, for only so we can grow. The poor man suffers that we may be helped; let the giver kneel down and give thanks, let the receiver stand up and permit. See the Lord back of every being and give to Him.' 'Pity to creatures! the Master exclaimed once. Sirrah! you who are lower than even a worm, how dare you speak of showing pity to creatures! Who are you to show pity to them? No, no, it is not pity to creatures, but service to them in the consciousness that they are verily God Himself.' He indeed has become all this creation.' The Lord has time and again said that service of His children is dearer to Him than the worship done to Him with flowers and other paraphernalia. Was he not by these words exhorting us to serve the less fortunate, the illiterate and the needy in society with all the zeal and bhakti of divine worship? There is divine assurance that social service done in a worshipful spirit, without motive as Nishkama karma bestows the highest benefit on the doer, and brings him God-realization.

Both for the spiritual benefit of the individual as also for the good of society, it is very necessary to keep in tact this umbilical chord that connects religion and social service. A man of realization is a light unto himself and to others; but a smoky lantern fails to illumine itself and others. Social service without religion has no root and hence no fruit. *Per contra*, it will be asked whether religion without social service has no fruit? It will be madness to dictate to a saint in a cave to

go and work in an Adult education class or a dispensary. He may laugh at such a command. Not that he is averse to the service of his brethren, but that his method of work is different. From the distant Himalayan cave the saint's good wishes and blessings penetrate the walls and space and work wonders years after his physical disappearance.

The Hindu conception of society has effectively established this very necessary blood relation between religion and social service. The Purushasukta hymn describes how the Lord Himself became this society, limb by limb. So then to serve society is to serve the Lord and from society to the Lord is but a short step. This conception is helpful not only to the aspirant who takes social

service as sadhana, but also to the modern man of positivist temper who keeps for himself a Godless religion and whose deity is the *Grand Etre*, Humanity. To-day there is an incorrigible tendency to keep the Mother-religion away from the child-social service. Religion is pushed to the corner as the unwanted out-dated grand-mamma. Thousands gather round social service, and admire her bright ornaments and ask for her autograph and promise to follow her. Let us not forget that but for the grand-mamma this beautiful daughter would not have been born. Let us be mindful not to take God out of the picture; without God, 'the central radiation of life, the unceasing life, action and freedom', the land of social service turns into a desert.

THIS PICTURE AND THAT

The religion anxious for personal salvation is too selfish a religion to confer social benefits. So was Old religion in all countries. So were the Hindu ritualists who through laborious ceremonials sought heaven for themselves. Altruistic impatience, the creed of a modern majority, is so selfless a religion that it leaves out the individual's good altogether. It is possible to forge a third and most wanted religion from the above two, which sees the spiritual progress of the individual and society as one whole and holy endeavour. That way lies the solution of the hiatus between religion and society.

NICOLAS BERDYAEV AND THE MEANING OF HISTORY

By DR. K. C. VARADACHARI, M.A., Ph.D.

All history is a Bible, is the trail of the Divine. It is this spiritual conception of history that Dr. Varadachari ably presents here. Berdyaev puts the idea beautifully: 'This historical process and history are not phenomenal, but noumenal; for the historical brings with it the revelation of the inner spiritual nature of the world and the inner spiritual essence of man.' Our Hindu seers said that this society of ours is a reflex of the society in heaven. But how can man who always allies himself with the natura be made conscious of the spiritual nature of this historical process? 'By his transcendence over the natural order', answers Berdyaev, not by denial of it, but by the subsuming of it under the spiritual. To Hindu seers Maya is not the opposite of Brahman. Maya is Brahman; she is the power benign of Brahman.—EDS.

The philosophical understanding of History has been one of the most important efforts. History as a mere narration of the processes of nature, of peoples, of personalities, of seekings and struggles of masses of men is no longer considered to be adequate. History is neither a mere process of evolution, nor the evolution of ideas or institutions or even cultures and their shapes. It is all these and more than these; because its meaning has been elusive and yet is inherent in its being at every cross-section of its process, it is yet a problem awaiting an adequate solution. The meaning of History has to be sought then not in the struggles that we witness between the forces of liberty and security, however widely the connotation of these terms may undergo variation so as to appear not so very different from one another in the concrete situations of History, but in the availability of a point of view which transcends the 'historical' just to enable it to perceive the pattern and inner impulse of the historical.

In this paper I shall try to present the standpoint of M. Nicolas Berdyaev¹ the Russian thinker and theologian. He says

¹ *Meaning of History*: Nicolas Berdyaev Readers may usefully consult also *Christianity as an interpretation of History*: by Rt. Rev. William Temple; Longmans.

that 'to comprehend and define the term "historical" it is necessary to experience a certain spiritual dismemberment'. There are three epochs in history, the first is the period of direct integral organic experience in some settled historical order, where thought is static, and the dynamism of the object of historical science is not clearly grasped by the human mind'. The second is the period of fateful and menacing schism and disruption. It is the period of collapse of the organic structure and vital rhythm. The individual's experience of himself is divorced from the object. The intellectual life of man has arrested the unity-experience and divorced his oneness with the universe about him. Intellect has thus led to separation, and the growth of the antithesis between the historical and the knowing subject. The third is the period that involves a return to the unity of the organic that had been disrupted and its two poles torn asunder by the intellectual or speculative activity of the subject are sought to be united by the experience of the Divine. This return to the unity of the organic historical, is stated by Berdyaev to be rendered possible by a dialectic of which the first two are moments. This is the spiritual state wherein the meaning of the historical is made explicit or is elucidated. According to Berdyaev the growth of the reason and the occurrence of the

rationalistic trend in history are those which dismissed the truth and mystery of the historical; and because of this the movements of ideas, the evolution of cultures, the growth of values and religion, art and human life itself are considered 'as merest accidents of matter in movement and devoid of substantial reality! The modern view of historical materialism has its strength and originality in the repudiation of spirit. Its value is great, though that value is essentially negative says Berdyaev; it helps destroy all the half-digested and semi-ideological currents which had formed themselves in the 19th and 20th centuries. But what is more important is that it poses the dilemma either of adapting oneself to this mystery of non-existence (of spirit) and plunging into the abyss or of communing once again with the imponderable mystery of the inner destiny, of the inner traditions and mysteries, a communion that has suffered and overcome the ordeal of a triple iconoclasm, destructive, critical and negative.'

We can now understand that any philosophy of history must either study man in the concrete fullness of his spiritual being, in relation to himself, in relation to the world forces which act upon him, and or in relation to the whole group of which he is a member, and in either case it is inevitable that the individual must be studied in his concrete fullness and this is what modern psychology, physiology, and other spheres of human knowledge are unable to do. They study him but incompletely and thus are more or less abstract.

Berdyaev says that this historical process and history are not phenomenal but noumenal, because 'the historical' in the real sense of the word, brings with it the revelation of the essential being, of the inner spiritual nature of the world and the inner spiritual essence of man and not merely of the external phenomena'. It is for this reason that history is

synonymous with the greatest spiritual reality. But this is not to say that that could be understood or apprehended in the ordinary manner. 'It can be approached through the historical memory, that is, through a certain spiritual activity, a certain given spiritual relation to the "historical" with the sphere of historical knowledge, which as a result becomes inwardly transfigured and transformed'. This historical memory is an inalienable part of the historical tradition. This historical tradition sustains the historical memory as its content, and is transposed into historical destiny. The process of the recovery of the historical tradition thus appears to be the one necessity of the spiritual being or subject in order to understand the conscious integrality of the process of change and movement, progress of effort to transcend the purely objective and materialistic, and purpose of the individuals seized with the process of Nature. The transcendence over the temporal world is thus to be sought through the recovery of the inner tradition, the true historical tradition, for it is that that grants 'an absolutely peculiar feeling of communion with a world other than the empirical, whose nightmare oppression we must overcome before we can attain to that historical reality which is the authentic revelation of other worlds'. And further the inner tradition is 'man's inner free spiritual tie: it is something that is neither purely transcendental nor imposed upon him but immanent. This is the only conception of tradition that contains the true basis of philosophy'. The position thus comes to this that any ultimate or absolute conception of the historical process is possible only by a recovery of the tradition, the Sruti, to use the Ancient Hindu terminology, which is the ultimate and absolute tradition. Sri Aurobindo writing in his '*Synthesis of Yoga*' says that this Sruti must be hearkened to, must be found in the individual depths of consciousness. Berdyaev is aware of this when he

says that in Indian philosophy and mysticism the inner tradition is wholly to be recovered in the individual depths, and considers that to be somewhat of a weakness. He holds that it must be a universal revelation of the nature of the world-process not of the individual alone. And this revelation must be that of a catastrophic variety namely 'that divine revelation by which the interior becomes the exterior and the spirit incarnates', by a supreme revolutionary synthesis, even a tragedy since it is the noumenal presentation of the 'love felt by God for his other self and its longing for reciprocal love' and the accomplishment through this double expression of the union of the historical destinies of the divine and human lives. This is ultimately to be realised in and through the transcendence over the world in which we live and move and have our mortal being. This is the metaphysical truth, the fact of love reciprocal and self fulfilling. This is the eternal tradition capable of being discovered within the depths of individual being as well as world-history. Such is the life of Christ at once a noumenal fact and a tragedy that brings into its focus the entire fact of divine and human consummation through, reciprocal love, the union of God and his other self, the Son, and the accomplishment of the unity of these two in the higher third, which is capable of being known and understood in the light of other worlds alone.

M. Berdyaev in another work *Freedom and Spirit* writes that the living God and the drama of divine life only exist for the symbolic and mythological consciousness, and the metaphysical truth of history lies in conceiving it to be the myth of the drama of divine life. Neither myth nor symbol is unreal. They help evaluating the evolutionary process that is taking place. Behind the external succession of biological forms and lives, there is a creative process, deep and abiding and phenomenally appearing uncon-

scious or merely dialectical (in the Hegelian sense), but its secret *elan* when traced will reveal the presence of the creative action, divine and not subject to any law other than that of its own freedom. And it is 'a torrent of fire in its free creative dynamism'. And if we understand by fire the 'love' that transforms and transmutes which is the symbolic meaning given to it, then we can see that the catastrophic view may not be the whole meaning of history; it is but a partial phase of the Absolute Spirit confronted by a refractive soul, and its more refractive objectivity, or the material universe. It is likely to be so when the world or plane on which the incidence of the divine energy of love is to act is of the *asuric* type, vital and egoistic. It is bound to be different in respect of the *daivi* type, spiritual man, wherein the reciprocal love is bound to endure and flourish without the catastrophic impinging and denial of this world. With the human, *manava* type it is just possible that it might be either this or that or as we have known in the *Gita* a mixture of both, a *vishada*, prescience of tragedy, surrender and acceptance and transcendence through yoga of integral transformation.² The influx of the spiritual on the natural world may open up many avenues of release and freedom is to be bought at the price of sacrifice, which is expressive of the tragedy that is the statement of dismemberment of the natural order so as to group uniquely for the re-memberment in the spiritual. The realization of the spiritual evolution is the aim of the historical process. The goal of evolution is the transcendence over the natural order not by a denial of it but by the subsuming of it under the spiritual, that is the natural is drawn firmly into the spiritual so as to become unified with it. It is just possible as intellectualists of the West however advanced they might be to

² *Hiranyakasipu*, *Arjuna* and *Mahabali* are the three types, and the first alone was catastrophic, the other two non-catastrophic.

emphasize the fact that the natural order is antagonistic to the possession of it by the spirit divine. If it be so there is no possibility of realization of the spiritual universe neither by the individual by discovering the inner tradition nor by the community, for it is but the statement of the impotence of spirit. The weakness of the dialectical exposition of the inner life or the stages of historical process verily consists in this creation of absolute opposition or formal opposition. Evolution involves the meeting of the extremes in the life and activities or

becomings of the individual and it is in him they become concrete or positive forces of freedom and restraint, which realises the fullest possibilities of the individual, as the symbolic image of divinity, self-free, self-conscious, self-lawing and self-abiding, possessing the infinite quality of spiritual or divinised life. It is precisely this point that is sought to be elucidated by the ancient Hindu concepts of *Lila* and *Maya*, the latter being understood in the sense not of illusion, but as the power-omniscient and beneficent of the Divine.

PROPOSED ACADEMY OF INDIAN ARTS AND LETTERS

By PROF. B. S. MATHUR, M.A.

D. A. V. College, Cawnpore

Literature is gathering on the idea of establishing in near future an Academy of Indian Arts and Letters in some central place like Delhi or Calcutta or Bombay. The use of the word 'central' for these cities may not be appropriate; but one thing is manifestly certain that these cities are big cities in India and are constantly attracting people from different and distant quarters of India and of the world. It is time that we start about the thing in right earnest. There must be some considerations which are to precede the final consummation in the shape of a fully developed Academy, working comfortably as a central organisation for the assimilation of Indian Arts and Letters.

In *The Modern Review* of May 1943 there appears an article entitled 'Comment and Criticism' by Dr. James H. Cousins. That is solely by way of a rejoinder to some criticisms made by that intelligent and delicately artistic lady, who edits *The Aryan Path* and

The Indian P. E. N. Dr. Cousins writes: 'So far as I am aware, no Indian who is interested in the matter thinks of the creation of an Academy tomorrow or even next month. So large an undertaking, with so many considerations of detail, obviously needs much enquiry, the formulation of proposals, their criticism and modification, where necessary. As to when such preliminaries might be ready for presentation, that, I feel, is a matter that must rise out of the Indian circumstances and the tradition and the psychology of the Indian artists and authors. To indicate the postponement of the consideration (even the creation if such were possible) of an Indian Academy until India attains freedom in its legislative life is to make culture the lackey of politics; whereas there is much that could be said in support of the contention that the character of politics depends on the culture of politicians, and that a country is less eligible for freedom than it would be if it had an organised recognition of its cultural leaders'.

Dr. Cousins has made a clear case for the immediate establishment of an Academy. To avoid the controversy I might state that Mrs. Wadia should have no hitch now as the war is over and India is, according to political speculation, heading to be free. Certainly I am one with Dr. Cousins that culture should not be in the position of a slave to politics. I venture to suggest our present ills are, to a great extent, due to this over-emphasis on politics. No considerations of being free first should stop us from having the establishment of an Academy.

Cultural prosperity is essential for the political and economic prosperity of a country. Take the case of America. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, second oldest learned society in the United States, celebrated its 165th anniversary on May 4, 1945. It was 'founded by a group of prominent Bostonians who felt there was sufficient interest in the arts and sciences to warrant an academy devoted to their furtherance'. It is said that Benjamin Franklin was indirectly responsible for its establishment. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were among its earliest members. Names of great talents are associated with the Academy. Today it is housed in its own building in Boston. It has a library, which contains 46,500 books and its main function is to arrange exchange of various research publications in America. There it does not stop. It is definitely an organisation which makes it possible for foreign scholars to exchange notes with American scholars.

But why was this Academy established? In his 'Memoirs' Adams observes: 'In France, among the academicians and other men of science and letters, I was frequently entertained with inquiries concerning the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, and with eulogiums of the wisdom of that institution. These conversations suggested to

me the ideas of such an establishment at Boston, where I knew there was as much love of Science and as many gentlemen who were capable of pursuing it, as in any other city of its size'. Here I might add that our consideration to have an Academy is not this alone. We have to work for our freedom through cultural awakening and solidarity. We have, therefore, an extra aim. Certainly like the Americans we want greatness for our country on account of our cultural and intellectual assets. Yet the great and urgent thing with us is the question of our freedom. We can be free through culture and learning.

One thing more I will immediately mention. We cannot think of an official control in the matter of administration of the proposed Academy. Here we will, indeed, make a departure from the American ideal. The Royal Society of Bengal has sent to the Central Government a detailed scheme for the establishment of an Academy of Arts and Letters as part of the Government's post-war schemes. That is too much. There should be no official control. If at all there is to be a control it must be the control of intellectuals themselves. It is for this reason that we appeal to the rich and the generous public to come forward with their donations. I know there is enough wealth in India which comes readily at the moments of distress. Will it be a vain hope to suggest the emergence of this wealth to avoid distress?

It may be stated in all honesty that enough by way of a successful prelude is done for the establishment of such an academy. The Indian Branch of the P.E.N. The Hindustan Academy, and various other societies for the development of Arts and Letters in India are the nucleus of the right type. Already there is a desire to familiarise people belonging to different provinces with different literatures of other places in India. Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar writes: 'In India conditions are very different. There are no reliable or com

prehensive histories of most of the Indian literatures, even in the respective Indian languages. If there are hardly any good histories of Tamil Literature in that very language, it goes without saying that there are in Tamil no histories of other Indian literatures at all. This is generally true of the other regional Indian literatures as well.

..... Occasionally an article appears in English about the literary achievements of some Indian literature or other: more occasionally, a book devoted to Kannada or to Bengali or to Urdu is offered to the public: but being written in English, these do not reach the majority of literatures. The mental *purdah* is consequently not lifted'. (*Literature and Authorship in India*, page 10) Prof. Iyengar has indicated a desire for translations because translations will lead to cultural knowledge and solidarity. I may add, work of this type is being done at the moment. Just a few months ago I reviewed *My Life's Partner* by Motilal Roy for *The Social Welfare*. The book is originally written in Bengali and has been translated into English by D. S. Mahalanobis for the benefit of the general reader, who is acquainted with English. Or take the case of *Two Sisters* by Rabindranath Tagore, translated into English. The present writer because of his being an utter stranger to Bengali could not read this treasure of human insight. Thanks are due to the translator for throwing open this unknown treasure to the general reader.

While making a reference to work done in India for the establishment of an Indian Academy, I will be simply ungrateful if I do not refer to the enthusiasm and endeavour of Shri D. V. Rau of Andhra, who seems to have staked all for this consummation. Rightly he is collecting all literature on the great idea. In fact he is busy making arrangements for the publication of a book, dealing intensively and exhaustively with the idea of having such an Academy. Already he has contacted the

great intellectuals of India and of America and England. The *All-India Weekly* of Bombay recently published an appeal in which the signatories were such great people: Dr. J. H. Cousins, Dr. Nicholas Roerich, Sardar K. M. Panikkar and Dr. G. S. Mahajani.

What is needed immediately is the establishment of a Board of Intellectuals. Intellectuals do not mean mainly intellectual persons, devoted to Art and Literature. We can have, in fact we must have, intelligent persons, interested in industry, trade, commerce and science. And why forget people who have made their name in journalism and in politics? Essentially this Board must be a comprehensive body, like some organisation, interested in the cultural unity in India. The best way to have this central and all-representative body is to make appeals for intellectual and cultural awakening in various leading journals of India. That alone won't do. There must be funds for this purpose. After all we have given up the idea of being controlled in this matter by official interference, invariably harmful to a cultural renaissance. For this double purpose, our leading journals must invite contributions on this subject. I must say, mere economics won't do. It is apt now to remind my readers of the work done by such journals as *Prabuddha Bharata*, *Concord*, *Triveni*, *Dawn of India* and *The Hindustan Review*. I find that *Bihar Herald* and *United India* and *United States* are doing considerable work in this direction. Of course one cannot forget the work done by *The Aryan Path* and *The Indian P.E.N.* and *The Twentieth Century*.

Dr. Edward Thompson has made many suggestions in his book entitled *A Letter from India*: He wanted to see (1) Oxford Books of Sanskrit, Persian, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu verse, (2) "A legacy of India in the admirable Oxford University Press "Legacy" series, (3) A Book of Indian Art, (4) A Yea

Book of Indian Literature, (5) The foundation of readerships at either or both Oxford and Cambridge, with the wide scope, leaving their holders to represent any aspect of Indian thought or literature, (6) A "Nobel Prize" for India, to be given each year to an outstanding writer in some vernacular, and (7) Translations of some of the more original recent books, including a selection of Bengali short stories.

Dr. Thompson is no more. But I am sure his suggestions will soon be worked out. Already something is done in the direction. Indeed, there is one drawback. There are stray efforts. There is, as such, no central body to co-ordinate this work. My hope is that soon we will have such an organisation to effect this co-ordination, so necessary for intellectual output and for political solidarity for the achievement of our emancipation.

FAITH AND FUNCTION OF A WRITER

By G. M.

We seem to be living in times when non-violence has become but a small comma between two periods of violence. The writer's task is, then, clear-cut for him. He has to employ his pen not only as a prophylactic against the itch of aggressiveness that belongs to the brute in man, but as a panacea as well against the whole host of "dis-eases", to which that itch opens the door.

As a matter of fact, this is the writer's foremost and fundamental function. He is ever an ardent advocate of the three principal postulates in the faith-founded philosophy of life, namely the True, the Good and the Beautiful. For, without belief (it may be "irrational", as it is generally supposed to be, because often intellect, as such, is not capable of conceiving them) in these values the soul of man feels suffocated. He is, then, to be, first and last, a man of faith and his pen, a pill or potion of that faith so that, taking it, humanity may be saved from the tyrannic toxin of the red-labelled realism.

In a sense, we are all prisoners of the environment and ideologies into which we are born and in which we grow up. And for

long,—perhaps, till our penultimate stage in self-realization is reached, most of us live with our noses glued to the ground. The writer, however, should aspire to be a "prisoner" with some special distinction to mark him off straightway from the majority of his fellow-men. He ought to be like the person behind the bars, who looked at the stars and who, rejoicing in the radiance of the sky and being touched with its illumination, was able to see the growing lotus in the mud, as was Michael Angelo able to see an incipient image of beauty in the unkempt, uncouth, mass of marble lying by the wayside.

The writer's faith in the vision, veracity and vitality of the three values, the True, the Good and the Beautiful, may be considered by some people to be blind. But in its impact on his life, this blindness is revealed to be a kind of radiance, similar to the radiance born of "blind" love. (Blind, indeed, for the two eyes that see only the mud are closed, but what of the third eye, which is opened, consequent on their closing, and which sees more than they together could ever expect to see)?

For, it is this faith which will enable him to discriminate between Realism and Reality, and to realize that more than sight it is insight that matters and, further, that often what the sight discovers is not the truth, just as the eyes see only the sun moving round the earth, while the reverse is the truth. Let him concern himself undoubtedly with the struggles and sorrows of those among whom he dwells. But to believe that by a mere description of these, however brilliant it might be, he will be able to free his fellow-men from their strangle hold, will be as illogical as it will be for a physician to list down, in an impressive array, all the symptoms of the disease from which his patient is suffering and to flatter himself with the thought that thereby he is sure to restore the sufferer to strength.

The writer has, thus, perforce to prescribe for the ills, to which the body and mind of man is heir; more, however, for the mind of man. For, even the modern medical man, a sceptic as he is by temperament and training, has come to believe in the influence the mind over the body. So if the mind is *in its proper place*, then not only will it make for that wholeness, which is the secret at

once of health and holiness, but it will also pave the way to the pursuit of that something, which is more than the mind.

And believe it or not, it is something more than the mind which is the inspiration of all "timeless" truth. In other words, the intellect ought to be illuminated by the soul. For, man is man, primarily and precisely, because he is spirit. To be human is to be spiritual and also *vice versa*, though not seldom the so-called spiritual man, in his egoistic or altruistic impatience to scale the heights of heaven, forgets his fellow-beings, dwelling the dark valleys below.

Verily, as the physical world revolves round the sun, so does the mind of man inwardly revolve round the spirit, whether or not he is aware of this. His duty is to consciously keep the mind ever exposed to the spirit. For, it is the spirit alone which will endow his work with vision, without which individuals as well as nations, as they say, perish. The writer, then, is first a watch tower and only afterwards a workshop. To reverse this order of human development towards the divine would be nothing short of suicide or 'sin against the Holy Ghost'.

GITA AND PROGRESS (SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL)

By K. KALIANA SWAMI, B.A., B.L.

The characteristic of a well-ordered life is progress, which is not confined to any single or particular aspect of it, but what may be termed an all-round one or 'samagra-jivan' where there is a harmonious and balanced development of all sides of a man's being. In human life, if there is no progress, stagnation or decay sets in and death or a state of existence akin to death is the result. There is no middle course, however much many a deluded man ingeniously tries to explain away his state of stagnation and attempts to gain some sort of glum satisfaction by imagining that nothing is wrong with him and that he is advancing on the seemingly delightful journey of life fairly well.

Leaving aside for the time being, all other phases of life and confining our attention to the spiritual aspect of it, on which in a sense depend all other aspects, it can be easily seen how progress is very often misunderstood, misinterpreted and misapplied to the realities of one's life on earth.

In his path towards perfection, man is seeking the help of various agencies, the chief among which is religion in some form or other. But it may be asserted, without much fear of contradiction, that only such a religion would be helpful which has the dynamic capacity to influence life to such an extent as to transform it to a higher and a better state, while the other religions would lead to a state of spiritual stagnation, by insisting on an unquestioning submission to meaningless and out-worn usages.

That being so, a time should come in the life of every thinking person, who wants to lead a true or justifiable life, when he should be able to make a stern and rigorous self-examination of all aspects of his life and find out where he stands—spiritually and socially. In the majority of cases, such a serious self-review is shirked and persons who are under the grip of some traditional religion or other,

allow their lives to drift under the sway of time-honoured and accustomed ways, irrespective of the conditions and realities of the times in which they live. To such, though they, in some cases, profess to be highly religious, pious and learned, religion is no more than a slavish conformity to superstitious practices and irrational customs, without any thought as to whether they are keeping pace with the advance of human intelligence and knowledge. The question of progress or decadence in matters spiritual and social, never enters their heads or hearts and many a gross and monstrous atrocity is allowed to be perpetrated in the name of religion through their lives or the lives of those who are under their influence. Not only no question of progress arises in such cases but there is actual retrogression or decay, as with the passage of time and the consequent changes in the modes and methods of life, they are not even able to live up to what is best in the old order of things.

In the modern age, if anything comes more prominently before the eye of every observant person, it is the fact that human knowledge has progressed by rapid strides, thereby contributing enormously to the intellectual expansion of all branches of the human race. In India especially, we have the glory of producing some of the greatest intellectual giants, who had attained international fame and are acclaimed as world figures. This highly developed intellectualism of India is not an unmixed blessing, as it is quite common to meet with in this country intellectual stalwarts who are very often spiritual and social pigmies and reactionaries. When intellectual convictions do not keep pace with the practical work-a-day lives of individuals, ill-balanced and contradictory lives would result and they in no sense can be counted among those which are spiritually and socially progressive.

Spiritual progress has two aspects in relation to a man's life.

It is both subjective and objective; the former representing the intellectual conviction and the latter the way in which that conviction is implemented in actual life. The same is the case with social life. Unless both these aspects are developed in equal degree, the consequence would be a kind of self contradictory life, characterised by the divorce between profession and practice, such as that led by the large class of arm-chair politicians and academic Brahmos.

Subjectively, it aims at the perfection of the individual self by not only the elimination of all that is obstructive in the way of the individual soul reaching the feet of God, which is the goal of all spiritual progress, but by the active cultivation of all that conduces to facilitate the attainment of absolute purity, absolute truthfulness and absolute honesty, and in fact every other kind of virtue which is associated with a truly pious and holy life.

Amongst all the means that are adopted as *sadhanas* for the realisation of God, worship of the right kind holds the primary place and *sadhaks* of all religions and all climes, are united in giving expression to their common experience that the best means to reach God is through the door-way of worship, which includes prayer and meditation. In fact, prayer has been described as the golden ladder that is laid unto heaven. So, whatever views one may hold and expound theoretically, one has to reach the practical recognition of the unity of the Godhead and the nature of God as a spirit and adopt the means necessary to reach him. And the best way to reach God who is spirit, is through one's own spirit, which is a spark of the Divine that is implanted in him and not by means of ritualistic observances and ceremonies or material oblations made to idols, however grandly or elaborately they might have been planned.

In the religious history of India, we find that man had passed from the polytheistic worship of God, conceived as a deity behind every phenomenon of nature, who had to be appeased at every turn by material offerings,

which had prevailed during the Vedic period, to the Upanishadic age when that momentous discovery was made that God is spirit pervading the whole universe (*Isavasya midam sarvam*) and that the human spirit is essentially divine. Thus has been established the supremacy of the spiritual worship of God over every other kind of worship, and Vedic polytheism gave place to Upanishadic monotheism and Vedic idolatry to the spiritual worship of God inculcated by the Upanishads. So, naturally individual spiritual progress to be real, should subjectively express itself in the cultivation of all the virtues commended by the Vedas and the Upanishads and objectively in a purer kind of worship, wherein idolatry gives place to spiritual worship, that is to say, the subjective spiritual progress of any person should be objectively marked by the passage from idolatry to spiritual worship.

Viewing the question of progress from a social standpoint, the progress must be from exclusiveness, created by artificial differences and distinctions, between man and man, to non-exclusiveness, which means the practical recognition of human brotherhood without any reservations. In India the greatest dividing factor, which is the breeding ground of all kinds of exclusiveness is the system of Caste, which in its turn has given birth to various complexes by which Hindu society is divided, culminating in the abominable absurdities of untouchability, unseeability and unapproachability, which are the veritable plague-spots in Hinduism. So, unless caste goes these ugly features cannot be wiped from Hindu society and it looks as if reformers who are out to remedy this chronic malady had begun at the wrong end in working for temple-entry and removal of untouchability. It is like aiming to make a sick man healthy by merely attempting to cure the symptoms, instead of by trying to remove the cause, a process which spells its own ineffectiveness. It is very easy for one to write treatises, deliver lectures and associate himself with Harijan uplift organizations but it is difficult to implement all

this high-sounding theory into practice by abolishing caste in oneself, in his family and amongst those under his influence. Even institutions pledged to the avowed object of "Brotherhood of Man" have not dared to proclaim and practise castelessness. Thus true progress from a social-point of view should consist subjectively, of the recognition of the equality of all human beings as members of God's household and objectively, of the passage from caste to castelessness or human brotherhood.

Unless both these objective developments, namely, the passage from idolatry to spiritual worship and from caste to castelessness, go hand in hand with the subjective evolution of higher intellectual convictions of the superiority of spiritual worship and human brotherhood, there can be no real progress of man. Spiritual and social progress are so inter-related that the one without the other would be illusory. Hence, it is time that our learned and pious men, pundits and philosophers, critics and commentators of scriptures, of whom our country is so full, had examined themselves by this touch-stone of what genuine progress is or ought to be, and dislodge themselves from the fools-paradise in which they love to dwell. It is this divorce between their professions and practice—between their liberal expositions of spiritual truths and their conservative methods of life, bristling with all sorts of crude and primitive practices, taboos, exclusions and complexes—that is the bane of our country and it is this that in a great measure accounts for its degraded condition, though by some it is solely attributed to our state of political subjection, which after all can be made responsible to only a certain extent of it. It is not as though Hindu society would make the spiritual and social progress, on the lines set forth above, by leaps and bounds, when once the political independence of India is secured.

Let us now see what the teaching of the Gita is on the question of progress. As Prof: D. S. Sarma puts it 'With us progress

is the process of the perfection of *Dharma*. And the perfection of *Dharma* implies both the perfection of the individual and of society. In fact we cannot have the one without the other. They both act and react on each other.' (*Lectures on Bhagavad Gita*—P. 86). Later on (on p. 87) he says: "As in nature all progress is from the lower to the higher forms of life, so also in society all true progress is from the lower to the higher values of life." With regard to the orthodox man, Prof. Sarma's view (p. 82) is that his 'religion is more a stagnant pool than a flowing stream....' (p. 83) The Gita has no patience with the old orthodox ritualists of the day, whose religion was little more than a mechanical observance of rites and ceremonies.' The above statements go to show that even the Gita is in favour of a man's passing from a crude ritualistic ceremonial worship to a higher form of the worship of God, which obviously is the spiritual worship of him.

Even on the social side, the progress envisaged in the Gita is from the lower to the higher values of life, where all that separates man from man is eschewed and humanity as a whole is viewed as equal in the eye of God. Here also, the passing of man from castes and its inequalities and differentiations to a state of castelessness which stand, for human brotherhood, bereft of all distinctions of race, colour, creed and country, is envisaged in the Gita.

But what do we see even among our higher intellectuals who are learned in the Gita and who expound it from a thousand platforms? Like the unlearned man, who drifts with the current of caste, worshipping his family idols, they too have become immobile sticklers of idolatry and caste, from the moorings of which there is no thought in them of budging even an inch, in spite of all their tall talk of higher religion and human brotherhood. Prof: Sarma rightly bemoans (p. 51) the present apathy among those who are supposed to have attained a state of intellectual and spiritual eminence, in the eyes of the

world, by saying: "what excuse is there for our not stopping human practices like animal sacrifices? Certainly we are not following the lead of the Gita in allowing our popular religion and popular forms of worship to drift for themselves and degenerate from day to day without the consciousness of the ever-present Reality behind them. It is our sacred duty to strive for higher ideals and purer forms of worship not only in our own lives but also in the society to which we belong".

In the same vein were cast the observations of Sir Radhakrishnan (p. xi. of the Foreword to Prof. Sarma's *Lectures on the Bhagavad Gita*). He says: "The truly religious man will have little sympathy with those who mistake religion for ritualism and assume that the existing social institutions are ordained by God.....If the custodians of religion with their cast-iron conservatism regard the present order with its inequalities as organised by religion, no wonder the critics complain about the futility of religion. Those religious men, who, stiff with spiritual pride, quote scriptures in defence of the inequalities of caste and horror of untouchability, show themselves to be woefully lacking in the spirit of religion".

These passages clearly indicate, though not in direct language, the way that man should progress spiritually and socially—from ritualism, which is the necessary concomitant of idolatry, to a purer kind of worship, of which the best form is spiritual worship, and from caste to castelessness, which abrogates inequalities and abhors untouchability and its attendant evils. Thus a correct interpretation of the spirit of the Gita lends support to the view that spiritual and social progress ought to include as its objective content the evolution from idolatry to the spiritual worship of God and from caste to castelessness or human brotherhood. But the vast majority of the Gita expounders and followers of the Gita, glean support for their spiritual and social stagnation in the words,

of the Gita where the author of the Gita says:

"Whatever may be the form which each devotee seeks to worship with faith—in that form alone do I make his faith steadfast."
(Chap: VII-21)

"However men approach me, even so, do I accept them; for on all sides whatever path they may choose is mine, O Arjuna".
(Chap: IV-11)

"The four castes were created by me according to the division of aptitudes and works."
(Chap: IV-13)

And amongst those are the high intellectuals and the so-called pious and religious men, who are fond of dabbling in spiritual matters. So, it is not the ignorant and less-cultured people alone that want to stick to the letter of the Gita, ignoring the spirit of it. Otherwise how could it happen, in the present age, that a person in the position of a High Court Judge should have addressed an audience of cultured people commending image worship, instead of asking them to outgrow it; or that another very learned man of the same service, who is the author of several religious and other books, and who is very much in requisition to address public meetings of all kinds, should have in the course of a Bus journey, got down at a way side village to worship the village goddess, Mariamman, to whose wrath are attributed epidemic diseases, like Cholera, Small-pox and the like, and which the villagers seek to appease by means of animal sacrifices?

Though the Gita has set forth the highest ideal of life to which a man can rise spiritually and socially and has positively drawn attention to the wrong methods of worship, as could be seen from the following verses:

"Not knowing my supreme nature immutable and transcendental, foolish men think that I, the unmanifest, am endowed with a manifest form". (Chap: VII-24)

"Even those who worship the other gods and are endowed with faith worship Me alone, O Arjuna, though in a wrong way."

(Chap: IX-23).

it must be said that it has also served to stabilise men in the crude and primitive spiritual condition in which they find them-

selves, without providing the dynamic incentives which could serve to transform their lives, so that, they may be impelled to emerge out of it and reach a higher state; otherwise there was no reason for the vast majority of Hindus to perpetuate idolatry and caste all the while feeling satisfied that in doing so, they are following the Gita, their highest scripture.

BIO-DYNAMICS

By VILLAGER

[India's great hunger has elicited world sympathy but not enough food to appease it. India herself has to increase her production of food-crops if she wants to avert famines. Increase of grains means increase of land fertility and it is here that Bio-dynamics comes into the picture of India's agricultural improvement. 'Bio-dynamics,' says the writer of this interesting and instructive article, 'is a term used to describe an agricultural system based on the consideration of the physical, chemical and biological aspects of soil fertility, plant growth, animal health and human nutrition.' The author has got the villager's soft heart for villages, and a scientific brain full of schemes for improvement. Here is a useful study both for the lay reader and for the one who is anxious to initiate works of agricultural amelioration.—EDS.]

The writer of "The Urban Argument" in the *Vedanta Kesari* for August, 1946 concludes his most interesting article with the following paragraph:

"When India's best men were in the idyllic sylvan setting in those Aranyaka days, India's highest wisdom was born. To-day India's soul seeks refuge in the peace and quiet of the village from the din and blaze of urban civilization. Even as India's non-violence challenges the violence of the West, shall not her deep faith in the natural, simple, pure, modest and patient rural life shake the urban West out of the self-sufficiency and arrogance of her urban convictions?"

Veneration of the past, nostalgic longing for things that have gone, should not blind us to the fact that existence to-day in the average village in India is by no means

idyllic. For the average villager to-day life is one long struggle for a miserable existence. Ill-fed, undernourished, harassed by malaria from birth to death, haunted by rapacious moneylenders, he may well wonder what unspeakable crime he has committed to be sentenced to such a punishment. The increase in commercialism which the growth of urbanisation connotes has completely wrecked the balance of the villager's existence. Even though the total number of people who now reside in urban areas in India is small compared to the total in the villages that comparatively small number have command over a proportionately large part of the purchasing power (money) in the country. Without such command they could not exist. Because they do not produce the food they eat, they must bring it, by purchase, from the village areas where it is grown. As the urban areas grew larger so the drain of food from

the villages increased. To-day, a position has been reached whereby the average villager who cultivates land is not able to retain for himself and his family sufficient of the product of his labour to maintain himself and his family in a reasonable state of health. The landless labourer is worse off.

It may be asked why any villager should part with food needed for his own family. The answer is three-fold: Respect for law, the force of tradition and custom, deterioration of mental powers following years of undernourishment and malnutrition. In different parts of India those three factors play varying parts in the villager's misery. They influence, to a greater or lesser degree, every villager's life.

An illustration of how respect for law works can be quoted from the way in which procurement of food-grains for the Government works. Many villagers, individually and collectively, believe that in certain areas Government procure, and remove from the scene of procurement, more grain than it is wise to remove. Their respect for the law makes them acquiesce.

The force of tradition and custom is probably the heaviest to bear of the three factors. Tradition requires the surrender of a proportion of crops in payment of rent. Centuries of sub-division of holdings, of increasing pressure of human and animal population on smaller and ever smaller holdings, have created conditions under which the proportion of crops required to be handed over in payment of rent has increased to such an extent that in many instances now-a-days non-cultivators in the aggregate receive from land in which they are interested more than the cultivator receives.

Custom decrees that the three great events in life be fittingly celebrated, birth, marriage, and death. Celebrations take different forms in different parts of India. But in all parts they mean expense. In too many cases it is this expense that puts the unfortunate villager further in debt. To meet the interest on his

debt, let alone any hope of repayment of capital, means the surrender of still more of his slender crop.

The last of the three selected factors that compels a villager to part with food needed for his own family, deterioration of mental powers following years of undernourishment and malnutrition, is the saddest of all. But it undoubtedly exists and is increasing steadily. Year by year its invidious influence is seeping deeper and deeper, its tentacles spreading wider and wider. It works something like this. A cultivator has, shall we say, four maunds of paddy more than he needs for his family until next harvest. His grandfather, a stronger man physically and less affected mentally by malnutrition, would have stored that four maunds in his ghol against a possible crop failure later. The villager of to-day sells the four maunds for cash with which he buys, possibly, toddy, ganja, or other harmful things. In making this illustration, incidentally, no indictment of the individual villager is intended. The indictment is against the system that has brought the unfortunate villager to the plight he is in to-day. The system that brought the terrible famine of 1943 to Bengal, threatens the whole of India with even a more terrible famine someday, sooner, perhaps, rather than later, if existing trends are not reversed.

They can be reversed.

India's soul can find refuge in the peace and quiet of the village.

The idyll can be achieved by every one.

The first consideration in any attempt to banish famine from the land is the productivity of the soil. For the soil, like the people, is suffering from years of undernourishment and malnutrition. In many areas now-a-days the productivity is as much as thirty per cent less than it was even twenty years ago. One of the serious results of a reduction of this magnitude is that the crops grown on such soils are of much less food value than crops grown on more productive soils. Good soil

gives crops of good quality, (quite apart from the quantity grown), poor soil gives crops of poor quality. It naturally follows people and animals fed on poor quality grain, produced from poor soil, deteriorate in health. The deterioration in the first stages is slow, as with all natural processes, but the effect is cumulative and serious.

How can India's soil be brought back to a state where its productivity can be increased, the crops grown of better quality?

Bio dynamics points the way.

Bio-dynamics is the term used to describe an agricultural system based on consideration of the physical, chemical and biological aspects of soil fertility, plant growth, animal health and human nutrition. Primarily, that consideration is directed to achieving a correct balance in the soil. Fundamentally this arises from a conception that each agricultural unit is a complete microcosm in itself, from which it follows that balance must first be achieved in the soil, on which depends the life of all other elements in the microcosm, animal life, bird life, plant life, human life, insect life. We realise how difficult it is to achieve balance in the soil when we remember that the top nine inches of an acre of fertile soil may contain a total invertebrate population of eighty millions, including insects, earth worms, millipedes and centipedes, spiders and mites, eelworms, snails and slugs and woodlice. These inhabitants play a very important part in maintaining the fertility of the soil and the fact that the average population of such inhabitants in the top nine inches of the average acre in India is probably only a fraction of eighty millions is sufficient evidence to an experienced agriculturist of the infertility of India's soil to-day. It is widely known that earth worms perform valuable services to agriculture but it is not so widely known that the earthworm cannot render those services properly unless and until those other inhabitants have chewed up woody and fibrous material and so prepared that material for the earthworm's consumption. The earthworm has in its body

three large glands which secrete a surprisingly large amount of carbonate of lime; this carbonate of lime acts on material passing through the earthworm's body in such a way that the material when excreted contains an ideal calcium-acid balance. The achievement of that balance is one of the first essentials on the road to a correct balance of all components in the soil. This emphasises the essential importance of having sufficient earthworms in our soil.

It also, incidentally, explains why lime is applied to soil when the worm population is deficient. In the same way, calcium tablets are prescribed by doctors when human beings suffer from excess acidity. Every sensible person knows the aim of the doctor is to restore Nature's balance in the human body. A more widespread knowledge of the same purpose being the primary problem in correct agriculture would result in concerted attempts being made to increase India's earthworm population. What the population should amount to is not established but it is reckoned by some competent observers that any acre of soil rich in organic material, (what the farmer calls "in good heart"), will support over fifty thousand worms. Many acres of so-called agricultural land in India to-day doesn't have a thousand worms. In fact, it is frequently difficult to find any at all in some places.

Before we consider how the earthworm population can be increased let us picture the other inhabitants of the soil, in addition to the invertebrate population. Agricultural scientists have established that a gram of fertile soil, about enough soil to fill a salt spoon, contains up to half a million protozoa, several hundred thousand to three or four million fungi, three or four thousand million bacteria and hundreds of thousands of algae. All this adds up to an almost incredible total of microscopic organisms, each with its own apparently separate existence and each, it should be remembered, an essential element in every agricultural unit, in fact an essential element in the maintenance of the Universe

and everything else that lives in the Universe. This almost incredible total of microscopic organisms exists in the top few inches of soil and is perpetually concerned with the processes of decomposition, which leads to the breaking down of the elaborated carbon compounds locked up in the dead bodies of plants and animals, and of the extraction and or separation, of the elements nitrogen, iron, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur.

A gram of the average soil of India does not contain more than a small fraction of the microscopic organisms established by agricultural scientists as being present in a gram of fertile soil. Without the breaking down of the elaborated carbon compounds and the extension and/or separation of the elements nitrogen, iron etc., plants growing in India's infertile soil cannot possibly be of such value as food to human beings as plants grown on fertile soil would be. This is a fundamental truth which should be prominently kept in front of every leader of public opinion, every legislator, every politician, every doctor, particularly every housewife in India. An increase in the microscopic organisms in India's soil is essential before any progress can be made towards a healthy, happy India. For people fed on inferior food cannot be healthy. If you cannot be healthy you cannot be happy. You certainly cannot hope to give India's soul refuge in an idyllic sylvan setting similar to the setting in which India's highest wisdom was born.

At one time the soil in the Indo-Gangetic plain and delta was probably as fertile as any in the world. The hills bordering the plain and delta were thickly wooded; cultivated areas were small in relation to the total area; the human population was spread over the whole area in comparatively small numbers. Leaves fell from the trees, were mixed with the droppings of birds and of animals, went through a natural process of decomposition and eventually were absorbed into the ground in a state of organic activity ideally suited to adjust any deficiency in the soil caused by the growing of the tree from which

the leaves had fallen. In other words, Nature had provided for a process whereby the leaves would return to the soil from whence they sprung in a form in which they would quickly restore the balance in the soil, that balance having been upset by the growing of the leaves.

As the human population in the Indo-Gangetic plain and delta grew, the balance of living entities above the soil was upset. Nature is very patient. She gives the various entities in her scheme, particularly humans, wide scope for running counter to her over-all plan before taking revenge. So nothing very much seemed to go wrong when the human beings cut down the trees on the hill-tops, thereby upsetting still further Nature's balance. The cutting of the trees deprived the soil of the periodical restoration of its balance through the return of decomposed leaves. The invertebrate population not having suitable material to subsist on, decreased. The earth worms followed suit. This, of course, completely upset the balance in the soil on the hill tops. While a correct balance is maintained on hill tops wind plays a very important part in maintaining fertility in the valleys and plains lower down by removing tiny particles of fertile soil from the hill tops and depositing them lower down. When we remember how many living entities are contained in a gram of fertile soil, (such as Nature provided on the hill tops until man upset the balance), we can visualise how serious it was for the soil in the valleys and plains when the soil on the hill tops was no longer fertile and the wind then began to bring down infertile particles. As suitable material for their existence became less and less the various components in the soil became more and more active. In their struggle for existence the bacteria, for instance, multiplied more rapidly than they otherwise would have done, thereby upsetting still further the balance in the soil. But, deprived of the essentials for existence the return of the leaves would have provided, the bacteria, like the invertebrate population and the earthworms had to accept defeat. Then the

soil rapidly disintegrated. The wind blew more and more of it away. The Rajputana desert is one of the results. Soon no soil at all remained on many hill-tops, nothing but bare rock.

While this process, caused by man's cutting down trees, was going on, the human population moved down from the hill tops in search of land where crops would grow. They repeated the process of destruction all the way down and eventually in the course of centuries have increased the human population in the plain and delta out of all relation to the plant population, the tree population, the birds and wild animal population. The balance is completely upset above the soil.

The balance in the soil is even more upset. The mere cutting down of trees and gradual movement of human population downwards by themselves, as we have seen, would, over the centuries, have upset the balance in the soil. Man hastened the process. He, for instance, grew paddy on the same soil year after year. The paddy plant, in growing from a seed to a fully matured grain extracts from the soil certain elements. Those elements are different from the elements extracted from the soil by the tomato plant, the cabbage plant, the soya bean. Agriculturists know the components in the soil are different at the time of maturity of any plant from the time of planting out the seed. Certain elements will be greater in number, others less. If you adopt what is known as rotation farming, that is, growing different crops in different years, Nature will go a long way to restoring a correct balance between the various components in the soil. But if you grow, as in India, the same crop year after year on the same soil, Nature's best efforts at restoration of balance is finally defeated. Famine is the result.

There is no doubt the balance in the soil and the balance above the soil of India to-day is completely upset. As all life above the soil depends for its existence on food from the soil it is useless to attempt to adjust the

balance above the soil first. Obviously the answer, if it is to be found at all, will be found through an adjustment of the balance in the soil.

This is where the adoption of the Bio-Dynamics type of farming would be invaluable. The first step is a soil analysis. When soil analyses are taken the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium content are estimated and in ordinary practice advice is given to apply chemical fertilisers containing nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium in such quantities as to make up any apparent deficiency. Lime is also generally recommended. The bio-dynamic method does not exclude the possible use of these fertilisers as temporary drugs, just as believers in Nature's processes in relation to the human body do not exclude the possible use of drugs in illnesses of the human body. But the bio-dynamic method quite definitely is opposed to chemical fertilisers as long-term elements and aims at restoring fertility to a degree when chemical fertilisers are unnecessary additions. The plan is to restore the sick soil to normal health, which in effect means to a condition wherein the numerous inhabitants are in correct relation one to the other. Continuing the similarity to a sick human being, the plan is to change over from medicines to an invalid's diet, then to a normal diet. The final aim is a mixed farm built round a focal point such as dairying, market gardening breeding etc. Believing that organic manures are essential in the building-up process the first step is to have a sufficiency of animal life. A few milking cows would be an obvious choice. Not so obvious in India is the necessity to have a part of the farm set apart, in rotation, for the growing of proper grasses to feed the cows with. The more diversified the grasses fed to cattle, the more of what are called formative forces will be released when the animals are fed. The life of the animal will become healthier, the manure will be richer. That manure will go back into the soil to play its part in turn in further enriching the soil. The cows will give better milk, the children drinking the milk will get stronger;

Nature, being given a chance, will soon prove her ability to respond to working along Nature's way.

But Nature's way requires more than cows and children in a properly balanced Unit. Birds are necessary too. Birds suggest trees. Here we have arrived at the point of repairing man's foolishness in cutting down trees. So trees must be planted, as many types of trees as we can possibly find space for. Casurina trees for wind breaks and fuel, mango trees for fruit and furniture making, and so on. It is very important not to make the mistake of having only one type of tree, for that would mean limiting very much the types of birds attracted to the holding.

Domestic birds also would be selected, hens, ducks, geese, turkeys.

Farm-yard manure from all types of stock in the bio-dynamic method is prepared for administration to the soil by fermentation in compost heaps. To the heaps are added egg shells, leaves, hedge clippings, wood ash, weeds irrigation canal cleanings, kitchen refuse, fish skins, in fact all organic matter capable of being broken down by fermentation. Cow urine is systematically applied to the heaps daily, being an important element

in the activation of the bacteria lying latent in the other materials in the heaps.

Compost, properly prepared, contains very large numbers of those micro-organisms, earthworms, fungi, the soil of India is so deficient in. And what is of so much importance is that they not only provide a supply of plant foods by their activity when applied to the soil in compost dressings, but they provide that supply in the exact state required by the plants. Compost, in fact, is what Nature made on the hill-tops from fallen leaves, bird and animal droppings, before man cut down the trees on the hill-tops. In the Bio-dynamic process certain activators are added to the heaps, Cow manure, silica, herbs such as Camomile, Nettle, oak bark, dandelion, valerian—all so processed as to contain high concentrations of Etheric Formative Forces. Regular applications of properly prepared compost restores the balance in the population in the soil in a surprisingly short time. When that balance is restored better quality crops are grown, animals and humans eating those crops benefit in health. In fact, everything points to the intensive use of properly prepared bio-dynamic compost as the first step in bringing back to India that idyllic sylvan setting in which India's soul can find refuge.

RELIGION WITHOUT PRAYERS

By CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD.

In the April issue of *Commentary*, Prof. Irwin Edman has written an article called *Religion without Tears*. It asks the question, 'do moderns need an other-worldly faith?' and its answer is, 'no, they don't.'

This article is worth discussing from a Vedantist point of view, not only because it is moderately and intelligently written, without undue aggressiveness, but because it represents a large body of opinion in the world to-day.

Professor Edman begins by nothing that many people are now turning to religion because they despair of conditions in our society. The 19th century believed that scientific progress would automatically increase human happiness; instead it has brought us the use of the atomic bomb. 'If anything, of late the dissatisfaction with pure mechanism and pure materialism has grown even more acute. In a society increasingly dominated by things and threatened by them, an account of the universe seems a poor thing which leaves out, or seems to leave out what human beings chiefly value—the intimations of truth, goodness and beauty in their lives. The saints and the prophets still seem to say more that is relevant to human personality, to its hopes, its aims, its aspirations than do the bleak formulas of the mechanists and the behaviourists.....'

'If the world of science remains alien to our inmost spiritual needs, where shall we turn? Well, in this age as in previous ones, those who are disillusioned by the formulas and disinherited by the symbols and traditions of the religious past, turn in whatever direction they see a gleam of meaning, hope of consolation. Intellectuals are repeatedly discovering that though they may think they have outgrown theology, they are still in need of religion, of, in the old yet still pregnant phrase

a faith by which to live..... The dilemma is intellectual, and this explains, I think, why solutions are frequently sought by a revolt against intellectualism altogether....The new cults of mysticism at least give surcease from thinking; they provide or seem to provide sesames to protoplasmic peace.

'Other escapes are sought in less obviously non-intellectual ways, but anti-rational ones none the less. There is the cult itself, the reassertion of the basic importance of ritual in religion. The sharing of a common ceremonial hallowed by tradition removes one of the curses of the modern world, the sense of belonging nowhere, of having no bonds or attachments, of being a bleak anonymity in a vast megalapolis. Even the retreat to dogma is often in unintellectual or even anti-intellectual one. It is a flight to authority, it obviates the necessity of coming to one's own even bleak conclusions...There is no doubt that mysticism, ritual and dogma have been assuagements for many persons of a sense of insecurity, of loneliness and emptiness in the modern world.....'

What does the Professor Edman really mean by these remarks? He means, as far as I can understand him, that mysticism can degenerate into vague, irresponsible sentimentality, that ritual *may* be practices as an empty, formal observance, that dogma *is often* only a crutch for weak and lazy minds. Very true. The same thing might be said of one's attitude to a Shakespeare sonnet, a Fourth of July parade, or the Bill of Rights. I have known people who were extremely vague, sentimental and dogmatic when discussing the theory of democracy or the Marxian dialectic.

Religion, certainly, is what we make of it. Our effort is its reward. Has Professor Edman read Sankara, or Vivekananda? I am sure

he has. Then how can he possibly write that mysticism offers us 'surcease from thinking'? What greater demands could be made upon the human brain than Sankara makes this merciless, unwearying process of discrimination which he asks us to apply to every moment of our lives? What greater intellectual independence is there than Vivekananda's who would not even accept the teaching of his own beloved master until he had tested it for himself? Mysticism is empirical, or it is nothing. Ritual is personal act of recollection and self-dedication, or it is meaningless. Dogmas are hypothetically accepted truths, or they are silly.

Is mysticism other-worldly? Not in Professor Edman's sense. The I. W. W. used to sing:

'You will get pie
In the sky
When you die—
It's a lie.'

And they were right. It is the most pernicious of all lies the real 'opium of the people.' No great spiritual teacher has ever uttered it. Vedanta, with its doctrine of Karma and reincarnation, teaches the exact opposite: every thought, every word and every action will be paid for, in this life or in lives to come. Believe, if you wish, that death is the end. But do not dare to imagine that you can get away with murder, and be rewarded for it with 'pie', into the bargain. If there is a personal survival, it follows, surely, that our problem, our karmas, will survive with us, and that these karmas will determine the conditions of our future existence.

However, that is not the point. What has to be emphasised, again and again, is that mystical religion does not lay nearly so much stress on the question of personal survival as its critics seem to imagine. Buddha did not promise his disciples an other-worldly heaven;

he promised the 'ending of sorrow,' here and now. The mystics offer us a way of happiness here in this world; they offer us a way of understanding the true nature of the present life. Certainly, the basis of this happiness and understanding is outside time and circumstance—it is within this world but not of it. In that sense alone, it is 'other-worldly.'

Professor Edman continues: 'The first rehabilitation necessary is a revival of faith in man's own potentialities and in man's own hopes. The lack of confidence in these lies in the fact that by a century-old diffidence men have not trusted their own ideals unless they came from a world beyond this world.

But when it is realized, as Lucretius long ago realized that the most generous and flowering of human values are growths of these same natural energies out of which plants and animals grow, a wonderful resurgence both of human hope and of cosmic piety is possible... The first step needed in the rehabilitation of the human faith in candidly human values is a rediscovery of the reach and scope of human nature itself.'

Professor Edman deplors the fact that 'there has long been bred in the human imagination a distrust of anything tainted with the material, the fleshly, the earthly.' Did the mystics, in fact, feel this distrust? Christ would not condemn the woman taken in adultery, Ramakrishna liked to talk to drunkards and once offered consecrated food to a cat, St. Francis preached to the birds, Vivekananda wrote, 'see no difference between the ant and the angel; every worm is brother of the Nazarene.' I suppose Professor Edman would object that, Ramakrishna was not worshipping the cat as a cat, but as the Eternal Reality within the creature. He is quite right, but where does this lead him? He says that he wants to discover the reach and scope of human nature itself. Doesn't human nature include the mystical experience

of Eternal Reality? Aren't saints human beings? How are we to have faith in some man's own potentialities while we reject others? I do not want to sound captious, but I simply cannot follow Professor Edman here. 'Even theological ideas,' he says 'may be transcriptions of facts encountered and truths discovered in actual experience and in the natural world. Filial piety is familiar human emotion. It becomes sanctified by a commandment, but the commandment simply dignifies what human beings deeply feel.' If 'actual experience' is our criterion, can we honestly deny the experiences of spiritual religion? They, also, are deeply felt. And the world's scriptures simply dignify them.

But perhaps this is only playing with words. The end of the article, at any rate, is perfectly clear. It raises a very important question.

'What is needed is not a counsel of escape into an emptiness called Nirvana or the Absolute. Rather the challenge is to an ordering of personal life through intelligent understanding so that the varied riches of human values may blend and fuse into a rich and vital happiness. And the challenge, too, is the making of a social order in which individuals may come to diversified facilities.'

'Individual lives cannot be ordered except in an ordered society. There cannot be healthy souls in a sick commonwealth. Thus, the central challenge to a naturalistic philosophy is that of a society harmonized through intelligence... The mystical sense that once declared us all the children of God can now find realization in the awareness of our common humanity. The sadness that comes from the recognition that individual life ends with the grave is mitigated for any generous mind by the continuity of the adventure of mankind, and the participation, even if briefly, in the shape of things to come.'

This, of course, is the official philosophy of the Soviet Union. You work for the future, a willing cog in a great machine. You function for a while, wear out, and are discarded. It doesn't matter. The machine goes on.

As Professor Edman tacitly admits, it is a non-rational philosophy that is to say, it demands faith. You must believe that the spirit of human progress really is ascending, that life on this earth will get better and better. It is a faith which is anchored in time, in the future. Only history can prove it right or wrong. Suppose the human species dies out? Suppose we blow ourselves up, or hit a star? Then all our endeavours, *from an historical point of view*, will have been in vain.

Professor Edman would reply that we mustn't look on the dark side of things. We must have courage. Certainly we must—but where is this courage to be found? Only, it seems to me, in the doctrine of non-attached action, of work performed as ritual, which the Bhagavad Gita teaches. Non-attached action, however, is a mystical idea—and so Professor Edman is forced to reject it.

If you reject mystical religion, and at the same time, lose yourself in an earthly Utopia, what remains? Nothing but sheer stoicism, the grimmest and most heroic of man's philosophies. It is, indeed, a philosophy of heroes. Ordinary people will always shrink from it. I shrink from it myself. If this is all life offers, why I should I stay alive?

My duty to society? What does this actually mean? On the level of 'candidly human values,' it means my neighbours, Smith, Jones, Robinson and Brown. I quite like Smith. Jones, bores me. Robinson I scarcely know, Brown I detest. If I am to work for them, to dedicate my life to them, I have somehow got to love them all. But how?

I can only love Smith, Jones, Robinson and Brown and two billion others if I can see them *sub specie aeternitatis*; if I can learn to recognize, within each individual, the same Eternal Reality. In order to do this, I must first find the Eternal Reality within myself. You can't recognize what you don't know.

The search for Reality is a mystical one. It involves prayer and meditation and self-discipline, or, as Professor Edman would say, 'religion and tears.' Without it, I firmly believe, there can be no enduring co-operation between human beings. Without it, you cannot build the Just City, on earth or anywhere else. The bricks simply will not hold together.

And yet I cannot help feeling, as I read this article and many similar articles and

books, that the humanistic materialists and the followers of mystical religion are not nearly so far apart as they imagine. Surely, with the goodwill and effort on both sides, we can come to understand each other? Surely we can find a basis of agreement? We all want the same thing a faith to live by. The need was never more urgent. We should study each other's ideas, not in a spirit of contemptuous criticism, but quietly and thoughtfully. If words and phrases, too long contaminated by hypocrisy and careless mis-use, are getting between us, then we must reject them. The alternative is growing suspicion, the closing of minds, the hardening of hearts and, ultimately, perhaps, persecution. And that, as we ought to have learned by this time, will help nobody. (*Reproduced from 'Vedanta and the West'*).

The true devotees lose themselves in God
And sacrifice their worldly things all
They are like the bees that hum round
The honied flower and sit on.

There are other devotees who are like the flies
Now sit on the bun, now on the dung
Their time is spent in the company of God
And of men.

The true devotee is like the chatak *
That looks heavenward for the rain water
And shall never slake his thirst
Though the sea may rise in flood.

* Chatak—An Indian lark.

—S. C. Sen Gupta, M.A.

THE CONDUCT OF AN IDEAL WIFE

(From the Mahabharata)

Candili, a lady of great purity, by virtue of her sinlessness had succeeded in becoming a denizen of the heavenly regions. Another lady named Sumana of the Kekaya's race once upon a time visiting the celestial regions met Candili and was struck with her radiance and spiritual charm. She asked her by what conduct and what course of discipline she has attained this heavenly charm and status.

Sumana: Celestial sister, you seem to be a daughter of the Lord of stars, come to heaven in your own effulgence. You are adorned in white garments and yet are cheerful and at your ease. You are shining like a flame of fire. Certainly, you have achieved this by considerable penance and vows. May I request you to enlighten me as to the secret of your success and glory?

Thus questioned Candili replied without being heard by others.

Candili: I did not wear yellow robes; nor barks of trees. I did not shave my head; nor did I keep matted locks on my head. It is not as a reward of such acts that I have become a celestial. I never, in heedlessness, addressed any disagreeable or evil speech to my husband. I was always devoted to the worship of the deities, the Manes and the Brahmanas. I waited upon and served my mother-in-law and father-in-law with all attention and devotion. It was my resolution

not to behave with deceit, but be sincere. I never used to stay at the door of my house nor did I speak long with anybody. I never did any evil act; I never laughed aloud; I did not injure anyone. I did not disclose any secret.

When my husband went out on business and came back, I served him and worshipped him with reverence. I never ate an item of food that was unknown to my husband and with which my husband was not pleased. Rising early at dawn, I did and caused to be done whatever was required to be accomplished for my relatives and kinsmen. When my husband leaves home for a distant place on any business, I remain at home engaged in diverse kinds of auspicious acts for blessing his enterprise. Never during the absence of my husband, I use collyrium, or ornaments, or wash my body properly or use garlands. When my husband sleeps in peace I never wake him up even if an important business demanded it. I was happy to sit beside him lying asleep. I never urged my husband to exert more and earn more wealth for his family. I spare no pains to keep the premises clean. That woman who, with concentrated attention, adheres to this path of duty and keeps away from sin, becomes the recipient of great honours in heaven like a second Arundhati.

During the first four years of his Sadhana life, the Master of his own accord had engaged in the Vaishnava sadhana of Shanta bhava and sometimes also of the Sakhya bhava, in the spirit of Sridam and Sudam and other cowherd friends of Sri Krishna, of Brindavan. We had told our readers in preceding pages how he strove hard to realise the servant-ideal of Mahavira and actually lived and acted like him, and was blessed with the divine vision of Sitadevi. So he specially devoted himself now to the realisation of the other two principal bhavas, namely, the Vatsalya and the Madhura.

Perhaps it was during this period, that Sri Ramakrishna spent some time in the Janbazar house of Mathur Babu. An incident of the time which we shall relate to our readers, will strikingly bear out our thesis that Master could easily remould his whole being in any particular bhava, for the time being annihilating, as it were, the other aspects of his nature.

It was the beautiful autumn season of Bengal, when a strangely sweet calmness pervades the whole atmosphere and an almost palpable sense of something divine fills the mind with a keen expectation! Mathurath was celebrating as usual the autumn festival of the worship of the Divine Mother and had brought the Master a few days ago from the Dakshineswar temple to his place at Janbazaar, which naturally had added infinitely to the usual immensity of the joy of the occasion. For the very presence of the Master absorbed in the supreme bliss of divine consciousness, had transferred to everything around him something transcendental. The whole place had assumed an aspect of ethereal beauty; the image of the Mother appeared instinct with life, and a tense atmosphere of the divine presence

filled the shrine and was aggressively tangible even to the obtusest mind. No effort or expense had been spared to make the occasion an all-round perfection; thus there was an abundance of everything, and the image of the Mother was also sumptuously decorated with ornaments; if there was anything wanting in the spirit, that was now more than enough compensated for by the blissful and spiritually vitalising presence of the Master, and we may say that the sense of an indescribable heavenly beauty which pervaded the whole place must have inspired the heart of Mathur and his wife with an ineffable joy.

The Saptami day came; Mother's day-time worship done, the day slowly passed into night and it was now time for the vesper service of the Divine Mother, during which lights and other articles were to be offered to the Deity. Here, in the inner apartments of Mathur's house, the Master wore a different appearance altogether. He had dressed himself like a woman, and thereby obliterated from his mind all consciousness of his masculinity; every word or gesture expressed the consciousness of his being an eternal handmaid of the Mother, and his whole soul was now lost in a perpetual dedication of his body, mind and self at Her lotus-feet! His face shone with a supernatural lustre; a smile not of this world, flickered around the corners of the mouth, and his whole look and movements expressed only the woman that took possession of him! The change was so complete and thorough that it was absolutely impossible to recognise him as one belonging to the sterner sex.

The service (Aratrikam) was about to begin, but since the Master's bhava did not evince any sign of abatement, Sm. Jagadamba, wife of Mathur Babu, was in a fix as to her duty.

She wished very much to have the Master's presence on the occasion at the shrine, but that of course appeared to her improbable under his present almost unconscious state; nor could she leave him in charge of anybody else, lest the music of the Aratrikam might draw him away, and any harm might come to the Master's person in this his semi-conscious condition. Sorely troubled at the situation, she suddenly hit upon an idea which yielded an easy solution to her difficulties. She hurriedly got out some of her precious jewellery; and while putting them on the person of the Master, she repeatedly whispered into his ears, 'Come, father, come, let us go to the Aratrikam of the Mother; won't you go there to fan Her?'

Now, it was always true of the Master that whenever his mind used to get lost in the contemplation of any particular aspect of Divinity, however wholly his soul might be absorbed in it, and his mind be perfectly unconscious of everything else, he used to be always susceptible and responsive to the mentioning of the Name of that particular aspect or words relating to that Deity. Hence the words of Jagadamba produced the desired effect on the Master; for he presently came down to a semi-conscious state and gladly followed her to the shrine. The Aratrikam immediately began, and the Master stood amongst the assembled women and began to fan the Mother with chamara. Just then, from the other side, Mathur Babu chanced to look at the ladies and his eyes fell upon that unknown 'lady,' dazzling in personal beauty and adorned with silk and jewels, standing by the side of his wife. He took her to be one of his wife's friends and kept quiet.

The service being over, the Master returned along with the ladies into the inner apartments and when he came down to his normal consciousness, he divested himself of the

female attire, came out to the men's assembly in the outer apartments of the house and engaged himself in religious conversation.

When, however, Mathur went inside, he enquired of his wife about the strange lady he had seen beside her at the time of Aratrikam. She laughed out at her husband's confusion, and said, 'Didn't you indeed recognise him? It was our Baba! He was in bhava and was fanning the Mother. But it is no wonder that you failed to know him; if he puts on a female dress, he never looks a man' and then described the whole affair to him. Mathur was plunged in profound wonder at this disclosure and said, 'Indeed, it is impossible to catch him even in little things! Don't you see how even with such intimate knowledge of him, I failed to recognise him?'

But this was not a solitary instance of his power of remoulding his personality into the feminine being. Even at Dakshineswar, we have personally seen him manifesting the Prakritibhava (i.e., feminine personality), though there it did not last long at a time; for obviously he had by that time transcended all those particularities of bhavas and had as well experienced the Adwaita—the transcendental unitary consciousness of the self; and if he now manifested any particular bhava, it was only for the good of the devotees that came to him.

Indeed, in order to understand the full significance of the Master's sadhanas, it is absolutely necessary to appreciate first the unique constitution of his mind, and the tremendous changes that were brought into it by the last eight years of his strenuous sadhanas. We had it from his own lips, that even till the year in which he had first visited the Dakshineswar temple, and some time following as well, he sincerely believed in the prospect of his living the life of an honest house-holder,

following the footsteps of his forefathers; and never for a moment imagined the existence of any superior mentality in him, distinguishing him from the common run of men. But when the actual life began, his extraordinary nature became revealed at every step and he felt a power Divine behind him, unmasking the sordid insignificance of the sense objects in which the ordinary life revelled, and impelling him along a way, contrary to what is trodden by the common people. He soon accustomed himself to faithfully resign himself to the guidance of that Divine Power, with an easiness which is possible only for a mind, that is at once truthful, self-less, and free from all worldly proclivities.

Illustrations of the above statement abound in the Master's life, even from his childhood. We know how he refused to have anything to do with an education which, as he graphically described, could bring only 'rice and plantain'; and how, though accepting the priest's post in the Kali temple in order to improve the financial condition of his family, he shortly came to look at his duties in a different light and devoted his whole soul to God-realisation. Again, though married yet knowing that complete sense-control was an absolute condition of the realisation of God, he did not know his wedded wife either in word, thought or action. And he once for all eradicated the tendency of storing up things—so common to the prudent man of the world—even trifles, what to speak of money, having known it to be a great obstruction to the spirit of absolute resignation to God. A reflection on the above facts clearly shows how little indeed was the influence, the seductions of the world had on his mind even from his childhood, and how everything gave way before his strong will and infinite perseverance. Not even his former samskaras and habits could ever thwart him in his realisation of the *chosen* ideal.

Even as a child, we find him evincing great powers of memory, never forgetting what he once heard and able to reproduce it verbatim. We have told our readers how he would reproduce in toto before his crowded friends, all the Ramayana recitation, song or Jatra, which he had but attended for once. Thus we find him equipped fully with the qualifications of absolute truthfulness, un-failing memory and strong retentive powers, even before he entered into his sadhana life; and hence, it is no wonder that he, being master of these mental graces, which themselves required a life-long sadhana for an ordinary sadhaka, should make such rapid advance in spiritual life, in such a short period of time. Often we were struck dumb with surprise to learn from him that he went through the most difficult sadhanas and realised the goal of each within the incredibly short period of only three days; but that was because, we were not then aware of this superhuman constitution of his mentality.

A reference to some episodes of his life will clearly bring out our point. Towards the beginning of his sadhana he took a few pieces of silver and a lump of earth in each hand and intently reasoning on the evanescent character of both, he several times repeated the words 'money is earth, earth is money' and threw them together into the waters of the Ganges; and with them was thrown out from his mind, for ever into the water, that instinctive attachment for money, which is so deep-rooted in the ordinary man! He cleaned such places with his own hands, as a man never treads without afterwards purifying himself by a bath; and at once his mind became permanently freed from the instinctive feeling of the superiority of his high birth, and conceived it as in no way higher than that of even the untouchables of the society! Having realised himself as the child of the Divine Mother, he could never live with his wife in any conjugal

relation; for have not the scriptures declared, 'all beings of the feminine kind are but different forms of the Divine Mother?' We cannot properly evaluate these events without being conscious of the extraordinary power of application of the Master's mind; and if, in our wonder and incredulity, we fail to properly appreciate these incidents, it is because we know that though we may a thousand times imitate the Master's action in throwing off money and earth as equally useless, yet the attachment would still linger in us as persistently as ever. We know that like him, we may time and again wash dirty places, and yet that would not wash off the foul egotism of our soul; and that though from childhood, it has been dinned into our ears that every woman is in fact a personification of the Divine Mother Herself, yet in moments of weakness, this knowledge appears scarcely potent to help us. Our minds in fact are so hopelessly fettered with

the bonds of our previous Karmas that in spite of our persistent endeavours, we fail to achieve any tangible result. As we proceed in our sadhanas, with a mind that is devoid of similar self-control and power of application, and is overridden with the samskaras of the previous life, the result also becomes equally poor. Rare indeed is the appearance of such a powerful mind as the Master's in human society, it is doubtful if it comes even once in four or five hundred years. Unshakable self-control, adamant persistence in application, perfect freedom from the grasp of previous samskaras which are ordinarily so relentless,—dowered with all these uncommon graces, how his mind engaged itself, being driven mad, as it were, by that wonderful thirst for God-realisation, in the spiritual sadhanas, and ultimately was blessed with the perfect God-vision—is a thing we cannot conceive even with the highest flight of our imagination!

THE UNSEEN FLOWER

By S. C. SEN GUPTA, M. A.

I loved the colour and the smell,
But forgot the tree,
I loved the melody and the song,
But remembered not the bird,
I loved the wave and the drink,
But overlooked the stream,
I loved the stars and the moon,
But headed not the heaven,
I loved the word and the hand,
But knew not the man,
When I stood before Thee and wanted Thy blessing,
Thou wert pleased to say
"Who art thou? Thou art to me not known".

'Industry without art is brutality' said Ruskin at a time when Industry has begun to show her brutality. Machine came and not only robbed the poor man of his bread but things of their beauty. Utility was the only cry. In the pre-industrial days, that is, in the heyday of village industries, utilitarianism was never allowed to invade the sanctum of art. All crafts were arts and all craftsmen, e.g. weaver, barber, potter, carpenter etc., were recognised as artists. According to Indian spiritual convictions art can touch and transform the whole of life, to live was to experience art. 'The supreme moments are those when one can do common duties with great artistic ease and excellence' says the Gita. So in traditional society things were not considered useful if they were not artistically made.

The close inter-relation of art and industry is thus apparent in traditional arts and in our folk-arts. How and when came this separation between the two? How far is the machine responsible for the divorce between art and industry and how an Art-in-Industry movement must be sponsored, not only for keeping up the stamina of our artistic side but to strengthen our morale, are discussed in a very interesting way by S. J. Clerk in the May number of the *Visvabharati*.

Amongst the factors that brought about the separation between art and craft, the art pundits' slogan 'art for art's sake' is a powerful one. In all sentimentality and cynicism they said that art and work are incompatible categories. Dignity of manual labour is woefully at a discount and the modern artist thinks his art will perish if he is to do physical work. 'Why should I walk, when the car will carry me' asks he.

The greatest blunder committed in regard to the machine was that it was not shown its

place in human life and now it is everywhere, in all unwanted places. By itself machine is not a spreader of ugliness or of destruction. We have made it so. The atomic energy that reduced Hiroshima and Nagasaki to nothing can be made to contribute substantially towards human happiness. In the same way beauty can design for Industry as in America. India is in a peculiarly half-baked stage. She has given up the virtues of her traditions, but not yet got the virtues of modern industrialised West. Instead she has got her vices. In point of factory hygiene, lay-out, status and freedom to workers, which in fact are the fountains of industrial art, India is far back of the West. Yet India has made some headway in Art-in-Industry movements.

Mention may be made of the Art-in-Industry movement sponsored in our country by the Tatas and by the Burma Shell Company of America.

Indian genius knew well to combine art and utility, that is, art and Industry, and even to-day can do so in spite of the machines. We have made the machines and we can order them turn out beautiful products. We must be convinced that ugliness whether on canvass or cabinet is a crime against civilization and ugly objects for mass-distribution something to be penalised. Before this can happen, ugliness must be banished from daily life, we mean the ugliness of violence, hate, persecution, jealousy and all its hordes. There is no more heinous sin against art than these. Coming in contact with blood and death too often, with concentration camps, mass plunders, massacres and similar bestialities we have lost much of our tender sentiments, our human values. A life overflowing with love, compassion, poise, gracefulness and peace is the most artistic life. Such a life can not only touch and transform other un-artistic lives, but create beauty out of

ugliness, peace and poise out of our indecent haste and we love out of hate. Men who live such lives are the greatest desideratum of these days.

We have beaten our ancestors in the matter of technical and intellectual progress. We have conquered air by aeroplane; we have annihilated distance, we have conquered the foulest diseases and plagues. But we also have beaten our ancestors in cruelty and bestiality. Morally, we are behind the most uncivilized of our forefathers. Cannot moral integrity and technical progress meet? We can yet be masters of machine and retain our

achievements, realised through its services, and at the same time discard its evils—wars and exploitation. Machine can still be made to serve the purpose of realising the maximum of human happiness. For the maximum benefit of the largest number of human beings we shall require mass production and rapid means of transport—both impossible without machine. It will not help us to forget the present machine age as a bad dream and return to the pre-machine age of the bullock cart. But it will certainly be helpful to dream and labour to bring in the age of artistic Industry.

WHY RELIGIONS DEGENERATE

Why do religions degenerate? Rain water is pure, but by the time it reaches earth it gets dirty owing to the medium it passes through. If the roofs and the pipes and the channels are all dirty, the water discharged through them must also be dirty. So religion gets defiled by the medium through which it manifests.

—Sri Ramakrishna.

THE GANDHIAN WAY: BY
ACHARYA J. B. KRIPALANI. PUBLISHED
BY VORA AND CO., BOMBAY. THIRD
EDITION 1945. PP. 184. PRICE RS. 4/-.

To a large section of the Indian intelligentsia who can only understand the language of the West Mahatma Gandhi is an enigmatic personality. They find his philosophy of life to be reactionary, medieval, and illogical. Many even among his disciples and ardent admirers find it difficult to understand him and when they follow him they do so in a blind manner. Acharya Kripalani has done a great service to the critics as well as the admirers of Mahatma Gandhi by writing this book on "The Gandhian way" and by explaining through it the principles for which the Mahatma stands and relating them to a philosophy of life of which the modern world is in great need.

One point which the radicals, the socialist and the Marxists of contemporary India criticise in the Gandhian way is the emphasis he has placed on the spinning wheel and cottage industries in general as distinguished from large-scale factory industries using highly complicated machinery. Acharya Kripalani gives a fairly convincing answer to such critics. There are two basic factors about India today. One is that the masses are poor and the other is that she is not an independent and free country. From these factors it is that the need for cottage industries arises. Modern industrialism brings a large number of evils along with it. It leads to concentration of wealth and therefore of political power in the hands of the few and to the misery and suffering of the labourers. It is true that government can mitigate some of these evils and that under communism as it is organised in Russia most of them have disappeared. But the British government cannot be expected in the first place to encourage industrialism; secondly it has not evinced much interest in effective labour legislation. Large scale industries have no chance of being established on the right lines until we become politically free. But people require immediate relief and they can get this only through the encouragement of cottage industries. To the criticism that this will create a reform mentality and kill the growth of a revolutionary mentality among the masses Acharya Kripalani gives an effective answer.

For Mahatma Gandhi is one of the greatest of revolutionaries. The overthrow of British imperialism and the establishment of Poorna Swaraj is the goal which he has placed before his countrymen and he has been trying to accomplish this through direct action of a revolutionary character. Only the means which he has adopted and which he

wants his countrymen to adopt is different from that which revolutionaries in the west have become accustomed. He does not want to use force or violence. It is through non-violent satyagraha that he is trying to secure the freedom of the country. Satyagraha is organised resistance of the masses to foreign rule. It has already accomplished a great deal and has brought the country nearer Swaraj. It is the only ideal way of winning independence in the situation in which India is placed to-day and in this age of mechanised warfare any revolution based on force has not greater chances of success. And so far no critic of Mahatma Gandhi has suggested any other effective alternative.

But Mahatma Gandhi, philosophy of non violence and Satyagraha has a wider appeal. Wars have become more terrible today. A third world war is sure to destroy civilisation. It is only when nations resort to the method of non-violence that there is a chance for humanity to survive. Mahatma Gandhi's message is therefore not merely message for India but for the whole world.

The essence of the Gandhian way is the abandonment of what Kripalani calls the 'dual morality' that has been the characteristic of human life for ages. Moral principles which are regarded as sacred when an individual deals with another are completely discarded in group life—when one state deals with another. Duplicity, Fraud, deceit—all these are regarded as justifiable in dealing's between nations. But the evolution of social institutions like the Family, Marriage, education etc. shows how everywhere the principle of love and kindness have been gaining the upper hand. It will therefore be logical to adhere to these principles in the sphere of international relations also. It is also here that Mahatma Gandhi differs from all other prophets and seers who were generally disposed to think that unless a man gave up his connections with the ordinary world there is no prospect of his attaining salvation.

These and other matters are discussed by Kripalani with a great deal of insight and knowledge of world history. To sociologists the chapter on constructive work and Revolution will be specially appealing.

There is one question however to which Acharya Kripalani does not give a satisfactory or a clear answer. It is the question whether when India becomes free and has a national government strong enough to industrialise the country and do away with all the evils of factory system there can be a case made out for cottage industries. It is this

that should now engage the attention of constructive workers as we are on the threshold of securing independence.

M. VENKATARAMAIA.

"HINDUISM AND UNTOUCHABILITY": BY SWAMI SUNDARANANDA
UDBODHAN OFFICE, CALCUTTA. PP. 130.
PRICE RS. 2/-.

This book was originally published in 1922. The second edition of it is now published with the necessary additions and alterations which the lapse of almost quarter of a century has demanded and is also provided with a brief foreword by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha. The problem of untouchability in Hinduism is discussed from the social point of view in the first chapter and from the national point of view in the second, and throughout there is an eloquent plea for the removal of untouchability, which is a blot on Hinduism and Hindu society. Swami Vivekananda, whose opinions on the subject are profusely quoted in this book, once declared that "no religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and low in such a fashion as Hinduism". This discrepancy between theory and practice is the result of superstition, bigotry and the misunderstanding of scriptures. Castes were originally functional and not hereditary and there were no impassable barriers in ancient times between one caste and another as now. Our scriptures record how Valmiki, Vyasa and Visvamitra rose to Brahminhood from the lower castes. In fact, the great object of the Hindu system of Varnashrama was to raise the Kshatriya, the Vaishya, the Sudra and even the primitive tribes to the rank of Brahminhood from their respective positions by slow, steady and gradual process. Accordingly Swami Vivekananda in his great speech on the Mission of Vedanta delivered at Kumbakonam declared:

"There is a law laid on each one of you in this land by your ancestors, whether you are Aryans or non-Aryans, Rishis or Brahmins or the very lowest outcasts. The command is the same to you all, that you must make progress without stopping and that, from the highest man to the lowest Pariah, every one in this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin..... Such is our ideal of caste, as meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realisation of that great ideal of the spiritual man, who is non-resisting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure and meditative".

There are again innumerable instances in historical times of men of the lowest castes and of untouchable classes who have risen to the rank of saint hood by the purity of their lives and the intensity of their devotion to God. And the images of these saints—Tiruppana Alwar, Nanda, Chokamela and Nampodwan—are worshipped in temples and their birth-day ceremonies observed by orthodox Brahmin priests even to this day. The great leaders of Hindu society from time immemorial have condemned the evil custom of untouchability. Ramanada, Nanak, Tukaram, Chaitanya and in recent times, Ram Mohun Roy, Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Ranade, Tilak, Madan Mohan Malaviya and, above all, Mahatma Gandhi have pleaded for the absorption of the Depressed classes into Hindu society. It was only the other day that Mahatma Gandhi said:

"Let us not forget that untouchability is a most difficult thing to remove and our task is a difficult one. But I have no doubt that God will remove untouchability or remove Hinduism".

—D. S. S.

ESSENCE OF HINDUISM: BY
SWAMI NIKHILANANDA. PUBLISHED BY
THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CEN-
TER, NEW YORK. PAGES 91. PRICE
\$ 1.25.

Something cannot come out of nothing. If bliss is the end of spiritual sadhana that bliss must have been there in the beginning also. Yes, that bliss was always there in you, says the Hindu seer, as your very self. The soul is not only blissful, says the Hindu seer, but infinite, for the infinite alone can give us real bliss and not the finite. The self is not only infinite but immortal for the infinite never dies. It is not only infinite but also non-dual, for there cannot be two infinities. So this immortal blissful, infinite essence, our soul, was always in us brooding over us every moment. We have only to know this great fact. Knowledge brings immortality, Jnanadevatu Kaivalyam. This is the essence of Hindu wisdom and it is this outstanding contribution of Hinduism that Swami Nikhilananda has interpreted in his usual masterly way with all wealth of reading and originality.

The book falls into two parts, being two lectures the Swami delivered. In the first part entitled 'Immortality' is discussed Hinduism's distinctive contribution to philosophy and in the second part Hinduism is presented as the best 'faith for today'. The integral vision that All is one and I am that one, the samyagdarsan, is the final fruit of all true philosophy. This vision is earned when

one knows one's inner essence, the soul, in all its spiritual glory. To realise one's spiritual quality is to see the spiritual nature of the whole world says Sankara. How can this forgotten spiritual quality of ours and our at-one ment with the All be realised? By knowledge, says the Hindu seer, by the knowledge that the soul alone is real and all things illusory, by knowing and reliving the glory of the soul which was for sometime forgotten and displaced by the glory of things. The consciousness of our oneness, when gained lives always in us and once we know that we are in essence the All, we never die; we become immortal. Thus true knowledge ushers immortality in our everyday lives. It is this difficult doctrine that Swami Nikhilananda has explained in such a simple way with all the psychological implications leading to this culmination.

In the second part, the author stresses the practical side of Hindu religion and shows how Hinduism is a rational and spiritual religion. The exposition of the four yogas as the four paths is brilliant and helpful to the aspirants. Incidentally the Swami explains the Hindu conceptions of the universe, God, soul, realization, and morality and sums up the cardinal truths of Hinduism as the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence, the harmony of religions and the oneness of God. But, by far the most substantial part is the conclusion where the Swami has shown how Hinduism supremely fulfils our modern needs for a spiritual religion, for a complete ethics and for a living faith.

The book meets both the philosophical and religious needs of readers and is sure to be popular both in the East and the West.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI AVYAKTANANDA'S WORK IN LONDON

For the last eight years and more Swami Avyaktananda of the Ramakrishna Mission has been doing silent yet substantial work in London for spreading the influence of Indian-cum-Vedantic ideas and ideals, for promoting mutual understanding between all religions, races and nations and the spiritual and economic unity of mankind. From the response his work is receiving it must be said that he is successfully nurturing into full growth the seeds of Vedanta sown by Swami Vivekananda half a century ago.

The Swami is an untiring worker: in addition to initiating and carrying on the *Vedanta Movement*, his central activity, he is the chief moving figure in the constructive programme of many Associations that sponsor International peace, mutual cultural unity and Indian Independence. He is the president of the 'Indian Cultural Unity Movement' which is a group of Indians in England who are working for a New India with the cultural autonomy of all communities. The Movement has a ten-point programme in which rewriting the history of India bringing into prominence the contributions of all communities to the building of a cultural India, advocacy of full marital freedom including divorce, pursuing of art as a means of developing a community of ideas and feelings for the cultural elevation of all sections of Indian people, creation of 'non-communal' community centres and youth Hostels, and encouragement of inter-dining and inter marriage, are items that figure prominently. The Swami is also the president of the World Peace Movement and chairman of the League for the Federation of Mankind, a movement for those interested in building a new world of peace, security and freedom. He is also intimately connected with the Indian Independence Union and published early in 1946 a very stirring

paper '*Indian Independence*' a powerful appeal of spiritual India to moral Britain to transfer power to really Indian hands.

THE CONVENTION OF RELIGIONS

The great event in the year's history of the Swami's work is the London Convention of Religions the Vedanta Movement organised at 51 Lancaster Gate, London, between the 25th and 31st August 1946. The objects of the convention are: (1) to show regard for all religions and to discuss the essential harmony of all religions, (2) to discuss the spiritual basis of human solidarity and the contribution of each religion to the solution of present-day problems, and (3) to further a spiritual understanding between the East and the West. All great religions were represented by able and eminent men, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and the Chinese faiths. Problems of practical and immediate interest were discussed, for instance, Religion and Art, Religion & youth etc. Swami Avyaktananda as usual took a very active and important part in the conduct and discussions of the sessions. In the opening session he spoke on Religion and Modern Problems, performed Hindu service on the second day and spoke in the final session on Religion and world reconstruction. The convention was a splendid success and is certainly the measure of the Swami's work in London as also of the response of the West to the Vedantic truth, the unity of all religions.

The Swami lives a very austere and active life. A good yet varied cross section of the London society is getting attracted to the Swami's dynamic life and teachings. The Swami has a widening circle of admirers and devotees which in itself is an eloquent testimony that the seeds of Vedanta sown by Swami Vivekananda have grown into a glorious garden and are being ably nourished by the loving hands of Swami Avyaktananda.

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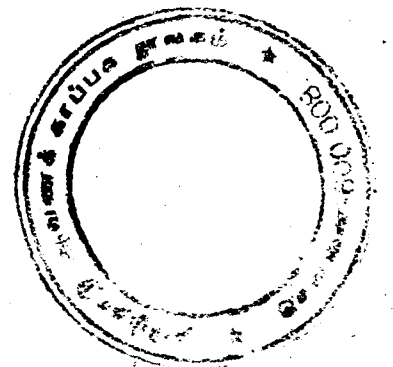
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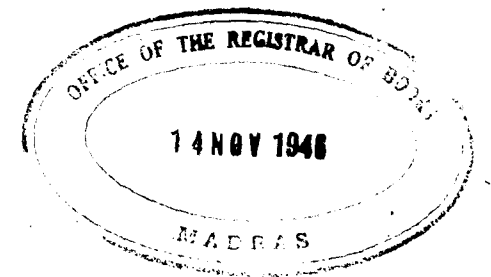
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CONTENTS

	PAGES
CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA	229
WISEACRES By Dilip Kumar Roy	231
PURE HANDS, NOT FULL	232
CONCEPT OF MOKSHA By Kumar Pal, M. A.	236
SWAMI VIJNANANANDA AND HIS MYSTIC EXPERIENCES... .. By Swami Jagdiswarananda	242
ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SOME CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT-PATTERNS By Aldous Huxley	247
CHHANDOGYOPANISHAD By Swami Tyagisananda	250
AN EDUCATION RELEVANT TO OUR NEEDS	257
THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ON THE REIGN OF TERROR	258
NOTES AND COMMENTS	259
REVIEWS AND NOTICES	263
NEWS AND REPORTS	265

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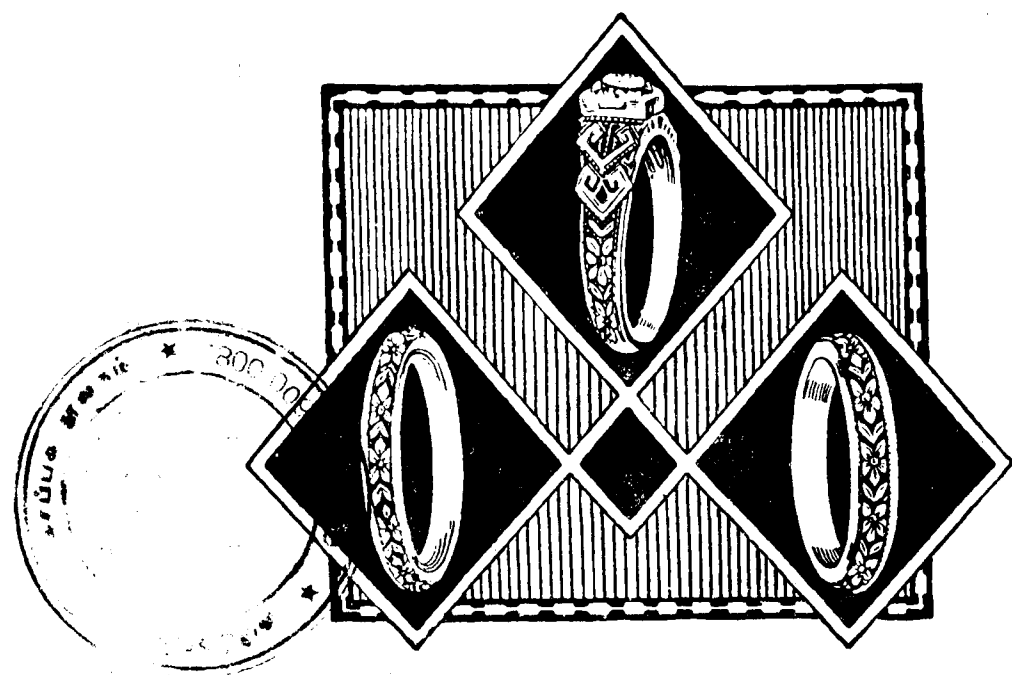
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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

To gain control over tongue, sleep and sex, the instinctual drives in man, Swami Adbhutananda undertook many hard austerities. Harder still were the *sadhanas* he practised to get rid of egoism. The sense of 'I' and 'mine' is perhaps the greatest enemy of spiritual life and it is more difficult to subjugate it than the natural appetites. To purge Latu of his 'I-ness and my-ness', of his *abhimana*, Sri Ramakrishna guided him along many paths of spiritual discipline.

One day the Master said to Latu: 'The partaking of food got by *bhiksha* (begging) banishes all sense of egoism'. Hearing these words of the Master a desire arose in Latu Maharaj to go a-begging. But he dared not express his wish for many days. One day Sri Ramakrishna called Latu Maharaj and asked him to go on *bhiksha*. In the forenoon he went to a neighbouring village and returned after midday. Seeing the quantity of food brought by Latu Maharaj the Master said:

Sri Ramakrishna: Look here, you should beg only that much which is absolutely necessary. Why should you bring more? You should not store up food got by *bhiksha*.

Once Latu Maharaj said: The Master one day asked me and Rakhal Babu (Swami Brahmananda) to go on *bhiksha*. At the time of our leaving the Master as usual told us:

'Some will abuse you; some will bless you; some will give money. You must receive all.'

In the first instance, somebody seeing us came to drive us out of his house. 'You, young, sturdy boys', he shouted, 'you have come to beg? Can you not work and eat.' Hearing these words Rakhal Babu became much depressed. I (Latu Maharaj) then told him that the Master has in the beginning itself told us that this will happen. He has asked us to receive whatever that comes to us. Still Rakhal Babu is feeling ashamed. In the end I told him 'Why are you afraid; come on, we shall go to another house'. We then went to a widow's house. That lady inquired, 'What is it, my boys, that has made you to come begging?' I then told her all about us and our life. She took a four-anna coin and with all her heart gave it to us. Turning to the sun, she prayed with folded hands, 'Let the sun-god bring you nearer to the goal of your life'.

After that we visited many other houses. Some gave rice, some gave money. We

brought all those things and gave them to the Master. He, then asked us to relate our experiences that day. We then narrated all that had happened and also what the widow told. The Master then observed, 'Yes, she has said correctly, Look here, that Suryanarayana is here (pointing to himself).

* * *

Another day one devotee asked Latu Maharaj why the begged food is considered pure. Of the one who toils and earns his food and of the one who begs his food, whose food is purer, questioned the devotee.

Latu Maharaj: The food which one earns by hard labour without becoming a slave to another, is pure indeed. But then, food got by begging is absolutely pure. Better to beg and eat than slave oneself to others and eat. Otherwise you will have to dance to the tunes of others and you cannot be independent. When one sustains himself by *bhiksha*, he is independent. To be independent is the supreme happiness. Do you know, why *bhikshanna* (food got by begging) is pure? The man who gives gets some *punyam* and the man who receives will get an opportunity to get rid of his sense of 'I and mine' and shyness. That is why the Master considered *madhukari* (food collected from house to house, as the honey-bee collects honey from flower to flower) a great help to spiritual life.

A devotee: Are *madhukari* and *bhiksha* the same, Maharaj?

Latu Maharaj: *Madhukari*? Even as the honey-bee goes from flower to flower and gathers honey little by little and fills up its stomach, similarly, the *sadhu* goes from house to house, receives handfuls of food and sustains his body.

'People give *bhiksha* with various motives. With every quantity of food is mixed up a

proportionate quantity of the desires of the giver. That is why a *sadhu* receives not more than a handful from a house, from anybody. In a handful of food, how much of motives and desires can they mix? That much of motive will not affect the spiritual *sadhana* of a *sadhu*. But if one receives more, there will be more desires in it than a *sadhu* can digest and it will harm the *sadhu's* life. That is why *madhukari* is extremely pure and helpful to *sadhana*.

Devotee: Maharaj, when the master used to send you for *madhukari*, did not your mind stray away from spiritual practices.

Latu Maharaj: You see, *madhukari* is in itself a part of *sadhana*. Is it different from *sadhana*? When one goes for *bhiksha* people use all sorts of language and one gets all kinds of treatment. The *sadhu* who keeps his balance in the face of all such taunts and who does not allow anger, spite, hatred and disgust to overcome him, has indeed progressed a long way on the spiritual path. You must know that *bhiksha* is itself a discipline. Nobody can go on *bhiksha*, so long as he has the sense of 'I and mine'. For the very same reason, the Sastras have enjoined on sannyasins to sustain their bodies with *musti-bhiksha* (handful of food given). This itself is a penance. If the giver gives with the idea that he gives to Narayana and the one who receives feels it is the grace of Narayana, then both are blessed. The *sadhu* who sustains himself by *bhiksha* will learn to depend on God. In order to make us depend on God the Master asked us to go a-begging.

Devotee: There must be other ways also of practising the dependence on God, Maharaj?

Latu Maharaj: There are. But, by *bhiksha* that dependence on God will go on increasing. You know why. By one's effort alone no one can get *bhiksha*. If the giver's kindness

descends then only you get *bhiksha*. Will the giver have kindness by himself? If the Lord is pleased, then the idea of giving dawns in the heart of the giver. If the Lord is pleased, even the poor can give and you are sure to get something. But if the Lord is not pleased, even in the rich man's house, *bhiksha* will not be available.

* * *

Seeing Latu Maharaj in the Brahmachari's dress going a begging, some youths scornfully said: 'See, see, the Paramahansa's battalion is on the move. These people become sanyasins, and break the jack-fruit on our heads and eat nicely. Why have you come here,

Sir? If you honestly want to do *japam* and *tapas* (penance) why don't you go to the Himalayas? Wandering in the streets of Calcutta you cannot do *japam* and *sadhana*. (Latu Maharaj did not answer anything to these words).

When the story was related to Sri Rama. krishna, he described the spiritual glory of the Himalayas and the atmosphere it gives for *sadhana*, and mentioned some Tirthas where people attain salvation by doing spiritual practices. Hearing the glory of the Tirthas and the spiritual significance of pilgrimage to those places a desire for the wandering life of a pilgrim dawned in Latu Maharaj's heart.

WISEACRES

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

The grass-blade on a sudden stirred!—
It was a living thing!
But till it walked on its green legs
No mind's imagining

Could ever infer an alien insect
Where Nature in trance lay still.
I marvelled: alas, how little we knew
Of consciousness' self-will,

And yet must glibly prophesy
How life's strange ocean will roll!
In the dark about its purpose we would
Shed light about the Goal!

PURE HANDS, NOT FULL

'God regards pure hands, not full'. There is something hidden and inexplicable in this partiality for purity (How partial and capricious is God in the bestowal of His gifts and grace!) and in the veiled exhortation to purity not to mingle freely with fullness. Is not God the father of both purity and fullness? Is it worthy of a father to disown one child and prefer another? Yet God to be God must have the deepest preference for his own essence, purity, and not for His shadow. Sri Bhagavan says in the Gita that he who knows Me in my real pristine purity, *tatvata*, is dearest to Me. He disowns His child Maya and all her glammers in the words: By Me all this world is pre-empted: All beings dwell in Me but I do not dwell in them.

मया तत्तमिदं सर्वं जगद्व्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥

The whole of religion and philosophy is rooted in the idea that the 'fulness' that is the world though an emanation from God, is not His reality, but His appearance, His garment. The garment belongs to Him, but He does not belong to the garment. The waves belong to the ocean, but the ocean does not belong to the waves. First, in India in the Upanishads, again in Greece in the philosophy of Parmenides and Plato and at a more recent time in the philosophy of Sankara, Kant and Schopenhauer, philosophy advanced to a clearer comprehension of its recurring task when it affirmed the above truth that the universe is only an appearance and not reality. The Upanishads reconcile this difference happily by the expression, *maya*. 'In the very demand which they make that the atman of man, the atman of the universe, must be sought for, it is implied that this body and this universe which reveal themselves to us unsought are not the atman, the self, the true reality; and that we are under a delusion if, like the demon Virochana, we

regard them as such. All worldly objects and relationships are, as Yajnavalkya explains in *Brihadaranyaka*: 2-4-5, of no value for their own sake, but for the sake of the atman, nay, they exist solely in the atman, and that man is utterly and hopelessly undone who knows them "apart from the self". He who has seen, heard and comprehended and known the self thus, by him is this entire universe known. God, the self of the world does not need either man's work or his own gifts. They serve Him best who knows Him in the above sense. God will sow and reap a thousand worlds if He can gain one pure man with the above knowledge who without being lured by the fullness of the world, will be devoted to the purity that is God. No wonder that such high and noble intentions of God are not understood by the equalitarian-cum-socialistic genius of the modern age which questioned God's godliness in creating this unequal world, exposed his partiality to purity and condemned Him as an aristocrat, a purist, and a *bourgeois*. The hands of our age are full with achievements, achievements often soiled with impurity. How can it face this purity—message of God, purity shorn of fullness?

If God's preference for purity is too high to be accepted as a Gospel, for God is often declared unknown and unknowable, let us turn to the world for its opinion. It is God's child and its guidance cannot be ungodly. The world thinks itself blessed (*Vasundhara punyavati*) if it can give birth to one pure man. The world lies prostrate at the feet of the pure one who declares the world an illusion and takes to the path of purity that is God's. The world adores and worships him as a God, surrenders at his feet its fullness which he kicks off as nothing! Such were the saints, prophets and mystics. The moment we turn away from the glorious spectacle of the mystics spurning the world

we run behind the world asking for more and get kicks from it. How long will we continue unconvinced by the wisdom of the mystics who asked us to make purity our God and not fullness?

Our history has been one array of the argument of fullness, from beginning to this day, a fullness unmindful of purity. And so the one lesson of history is that evolution and moral progress are not identical. Witness for instance, the individual life where we know the ascent in evolution does not necessarily mean a moral ascent or greater happiness. An adult is not necessarily better and hardly happier than a child. His rational faculty has developed, but with that have come up his irrational propensities. Growth there is, but growth has not brought in moral improvement or increased well-being. This is poignantly true of human community. From individual to community, from community to State and thence to democracy and socialism has been the march of increasing numbers and fullness, but of advancing impurity and corruption. The advance of socialism from doctrine and theory to practice, no doubt, extends the activities and powers of the State, but it also extends the opportunities for corruption and the mass of the plunder. The socialists advocate nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange; they exhort us to educate, to agitate, to organise with that in view. But even then it is possible to exploit the people far more thoroughly than at present, to increase unearned income and relieve its holders from taxation whilst increasing also the cost of living to the proletariat and reducing their means of defraying it. To quote an eminent thinker, 'Nowadays the capitalist cry is "Nationalize what you like: Municipalize all you can: turn the courts of justice into Courts martial and your parliaments and corporations into boards of directors with your most popular orators in the chair, pro-

vided the rent, the interest and the profits come to us as before and the proletariat gets nothing but its keep". This is the gift of socialism, the harvest from the fields of fullness divorced from purity.

The reason for this corruption is to be found not so much in increasing numbers as in the dilution of ideals. 'Corruption wins not more than honesty' We hear this voice of time, but we heed it not. Increasing numbers is an inescapable problem of society. The corruption has its roots in man's incapacity to overstep himself and answer the spiritual demands made on him by an expanding community. For the last three centuries man has been moving rapidly in the direction of a mechanical collectivism. Technical and rational progress means collectivism and today everything is collective, capitalism, state, industry, sport and what not. The step from national monarchy to democracy, and to State involves a growing expansion and complication of administrative tasks, a gradual advance to organised co-operation. But man is not spiritually ready for this co-operation, for these new duties by a world society. Physically man has emerged from individuality to universality, but spiritually he continues to be the same cribbed and cabined individualist. If man cannot hear the small voice from within to expand his outlook, to increase his awareness, there is the compelling logic of collectivism imposing on him the necessity for a fundamental change. It calls upon him to transcend his personal life, to shift his centre of gravity more and more from himself to the collective and to merge himself in collective functions, feelings and sympathies. And these man can fulfil only with the help of his essential quality of transcendence, of overstepping himself. This is the quality of the spirit in man, the divine in him and it is exactly in this quality man has betrayed his bankruptcy to day.

The modern temper is marked by an aversion to matters relating to the spirit, by an antipathy to the divine law of truth and love. The youth especially, is an individualist in morals and character, even as the nation is an individualist in the sphere of international law and ethics. The youth pays lip homage to internationalism but is a law unto himself and swears not by his social self. Man cannot be an individualist in morals, a law unto himself and yet be a unit in an expanding healthy community. He must put himself in unison with the pattern of life and ideals of the community, by accommodation and love. He must put himself in unison with the cosmic pattern of truth, beauty and love. All religions have stressed the necessity of man tuning himself with the cosmic divine pattern. Man is half brute, half divine. It is possible for him to open out the waters of divinity and cause them to flood his brute-half. This is done through the practice of truth, of penance, of *samyagjnana*, (the experience of oneness with the all) and of sense control. This is a two fold discipline. The lower self is chastened and made fit for the inflow of spiritual energy and the divine is strengthened. And once we succeed in gaining back our divine whole we achieve at-one-ment with the current of the cosmic pattern. This is purity, this is religion, this is spirituality.

But the convictions of the youth are entirely different. He is averse to discipline. He believes in fullness and is anxious to amass fullness of various kinds, artistic, intellectual, cultural and so on. How and where will he keep these without purity? We are reminded of the pithy parable of Sri Ramakrishna who said, 'The man without purity is like the farmer who labours to water his land but never cares to stop the rat-holes in the canals. At the end of the day he finds that most of the water has escaped through the rat-holes.' The

senses are the rat-holes. Let this be the modern youth's first meditation: fullness without purity is not going to help me. First let it dawn as an intellectual conviction on him, and to-day's intellectual conviction is to-morrow's realization.

Virtue is knowledge, is the second meditation which strengthens the first and is the most significant for this age. This wisdom has spoken loudly enough along the corridors of time from the time of the Upanishads in India and from Socrates in the West. We cannot afford to be deaf to its voice and have peace and poise in our life. To-day many argue that knowledge and virtue are independent things, that head should not dictate to the heart, that the heart has reasons which the head cannot understand, that knowledge can be had without virtue. Yes, knowledge can be had, art can be acquired, without virtue and so we have very intelligent people with selfishness as their core, we have artists with immorality as their speciality. Virtue results from emotional purification, from emotional wholeness and strength, and knowledge is the result of intellectual integration and synthesis. In a complete man emotional health and intellectual vigour co operate and work for the one end, the whole man. That is why we find the Hindu ancients stressing on virtues like purity, self-control, steadfastness, absence of attachment for the objects of the senses, absence of egoism and the like as essential pre-requisites for knowledge.

But how can these virtues be acquired by man? The good and the pleasant, the *sreya* and the *preya* are given to us mixed up, and in spite of ourselves, we are drawn to the pleasant, for the nonce forgetting the good. Yes, the world cannot but be a mixture of the pleasant and the good. We have to use our power of discernment to sift the good from the pleasant. It is here that the second quality of the spirit, i.e., discernment, the first being

transcendence, is called to action. Here we have to make use of a third meditation. We know of no instance where man has fed his desires with enjoyments and reaped *vairagya*, or renunciation. How can a fire be extinguished by feeding it with more and more of fuel? To withdraw the fuel is the sure way of extinguishing it. We have to tell our mind, 'O'mind, for many births I have been feeding you with all your desires. You have seen them through and through. You have found that one leads to another and so on without end. We cannot afford to waste lives, running after these endless desires. It is time you turn to the one thing that gives you peace, to desirelessness, *vairagya meva-abhayam, nairasyam paramam sukham*.' When the mind has been convinced of this, if the pleasant appears again, it smiles a triumphant smile and says, 'I had enough of you. Now no more.' This meditation is sure to be helpful to us to resist temptations. Let not the earnest aspirant wait for the temptations to appear and then to tackle them; but let him in the quiet sanctuary of his

contemplation, feel convinced of the hollowness of sense — pleasures and of the strength of the life of purity so that when the test comes he is strong to tide over it. Eternal vigilance is the price of purity.

Vigilance alone can help us in our progress in purity, in our spiritual life. When our scriptures after enjoining ceremonial purity, purity of dress, form and flower say that more than this is inner purity, they imply vigilance.

What is the sign of a Brahmana, asks the scripture. Conduct, it answers. And conduct is a spiritual flame that is kept up only by the oil of vigilance. कारणानि द्विजत्वस्य वृत्तमेव चकारणं.

When through purity-discipline one becomes at one with the Lord, our inner self merges into His self, then what more fulness is required? Is not the Lord the house of all fulness? When we attain Him all fulness becomes ours. This fulness is the flower and fulfilment of purity. This is the life of the spirit, this is the promise of religion.

THE LAST DEED

What wouldst thou be found doing when overtaken by death? If I might choose, I would be found doing some deed of true humanity, of wide import, beneficent and noble. But if I may not be found engaged in aught so lofty, let me hope at least for this that none may hinder, what is surely in my power—that I may be found raising up in myself that which had fallen; learning to deal more wisely with the things of sense; and thus rendering that which is its due to every relation to life.

—Epictetus.

THE CONCEPT OF MOKSHA

By KUMAR PAL, M.A., *Sarvadarshanacharya*

If we do not and, I may state at the very outset that, we would not, take into account the now obscure doctrines of the Charvaka system, we find that the concept of Moksha occupies a central place in every system of Indian philosophy. I may go even further to assert that the conception of Moksha or release is characteristically Indian and it is this which imparts a distinctively practical character to the whole outlook of Indian Philosophy. In India, unlike the West, philosophy is not a matter of mere speculative interest, but is regarded as a practical necessity. Philosophy for us is not mere arid logomachy which may have taken its rise in a sense of wonder, or curiosity. The business of philosophy is not only to resolve intellectual doubts. For an Indian, philosophy springs from a spiritual discontent with the whole existing order of the world. All schools of Indian philosophy contend that life is suffused with suffering and evil, and philosophy is regarded as the unmistakably effective remedy for the ills that are incidental to all life here and hereafter. Liberation from pain is the real goal of philosophy. The Indian philosophers do not stop short at the discovery of truth, but strive to realise it in practice.

I may point out here that I totally disagree with those who unfortunately have failed to cast off the mystical ghost of the most unnatural distinction between the East and the West. The fundamentally homogeneous world—mentally as well as physically has been split and splintered into artificial divisions. Thought, more particularly has no boundaries; yet I do not gainsay the fact that there are distinct features of every system of thought as of everything else. And if Indian philosophy is to be demarcated from others in any respect, it is in its close alliance with religion. Philosophy in India has been

a necessary counterpart of religion. The Western philosophy is stigmatised as intellectual jugglery merely on the score of its having nothing to do with the practical religion of the people. There it is possible to so divorce one from the other. It is not so here. The blending of the two is so harmonious that if someone persists to exclude all reference to anything but pure philosophy it is like squeezing the life out of the body.

Nevertheless, we cannot justify the recriminations of some western philosophers who dub all Indian thought as only theology or mythology having no features of philosophy. Judged by western standards of philosophy, Indian systems of thought may very easily be declared to be full-fledged philosophies too. Even the very religion of India is philosophical, because the end, the ideal or the *summum bonum* is visualised as already achieved and as realisable by a rational understanding of truth. It requires no specific course of discipline save knowledge itself, which is the sole means prescribed for the attainment of the *summum bonum*. In fact, the problem with us is purely philosophical or rather epistemological.

The great quest for Freedom

Now, the concept of freedom or liberation implies the existence of that which is in some way limited and which can be freed from the limitations. While discussing this subject, almost every thinker has set up a duality of the individual and the Absolute. The distinction though maintained in some way or other by every system of Indian philosophy is not, however, regarded as ultimate by several schools of Vedanta. Western theories, one and all agree in holding that the individual is not the Absolute. The individual is either a part or element of the whole or a partial realisation or expression of the

Absolute. Plotinus propounded the theory of emanation of individuals from the Absolute One which he called the 'Nous' but the difference came to be real and not illusory as in the Vedanta. Bosanquet equates the true individual with the Absolute, but the true individual is as much ideal as the Absolute, for the finite individual, which is always merely an element of the whole. The Vedanta alone had the courage to declare that the individual itself is in fact the Absolute.

The limited nature of the present attempt does not permit me to dwell any more upon the problem of the relation between the individual and the Absolute, which therefore I propose to reserve for some future occasion.

Besides the self, the very idea of Moksha postulates the existence of some sort of bondage and the possibility as well as the desirability of release therefrom. In fact, the whole of Indian philosophy is nothing but a quest for this higher life and an attempt to attain this supreme goal. Each system may not inappropriately be designated as an independent science of freedom, or Moksha Shastra.

The existence of evil is countenanced by every one in his daily experience, but very few care to reflect upon the problem seriously. From the very moment of birth man suffers from a keen sense of insecurity and hankers after peace which he has lost as it were. Quite naturally, set in the natural surroundings with his senses wide open, man first of all looks to outer aids. He sets his goals in the external world. But, in due course, there comes a time when man exhausts all avenues and finds all the possible outer helps to be quite useless for his purpose. Some persons may realise very early on account of some unknown hereditary reasons, that the whole paraphernalia of the world is inadequate to ensure the desired peace. One may possibly detect misery and pain even in the so-called

pleasures of the world. Severe disappointment and afflictions may chase him in his pursuit. Or man may himself grow incapacitated for the achievement of his desires and then he may wisely and earnestly try to relinquish them instead of running after them and stumbling at each step. Or he may have no further incentive, no more ambition to strive for and yet he fails to find a lasting peace which he seeks.

For some reason or other, out of so many enumerated here, sooner or later (in this life or the next) the interest in the outer world slackens. The former charms no longer attract man. As a matter of fact, the worldly pleasures cease to be pleasures. In short, there comes a critical moment or turning point in his life, he becomes averse to the world. Howsoever much one may wish apparently to prolong the tenure of his transient terrestrial tenement he is bound, at some juncture, to feel in his heart of hearts a genuine disgust with all that is this worldly—first with his office, position and status which he is obliged to leave for the younger, new and perhaps generally more competent competitors. Secondly with his wealth and acquisitions which are being usurped and partitioned by his descendants mostly against his will; then, in the third place with his family (wife and children) whom he has either begun to despise because of their disregard for him in his dotage and their disobedience and non-compliance with his standards and wishes, or if not, whom he has to leave willy nilly; and lastly with his own worn out, diseased and wrecked physical body, which is no longer able to stand the harshness of the environment and is incapable of rendering any service to him. These very objects which formerly set him on his track of pursuit now repulse him. Attraction turns into repulsion after *vairagya* or dispassion; *pravritti* changes into *nivritti* after *virakti*. It is remarkable to note here that what is the last to be acquired

in life is the first to disappear and that which is the first is the last to be discarded.

This four-fold retirement is generally not a purely negative return. It is not a retracing of the same path. It is more appropriately a departure from it, another novel approach to his long cherished desire for perpetual peace and happiness, rather than a mere abandonment of the pursuit. If this world does not provide such happiness man looks elsewhere for it. Some persons not thoroughly disillusioned by evil in the world, or who regard release from it impossible, expect and prepare for a better and more pleasant state of reincarnation in this world. Others believe that there are other much better worlds (*lokas*) to enjoy. Both these types of persons are in truth still enchanted by the worldly delights. They merely try to obtain a better bargain or a longer lease for the same. But even the joys of heaven terminate and the soul has again to suffer as before. While in heaven itself the soul is perpetually haunted by fears of fall and the pleasure too is inter-mixed with feelings of jealousy towards those who enjoy greater pleasure.

In the end, therefore, an intelligent man asks himself the question: 'Is there any place where there is no agony of suffering? Is there any creation which is not transitory? Is there any view which is free from error? Is there any transaction which is free from deception?' This was the supreme question which set Rama on a quest for the True and the Blissful and it is sure to occur to the mind of every human being at some time or other.

The question involves a negative reply and serious thinkers of all ages and areas declare with a unanimous accord that life is full of misery. Pain is the characteristic of all being.

Evil and error possess an objective reality of some sort. Our experience compels us to grant some independent status to evil in the world. It cannot be discussed merely as a

subjective fancy, as some enthusiasts are prone to profess. Even a subjective fancy is real in a sense and it serves to explain the existence of fancied joys or sorrows of a Sheik Chilli. But the sorrows of the world cannot be explained as merely fanciful. Their reality is effectively proved by their pressing pain in spite of our will to see otherwise. We are not free to take or reject pleasures and pains as we make or unmake fancied objects.

In Western philosophy also we come across the same problem and meet with several conceptions of evil.

Before, however, seeking for the causes of our pleasures and pains, it would be better if we analyse their nature. Before enquiring the *why* of evil we ought to be sure about the *what* of it. Unless we know the 'what' we cannot even understand the *why* or *whence* of anything. You may say there is no need of this enquiry as all persons feel and know full well what pain or pleasure is. But if any of you is accosted with a question or two, you will be simply non-plussed and would refuse any reply off-hand. For example, if I ask you why the same object is painful to one and pleasant to another, or why is it agreeable and disagreeable to yourself at different times, you will have to make a serious search for an adequate answer.

It may appear to most of you that the subject is more concerned with psychology than with philosophy. You would like the psychologist to determine the nature of pleasure and pain. But I may tell you here that after having examined many theories suggested by different schools of psychology, Higginson has been led to conclude that 'it is impossible to find a final answer to why a thing is pleasant or otherwise' (*Psychology*, p. 517). This can in fact be the only end if we insist on a scientific and psychological study of the question.

Here Indian philosophy alone throws some light upon the subject. The pleasures and

pains of human life, philosophically considered, are the outcome of its double nature, so to say. Man is according to Indian philosophy in his real nature beyond all limitations and sorrows. He is really infinite and blissful. But he wrongly identifies himself, as it were, with a finite body and thus becomes a finite self for the time being. Man as a finite-infinite being has the ineradicable impulse to transcend his limited nature. The finite self is continually passing out of the narrower self into a fuller and more complete self. When the mind's effort towards completeness is successful the result is pleasure, when it meets with obstacles and limitations it is attended by pain. Without this duality of man there can be no sense of pleasure and pain. Pleasure or enjoyment consists merely in the removal of a more or less painful state, the state of want or need. Only the finite can have wants or needs and so pleasures and sorrows too. This truth is beautifully expressed by Manu सर्वं परवशं दुःखं सर्वमात्मवशं सुखम्. (IV 160). 'The sense of dependence, insecurity, inferiority is pain. And the feeling of mastery, superiority, completeness is pleasure'. Dukha is also characterised as frustration by others, for the infinite has nothing else beside. बाधना लक्षणम्. The Upanishads declare in a similar way that fear arises out of restriction and limitation. अल्पा द्वै भयं भवति and that happiness lies in breaking up all bonds and becoming infinite. यो वै भूमा तत्सुखम्. (Chh. VII 23.)

Pleasure and pain thus turn out to be relative states, sometimes the two can hardly be distinguished at all and almost always they are inter-mixed and inter-dependent. Pain is only a negative of pleasure and often serves as the means of preliminary to pleasure. Every pleasure again may well be called a lesser pain and every pain a lesser pleasure, because in between the infinite and

the infinitesimal there are innumerable grades or stages which when looked at from above may be called lesser and lesser infinite or pleasure and when seen from the other side each of them may be taken as lesser and lesser finite or pain. From the standpoint of man, however, pleasure is to be clearly distinguished from pain. That which leads him to the infinite and expands him, is pleasant; that which degrades him towards the more finite or contracts him is unpleasant. That which facilitates self-enhancement is pleasing and that which thwarts it is displeasing.

Here I should like to tell you that the element of pleasure in all our experience does not come to us from eternal objects. Objects as such in themselves have no characteristics whatever. It is only when related to a subject that they acquire their determinable forms. Now it may look strange to suggest that pleasure is a contribution of the subject, though it is not a subjective fancy as I told you. Yet in a very real sense, indeed pleasure is always within ourselves. For if it is true that what we call pleasure consists in the removal of a want, the highest condition of well-being for the individual can only be the condition of wantlessness. This condition does not require any object to be enjoyed. It is the condition of the self as it is, without want and therefore without both pain and pleasure.

Many writers commit the mistake of conceiving this only in negative terms. The above statement too would not differ much if it is not further qualified. Such a view of wantlessness is compared by many to the condition of a stone and by others to a total extinction of life. Whereas the former view is ascribed to the Nyaya school, the latter is sometimes ascribed to Lord Buddha. As regards the latter there is ample evidence to believe that he looked upon Nirvana as a positive state of consciousness, and we need

not take up the argument to disprove such an interpretation. Liberation may look like total extinction; but in fact, it is an initiation into the Life Eternal for the individual in then united with the Infinite Reality.

While criticising the Nyaya conception of this state, every critic has sought to condemn it on the score that the liberated soul is said to exist in its pure form which is not only devoid of pain and pleasure but is also deprived of all consciousness as such. That is why the Moksha of the Nyaya school is rejected as not better than that of a lump of earth. Among recent psychologists Freud also conceived of this primal state as primitive, inanimate and inert. But neither the Naiyayikas nor the Freudians believe that the stones lying on the roadside are enjoying peace or rest, as is stated about a liberated person. If death and destruction were peace none in the world would crave for life. We can only get a minor clue from what Freud has said elsewhere that this state is devoid of all sorts of tension and is consequently beyond pleasure and pain which are the two states of low and high tension. Ernest Jones approaches much nearer the truth when he visualises it as 'a higher and fuller consciousness.'

Let me add more. That state is not merely a higher consciousness, as is advocated by Buddhism and Samkhya, but is supreme Bliss in itself, undecaying and unbounded. Had it been mere existence or mere consciousness without any feeling of delight or peace, why should all men hanker after it. It is a philosophical commonplace that every entity seeks to persist, or rather immortalise and infinitise itself. But even if so much is granted, we have still to ask the why of it. Nothing would aspire to continue if the very existence is beset with suffering. The fact seems to be that it is the very essence of all being to be pleasurable and desirable. It may for all practical purposes be said to be also beyond

pleasure, only because pleasure is always coupled with its relative, pain. We seek to be ourselves, to realise our true nature, because we are sure in the heart of our hearts that the self is itself Bliss unlimited and unimpaired. We have an inner assurance that we are immortal and free. But a mere immortal being cannot have any possible value. The persistent quest after self-realisation when even all else has been achieved, implies that the being of the self is the highest value. All objects and pleasures are pleasures because of the self and for the sake of the self. Self is the supreme object of desire beyond which there is nothing to be desired. Self alone is value in itself and pleasure *par excellence*.

Thus the wantlessness of the self is not that of a stone. It is not the pleasure-less state of inert matter. This is the state where all wants are always fulfilled, where wants come to an end. The self is wantless not because it can have nothing but because it has all and requires nothing more. That is why self is regarded in the Upanishadas as अकामः, सर्वकाम, आमकाम.

All that I have said so far suggests that we suffer because we are ignorant of the true nature of the self. Evil is accounted for by a false identity of the self with the not-self or body mind. The adherents of Vedanta and the Samkhya-Yoga school would say that the subject wrongly attributes to itself the conditions of the objects--psychical and physical for want of discrimination between the two absolutely separate entities. The subject they say, always remains aloof in its own state of self-effulgent consciousness.

The other schools of Indian philosophy would object to this position. It is maintained in Jainism, Buddhism and the Nyaya Vaiseshika schools that the ignorance of the self alone is not a sufficient explanation. The ignorance of the true nature of other objects is an equally important factor in the

causation of evil. And as a matter of every day experience we cannot gainsay the element of truth contained in this view. We daily find ourselves in difficulties and on reflection discover that it was because we did not know the real character of this or that object or the effect that it would have upon us. We suffer because of our mistakes of omission or commission on account of our ignorance of the reality of things about us. Their contention is, thus, very much like that of Socrates who believed that will is subservient to knowledge. As we know, so do we will.

There are two charges which may be urged against this position. In the first place the limitations of consciousness can all be ultimately traced to the effects of past actions. The deeds of a person leave behind them certain impressions which not only serve to recall the original situations but also operate as dispositions which give a specifically directed momentum to the subsequent mental processes. These unconscious mental habits prevent intelligent response to the rapidly changing circumstances.

They not only make the mind rigid and mechanical but also positively pervert it by way of passions. Secondly apart from voluntary experiences and our self-willed intelligent response there is the vast region of accidental misfortunes. Unless I become omniscient and therefore above all bondage, I cannot imagine when a particular brick may fall down upon my head from the ceiling or when I may be struck by lightning or when specially some mad man may enter my room and strike me in cold blood, there and then. Many more disagreeable happenings are beyond my control and are so to say thrust upon me, from which I would gladly keep away if I could.

The sum and substance of the criticism against Vedanta and Samkhya by other schools is that over and above the ignorance

of the self, we must also include that of the other objects and effect of past actions. But this evidences a very shallow understanding of the true contribution of Samkhya and Vedanta. After all, whatever the sources of troubles, it is our own mind which undergoes suffering. If the nucleus of suffering be recognized as either foreign to ourself like the Samkhya or as unreal as in Vedanta, the evil ceases for the self. The self is quite free from suffering. It seems to suffer only because it has seemingly identified itself with the mind on account of its own nature. Suffering is thus born of a lack of knowledge of the true self. If the transcendent, immutable nature of the self is recognised evil has no meaning for us.

Again, all objects other than the self are not at all real apart from the self. They in fact are nothing without it. Whatever we understand by an object is a subjective contribution. Objects are there because we know and will them to be so. They in fact have no reality of their own. Self alone is real and self-subsistent. All other objects derive a partial reality from the self. So if we enquire the real nature of the objects we shall ultimately come to the self itself. It is said that if we begin to study a leaf of grass and push the quest to the end we shall certainly realise the Brahman thereby.

Thus at length we are left only with the Vedanta hypothesis, which ascribes all evil and pain to our ignorance of the self. Really speaking all evil is error and not only that, it is based on error. There is no true evil for which ignorance may be a reason. The true may very well be regarded as convertible. Just as the self is realised as knowledge itself and nothing as known, so other objects can equally be equated with ignorance. The whole world is made up of the stuff of which ignorance is made of.

(To be concluded).

SWAMI VIJNANANANDA AND HIS MYSTIC EXPERIENCES

By SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

[The birthday of Swami Vijnanananda falls on Friday, the 8th of November. Hence this article on the Swami's mystic experiences will be read with interest—ED.]

Swami Vijnanananda was one of the sixteen monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and became the fourth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He was born on the 30th October, 1868 and passed away at the age of seventy on the 25th April, 1938 at Allahabad where he had established in 1910 a branch of the Ramakrishna Math. Swami Vivekananda fondly addressed him as the Bishop of Allahabad. Of his monastic life, extending for about four decades, nearly 37 years were spent at the sacred site of Allahabad in study and *tapasya*, in work and worship.

Hariprasanna Chatterjee, as Swami Vijnanananda was called in his monastic days, passed the Entrance examination in the first division at the age of fifteen from the Hare school of Calcutta. He studied the First Arts in the St. Xavier's college of Calcutta where Swami Saradananda, the first Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Ramananda Chatterjee, the founder-editor of *Modern Review* and other distinguished men were his class-mates. Hariprasanna secured the twenty first place in the F. A. examination and then graduated from the Patna college. After prosecuting his studies in engineering in the Poona College of Engineering, standing second in the L.C.E. examination of 1892, he served under the India Government as a district Engineer for about five years at Gazipur, Etawah, Buland Shahar, Meerut and other towns of North India. He joined the Ramakrishna order at the Alambazar Math in the middle of 1897 soon after Swami Vivekananda's return to Calcutta from his historic tour in the West. When the Belurmath was

founded in 1898 Swami Vijnanananda was entrusted by Swami Vivekananda with the responsible work of supervising the construction of the new buildings. The original plan of the Ramakrishna Temple at the Belur Monastery which was constructed under his direction and dedicated by him in the last year of his life was drawn up by him according to the instruction of Swami Vivekananda during the latter's life time. Vijnan Maharaj was an erudite scholar and wrote books in Bengali on engineering and translated into English the *Devi Bhagavatam*, *Narada Pancharatram* and *Suryasiddhanta*. He undertook the English rendering of Valmiki's *Ramayana* but he had to leave it unfinished.

The following incident illustrates how love of truth struck its root deep in his mind even in boyhood. Once his mother called him a liar on account of some misunderstanding. The truth-loving boy strongly protested again and again; but the mother could not believe him. This wounded and enraged the boy so much that he tore into pieces his sacred thread saying, 'If I have told a lie, then I am not a Brahmin!' He maintained this moral stamina in his youth too. When he was a student of Poona College, a Christian missionary was the professor of Geology there. One day when the professor was lecturing in the class, an ox happened to graze in the lawn adjacent to the class room. The *padre* professor addressing the Hindu students of his class said, "Lo, lo, your grandfather is grazing." By this silly taunt, the professor wanted to criticise the Hindu idea of reincarnation. Hariprasanna, like other Hindu students, could not pocket the insult and

retorted calmly but courageously. "Your Christ is the son of virgin Mary and you call him the son of God. How do you explain it?" This sharp reply no doubt silenced the professor but Hariprasanna had to suffer for it. The professor was so displeased with him that he gave him much less marks than what he had actually deserved in his answer paper on Geology for which he could not stand first in the final examination as expected by all.

Swami Vijnanananda had the good fortune of meeting Sri Ramakrishna nine or ten times in his life. The first meeting took place at Belgharia, his native village on the 5th September, 1879 when he was a school boy eleven or twelve years old.

Sri Ramakrishna had gone on that day to the Tapovan of the Brahmo Samaj in the company of Keshab Chandra Sen in connection with the Bhadratsava. From the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we understand that he met him on the 18th February 1883 again at Belgharia in the house of Dewan Govinda Mukherjee where Sri Ramakrishna held *sankirtan* with Narendra, Ram, Baburam, Nityagopal and other devotees. Of the neighbours who attended the function Hariprasanna was one. But as the boyhood memories had gone faint in old age, the Swami used to describe these two meetings as one. On the 8th June of the same year the next meeting occurred at Dakshineswar temple when Swami Shivananda was present. While a student of the St. Xavier's college he went to Dakshineswar by a boat on a holiday with two of his class friends, Swami Saradananda and Barada Pal of Comilla, when Baikuntha Sanyal, another devotee was with them in the same boat. That day the Master went on invitation to the house of Mani Mohan Mallick, a Brahmo devotee of Calcutta. Hariprasanna and his college friends met the Master again in the evening of the same day in Mani Mohan's place. The

date of this meeting according to the *Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga* is assigned as 26th November, 1881. The fifth meeting was held on 13th August, 1884. It was the auspicious day of Sri Krishna's birth and Girish Ghosh, the great dramatist and devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, was present there on the occasion. Hariprasanna met the master again in the beginning of the next year, spent the night for the first time at the temple with the Master, and took the sacramental food of the goddess Kali. To a sturdy youth like Hariprasanna the little *prasada* from the temple was quite insufficient for a meal. So Sri Ramakrishna had bread and dal brought for him from the Holy Mother then residing at the Nahabat. The Master spent the whole of that night in an ecstatic mood, now clapping his hands, now talking to the Divine Mother, or pacing silently in divine intoxication. The seventh meeting took place sometime in 1885 when Sri Ramakrishna wrote on the tongue of Hariprasanna a *mantra* by his fingers.

Then as directed by the Master he went to the Panchavati and was lost in profound meditation the like of which he never experienced before. By a mere touch the Master transmitted spirituality to his disciple. When Hariprasanna came to normal consciousness he found the Master sitting by his side and caressing him lovingly. The disciple followed the guru to his room where the latter fed him and talked to him long on spiritual matters. The next meeting was on the day when Swami Brahmananda was present. On that day the Master wrestled playfully with his athletic disciple, Hariprasanna. Though the young disciple cornered his guru by physical force, yet he was finally defeated by the spiritual power. In the ninth meeting Sri Ramakrishna spoke to him about the Gopis and the Raslila of Sri Krishna to which Swami Vijnanananda used to refer in later years. The last meeting was held in the middle of 1886, the year in which Sri

Ramakrishna left this world. On that day Hariprasanna spent the night with the Master in the Kali temple.

After this meeting Hariprasanna had to go away for his B. A. studies to Bankipore (Patna) where later on, he learnt of the sad news of the Master's passing away from the *Basumati*, a Bengali daily. On the previous day he saw in a vivid vision Sri Ramakrishna standing before him. He could not make out the meaning of this mysterious vision till he read the newspaper the following day. At Bankipore he lived in a rented house in which happily the local Ramakrishna Ashrama has now been established. When Swami Vivekananda passed away on July, 1902, Vijnananandaji was at the Brahmavadin Club at Allahabad. On that night too he had, during his meditation in the shrine of the club, a beatific vision of Swami Vivekananda as seated in the lap of Sri Ramakrishna. He was at a loss to understand the import of this vision till a wire from the Belurmath brought to him the news of the death of his illustrious fellow disciple.

Swami Vijnananandaji was blessed with many extra-ordinary spiritual experiences. But as he was very reserved and reticent he did not express them, unless importuned by the devotees, or Sadhus. Several mystic visions, noted from his talks, are described here to show how rich and varied was his spiritual life. Once the Swami accompanied a junior monk of our order to the Temple at Kalighat, Calcutta. There he saw and touched with great devotion the holy image. While he was circumambulating the temple he got a vision of the presiding deity. This vision awakened his Kundalini which going up to the Sahasrara illumined the top-most plexus with heavenly light. On another occasion when he had gone on a pilgrimage to the Puri temple, he embraced the sacred image of Lord Jagannath, and felt the wooden

image to be as soft and delicate as butter. At the time of narrating this unique experience he observed, 'If one visits a sacred place with sincere devotion, and sees the image in the temple with a pure mind, leaving outside one's worldly thoughts, he is sure to be illumined'. At Triveni (Allahabad) the confluence of the three sacred streams, the Swami got the vision of the goddess Triveni. After a dip in the holy waters of the confluence he saw a girl of divine radiance with three plaits of hair on her head floating on the water. From Swami Brahmananda he ascertained that the goddess was none other than Triveni. In this connection he remarked, 'A vision is true if it deepens our spiritual emotions and unfolds greater wisdom and bliss. Even now after so many years when I think of the vision of the girl form of Triveni I am transported with joy.'

Swami Vijnanananda got a vision of Lord Viswanath at Benares. He went to this holy place, one of the seven centres of salvation according to Hindu belief, to supervise the building work of the local Sevashram. From the cantonment station he was going in an Ekka carriage to the Ramakrishna Advaitashram. While the carriage was taking a turn at a cross-road, it toppled down and the Swami fell on the ground with his leg caught in the wheel. Somehow he pulled out his leg and in the same carriage reached the destination. The doctors did their best; but at night he got high fever coupled with shivering of the body and pain in the leg. When he was restlessly rolling on the bed without sleep at the dead of night he thought within himself: 'Oh Lord Viswanath, I have come into your safe jurisdiction for a philanthropic work of Sri Guru Maharaj and such a calamity overtook me! I do not mind my troubles; but Lord's work will suffer. What can I do?' Thus thinking he fell asleep. At about 1 or 2 A.M. he had the vision of Lord Viswanath with matted locks, and smiling face. The

divine figure approached the Swami with slow steps looking at him with compassionate eyes. The Swami said to him, 'Oh Lord, have you come to take me with You? I cannot go now as I have yet to do my Lord's work.' The holy figure drew near the Swami and embraced him lovingly, when the latter felt that his body had become as cool as ice and all his pain and fever has subsided. The Lord's form vanished with a sweet smile playing on his lips. The Swami got up from his bed next morning and was astonished to find that he was quite all right and even his wound had healed up! While describing this experience the Swami said, 'Whenever I recollect this vision, I see before my eyes the superbly serene form of Lord Viswanath standing before me with a smiling face and matted hair. I talk to Him and derive infinite joy'. The Swami once visited an Art Studio at Calcutta. There a beautiful picture of Lord Shiva in the standing posture with flowing beard and matted locks, attracted his attention. He was absorbed in the thought of Lord Shiva who then seemed to speak to him. Later in life he remembered the enthralling ecstasy of this experience and asked his attendants to bring from the market that picture. But unfortunately it was not available.

The Swami used to relate his two visions of Lord Buddha, one at Sarnath, Benares and the other at Pegu, Burma. Sometime in 1918 or 1919 he was at Benares. One fine morning he went on foot to Sarnath to see the Museum there. In the Museum the guide was showing him a beautiful image of Buddha at whose foot a short description of Lord Buddha's life from birth to death was given. While he was intently looking at the image, the external world vanished from him and he beheld a boundless ocean of Light. He stood like a point on its shore and was beholding the immaterial light spell-bound. He returned on foot to the Ashram at Benares by 4 or 5

in the afternoon; but his ecstatic mood brought on by the vision persisted, and continued to enthrall him for three days. To Swami Prabhavananda and Sister Lalita of Hollywood Vedanta centre, he described this vision thus: 'Suddenly I lost outer consciousness. My mind got rid of all mentations. An ocean of light engulfed me in the midst of it. This light was redolent of peace, bliss and wisdom. I felt I was full of the Buddha and had no existence separate from the Blessed One. I cannot say how long I remained immersed in that state. The guide was under the impression that I felt sleepy. So he tried to rouse me and thus I came to my senses.' In December, 1936 the Swami went to Rangoon on a flying visit. From Rangoon he motored to Pegu to see the huge lying statue of Lord Buddha there. All his companions came out of the Pagoda soon after seeing the colossal statue. But the Swami stood still and speechless. All waited for him a pretty long time; but the Swami did not move. He was in an exalted mood. After some time when his mind came down from the superconscious plane he came out of the temple. On his way back in the motor car the Swami sat motionless and completely indrawn. In the Rangoon Sevashram when requested to narrate his experience at Pegu, he kept silent. But when pressingly solicited, he said, 'Lord Buddha out of his infinite mercy granted a vision to me. I saw the lying image of Buddha pulsating with life. How wonderful was the lustre of His fascinating beauty!'

Swami Vijnanananda had infinite love and respect for Swami Vivekananda, and felt the living presence of the latter in his room at the Belurmath where he lived and died. Vijnanananda had a wonderful experience during his stay at the Belurmath. His room was close to that of Swami Vivekananda. One night he got up for urination and saw that the latter's room was lighted. He thought

that the latter had kindled a light to kill bugs or drive the mosquitoes from inside the curtain. After passing urine while he was returning to his room, he peeped into that of his illustrious brother and was astounded to see a supernormal phenomena. There was no material light in the room. Swamiji was seated in deep meditation and his body shone like a luminous object so much that the room was illumined. In meditation the real nature of Swamiji being fully manifest the earthly frame became effulgent. When the monastery was in the garden house of Nilamber Mukherjee, Vijnananandaji on the Dassera day bowed down to the Swamiji and touched his feet with his hands. At that time he received spiritual charge which resembled an electric shock.

As a monk, Swami Vijnanananda was rigidly stern and austere. But his rough exterior concealed a sweet and soft heart.

For this reason Swami Saradananda aptly compared him to Kabuli grapes which though so very soft are encased in hard wooden boxes. He was very strict in his dealings with women and would not allow even a woman sweeper to enter the compound of the Allahabad Asram. He did not allow his own women disciples to be in his presence for more than a few minutes! When his mother came to see him in the monastery at Belur he reluctantly met her in a quiet corner of the garden at the request of his gurubhais. His only surviving sister had once arrived at the Allahabad Math to see him, but he did not accommodate her in the monastery for the night. He confided to Swami D. that he never dreamt a woman in his life! Such complete conquest of lust is possible only for a knower of Brahman! Indeed, the Swami attained Brahmajnana and that is why he could retain full consciousness till the last moment of his life.

NATURE AND GRACE

Nature is crafty, and draws away many; ensnares and deceives them, and always keeps herself before herself as her end.

But grace walks with simplicity, turns away from every appearance of evil, uses no false pretences, and does all things purely for God, in whom also she finally rests.

Nature loves ease and bodily rest. But Grace cannot be idle and willingly embraces labour.

—Thomas A Kempis.

ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SOME CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT-PATTERNS

By ALDOUS HUXLEY

Unlike art, science is genuinely progressive. Achievement in the field of research and technology is cumulative; each generation begins at the point where its predecessor left off. Furthermore, the results of disinterested research were applied in such a way that the upper and upper-middle classes of all industrialised societies found themselves becoming richer and richer. It was, therefore, only to be expected that the West's professional thinkers, who all sprang from these classes, and whose education had made them familiar with the methods and achievements of science, should have extrapolated the progressive tendencies of technology, basing upon them a general theory of human life. The world, they affirmed, was becoming materially, intellectually and morally better and better, and this amelioration was in some way inevitable and inherent in the very nature of things. The theory of progress—a theory which became a dogma, almost, indeed, an axiom of popular thought—was novel and, from the orthodox Christian standpoint, heretical. For orthodoxy, man was a fallen being and humanity, if not actively deteriorating, was statically bad, with a badness which only grace in co-operation with each individual's free will could mitigate.

The belief in all-round progress is based upon the wishful dream that one can get something for nothing. Its underlying assumption is that gains in one field do not have to be paid for by losses in other fields. For the ancient Greeks, *hubris*, or overweening insolence, whether directed towards the gods, or one's fellowmen, or Nature, was sure to be followed, sooner or later, in one way or another, by avenging *nemesis*. The dogmatists of progress imagine that they can be in-

solent with impunity. And their faith is so strong, that it has been able to survive two world wars, and several revolutions of almost unprecedented savagery, and remains flourishing in spite of totalitarianism, the revival of slavery and concentration camps, saturation camps, saturation bombing and atomic missiles.

Belief in progress has affected contemporary political life by reviving and popularizing, in an up-to-date, pseudo-scientific form, the old Jewish and Christian apocalypticism. A glorious destiny awaits mankind, a coming Golden Age, in which improved gadgets, more grandiose economic plans, more elaborate social institutions will somehow have created a race of more virtuous and more intelligent human beings. Man's Final End is not (as all the masters of spirituality have always affirmed) in the timeless eternal Now, but in the not too distant, Utopian future. In order to realise this temporal Final End, the masses ought to accept, and their rulers need feel no qualms, in imposing, any amount of suffering and moral evil in the present. It is a highly significant fact that all modern dictators, whether of the right or of the left, talk incessantly about the golden future and justify the most atrocious actions here and now on the ground that such actions are means to that glorious end. We see, then, that scientific and technological progress has produced a boundless faith in the future, as something necessarily better than the past or present. But the one thing we all know about the future is that we are profoundly ignorant of what is going to happen, and that what in fact does happen is generally very different from what we anticipated. Consequently any faith based upon what is supposed to be going to happen a

long time hence must always be hopelessly unrealistic. But to act upon unrealistic beliefs is generally fatal. In practice, faith in humanity's progress towards a future assumed to be bigger and better than the present is one of the most potent enemies to liberty, peace, morality and common decency: for as recent history has clearly shown, rulers feel themselves justified by what they fondly imagine they know about the future in imposing the most monstrous tyrannies and waging the most destructive wars for the sake of the entirely hypothetical fruits which those tyrannies and wars are expected (goodness only knows why) to bear some time, let us say, in the twenty-first or twenty-second century.

The dogma of progress is by no means the only intellectual consequence of scientific and technological advance. As theory, pure science is the reduction of diversity to identity. As a praxis, scientific research proceeds by simplification. These habits of scientific thought and action, have, to a certain extent, been carried over into the theory and practice of contemporary politics. Where a centralized authority undertakes to make plans for an entire society, it is compelled by the bewildering complexity of the given facts to follow the example of the laboratory worker, who arbitrarily simplifies his problem in order to make it manageable. Scientifically, this is a sound and entirely justifiable procedure. But, when applied to the problems of human society, the process of simplification is a process, inevitably, of restraint and regimentation, of curtailment of liberty and denial of individual rights. This reduction of human diversity to a quasi-military identity is achieved by propaganda, by legal enactments and, if necessary, by brute force. Philosophically, this ironing out of individual idiosyncracies is held to be respectable because it is analogous to what is done by scientists, when they arbitrarily

simplify an impossibly complex reality, so as to make nature comprehensible in terms of a few general laws. A highly organized and regimented society, whose members exhibit a minimum of personal peculiarities, and whose behaviour is so governed by a single master-plan imposed from above, is felt by the planners and even (such is the power of propaganda) by the plannees to be more 'scientific' and therefore better than a society of independent, freely cooperating and self-growing individuals.

The first step in the simplification of reality, without which (since human minds are finite and Nature is infinite) scientific thought and action would be impossible, is a process of abstraction. Confronted by the data of experience, men of science begin by leaving out of account all those aspects of the facts which do not lend themselves to explanation in terms of antecedent causes rather than of purpose, intention and values. Pragmatically they are justified in acting in this odd and extremely arbitrary way; for by concentrating on the measurable aspects of such elements of experience as can be explained in terms of a causal system, they have been able to achieve a great and ever increasing control of the energies of Nature. But power is not the same thing as insight, and as a representation of reality the scientific picture of the world is inadequate, for the simple reason that science does not even profess to deal with experience as a whole, but only with certain aspects of it in certain contexts. All this is quite clearly understood by the more philosophically minded men of science. But unfortunately some men of science and many technicians have lacked the time and inclination to study the philosophical basis and background of their special subject. Consequently they tend to accept the world-picture implicit in the theories of science as a complete and exhaustive account of reality; they tend to regard

those aspects of experience, which scientists leave out of account, because they are incompetent to deal with them, as being somehow less real than the aspects which scientists have arbitrarily chosen to abstract from out of the infinitely rich totality of the given facts. Because of the prestige of science as a source of power, and because of the general neglect of philosophy, the popular *Weltanschauung* of our time contains a large element of what may be called "nothing-but" thinking. Human beings, it is more or less tacitly assumed, are nothing but bodies, animals, even machines; the only really real elements in reality are matter and energy in their measurable aspects; values are nothing but illusions, which have somehow got mixed up with our experience of the world; mental happenings are nothing but epiphenomena, produced by and wholly dependent upon physiology; spirituality is nothing but wish-fulfilment and misdirected sex; and so on. The political consequences of this 'nothing-but' philosophy are clearly apparent in the widespread indifference to the values of human personality and human life, which are so characteristic of the present time. Within the last thirty years this indifference has expressed itself in a number of dangerous and disquieting ways. We have witnessed, first of all, the wholesale revival of slavery in its worst and most inhuman forms—slavery

imposed upon political heretics living under the various dictatorships, slavery imposed upon prisoners of war. Next we note the increasing indiscriminateness of slaughter during war-time. Area bombing, saturation bombing, rocket bombing, bombing by atomic missiles—the indiscriminateness has steadily increased throughout the second World War until now no nation even makes a pretense of observing the traditional distinction between civilians and combatants, but all devote themselves systematically to general massacre and a destruction of cities so complete that the survivors are doomed to suffer distress and hardship for years to come. Finally there are the phenomena of deliberate starvation of whole populations, concentration camps, torture, human vivisection and forced migration, or the removal, at the point of the bayonet, of millions of human beings from their homes to other places, where their presence will be more convenient to the rulers who happen for the moment to be in power. When 'nothing-but' thinking is combined with the other intellectual products of applied science—faith in progress and desire for 'scientific' uniformity and simplicity—the results as anyone can see who takes the trouble to look at the world around him, are truly horrifying.

(Reproduced from the *Vedanta and the West*.)

THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

GENERAL INTRODUCTION IV: THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF THE VEDIC RITUAL (I)

By SWAMI TYAGISANANDA

We have seen that the Vedas consist of two main sections—the Jnana Kanda and the Karma Kanda. The former, consisting of the Upanishads, gives us the essence of the Vedic teaching, namely the realisation of the Absolute Truth, as well as the immediate means of such realisation. The latter, consisting of the Mantras and Brahmanas, deals with the preliminary stages in the means of attaining this goal, in a more concrete form, so as to suit the capacities of less advanced spiritual aspirants. There is no contradiction between the two and the two sections are organically and synthetically inter-related.

Every religious community knows the value of a well established ritual. These rituals make religious beliefs lively and vivid, by concretising and objectifying them. Thereby they help the senses as well as the imagination co-operate to produce the reality-feeling. The force of the sense of social confirmation is very helpful to eradicate doubt and scepticism and to engender faith. The ritual helps to summon into the marginal consciousness of the worshipper the sense of a long line of past and venerated ancestors, whose faith is crystallised in the ritual. When a whole community follows the same ritual the voice of the present is added to the voice of the past. This social confirmation becomes so effective that faith marches triumphant over doubt and irresolution. Particular words and sentences as well as particular physical attitudes, such as prostration, upright sitting posture, folding palms, directing the look to the tip of the nose or closing the eyes etc., all help concentration of mind by shutting out all other extraneous, visual, sensual and mental impressions, by producing the highly valuable feeling of humility and the like. Custom and habit leads to repetition of practice, so much necessary in sadhana. Rhythmic chanting as

well as music and other forms of art aid in creating the emotional background for devotion. They also help the devotee to meditate on his ideal continuously without strain. It provides proper forms to help novices who do not know how to begin spiritual practice, and provides a means for expression of the spiritual feelings vaguely surging up from the heart, which would have otherwise remained inarticulate. Many of the elements of a ritual help to remind the devotee of the fundamental realities of the spiritual life through their symbolic nature and through the psychological principle of association of ideas. It binds together large bodies of people in bonds of love and reverence, and thus ritual serves as a socialising factor.

It has often happened in history that this tie proved stronger than the natural bonds between parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife etc. A well-established ritual is, therefore, a fort which protects a religious community from all disintegrating forces from without. It has also a historical function in preserving for a future generation what was found most valuable in the past, in convenient forms which can be easily handed down from generation to generation, thus helping to preserve continuity of social and spiritual life. Very often they are in their origin only expressions of higher spiritual experience of realised persons, and so they help to produce the actual experience itself by auto-suggestion. The variety of activities—physical, verbal and mental—provided in all rituals, relieves the novice from the tedium which might otherwise either fag his attention or lead even to fatigue and sleep. They also provide the necessary rest by way of change of work, and this, in a way, helps continuity in meditation. They also provide the arena for the exercise of morality by way of self-control, fasts and vigils, observance of sex taboos, charity, etc.

THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

251

The very expression, *Vaidika karma* suggests the end aimed at by all Vedic ritual. The karma is meant only to lead to Veda or Jnanam and it is to be done intelligently and with full appreciation of its spiritual purpose. This is what Bhagavan means when he says in the *Gita* सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते. The same is corroborated by him in the *Bhagavatam* X-24.6. ज्ञात्वाऽज्ञात्वा च कर्माणि जनोयमनुतिष्ठति विदुषः कर्मसिद्धिः स्यात् तथा न विदुषो भवेत्. cf. also *Chhandogya* I.1.10 “यदेव विद्यया करोति तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवति.” cf. also *Ishopanishad* XI वियां चावियां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह. etc. This is the Vedantic view of karma as opposed to the Mimamsa view. As Sayana points out, although the Vedas prescribe various kinds of karma, some Nitya or obligatory and others Kamya or optional, the prime interest of the Vedas is only in the Nitya karma. The Kamya karmas are prescribed, not because they are directly capable of leading to the highest goal, but only for the purpose of creating faith in the minds of persons who are actuated by natural desires. His introduction to *Sukla yajur Veda* runs as follows:

काम्य कर्माणि परमपुरुषार्थसाधनाभावेऽपि स्वाभाविककामग्रस्थानां पुरुषाणां वैदिकमार्गे फल संवादेन श्रद्धामुत्पादयितुमेव आश्रयन्ते, तस्मात् तानि वेदे प्रासङ्गिकानि । परमतापर्यं तु वेदस्य नित्यकर्मसु एव. He also insists upon the necessity for understanding the spiritual significance of ritual through *vichara* or rational enquiry. तदेव वेदवादिनां विचारपूर्वके अर्थ निर्णये तात्पर्यातिशयदर्शनात् सर्वोपि वेदार्थो विचार्य निर्णेतव्यः इत्यवगम्यते. This is also corroborated by Manu when he says: आर्षं धर्मोपदेशं तु वेदशास्त्रविरोधिना यस्तर्केणानुसन्धते स धर्मं वेद नेतरः । To the Vedantin the karma is not to be performed in expectation of any fruit, here or hereafter, but only as worship of God in the spirit of स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः of *Gita* XVIII 46. Every karma is equally valuable if it is done in this proper spirit. As Langakshi Bhaskara points out at the end of his *Arthasamgraha* “सोऽयं धर्मः यदुद्दिश्य विहितः तदुद्देशेन क्रियमाणः तद् हेतुः । ईश्वरार्पणबुद्ध्या क्रियमाणस्तु निःश्रेयसहेतुः” । This shows the spiritual efficacy of all ritual.

This process of converting every karma into spiritual practice by the method of *arpanam* or dedication to God is referred to in the *Gita* IX 27. यत्करोषि यदश्नासि तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्. Also IV 24, V. 10 etc. This process of *arpanam* is thus described in the *Kurma purana*

ब्रह्मणा दीयते देयं ब्रह्मणे सम्प्रदीयते ।
ब्रह्मैव दीयते चेति ब्रह्मार्पणमिदं परम् ॥
नाहं कर्ता सर्वमेतद्ब्रह्मेव कुरुते तदा ।
एतद्ब्रह्मार्पणं प्रोक्तमृषिभिस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥
प्रीणतु भगवानीशः कर्मणाऽनेन शाश्वतः ।
करोति सततं बुद्ध्या ब्रह्मार्पणमिदं परम् ॥
यद्वा फलानां संन्यासं प्रकुर्यात्परमेश्वरे ।
कर्मणामेतदित्याहुः ब्रह्मार्पणमनुत्तमम् ॥
तस्मात्सेवेत सततं कर्मयोगं प्रसन्नधीः ।
तुभ्ये परमेशस्य तत्पदं याति शाश्वतम् ॥

By *ब्रह्मार्पणम्* is meant the cultivation of a particular mental attitude in which the performer sees every object connected with the ritual as Brahman or God. He who makes the offering is Brahman, Him to whom it is given is Brahman, what is offered is also Brahman. The performer should develop the feeling that he is not the real agent of his actions and that the real *karta* is only God. He should also cultivate the consciousness that the ritual is performed only to please the Lord. He should also dedicate all the fruits of his actions to the Lord. In practice also, this is observed when a ritual is performed, by mentioning in the *sankalpa* at the beginning of the ritual that the ritual is meant for परमेश्वर प्रीत्यर्थम् and by the conclusion of the ritual with such statements as ब्रह्मार्पणमस्तु, कृष्णार्पणमस्तु. etc. The performer is also exhorted to do karma as yoga in the *Gita* II 48, by developing the spirit of *samatvam*. All this shows how the Buddhi is gradually trained and purified in the course of the performance of the karmas. It is this that gives it its spiritual value. Every act that sharpens the Buddhi and develops its strength and purifies it by freeing it from selfish desires and *tamas*, helps it to perform its natural function of realising the truth. त्याग and योग are thus present in every

ritual, if it is properly performed, but if it is performed for the sake of satisfaction of desires and worldly profit, it is more dangerous than beneficial spiritually. Hence we find a condemnation of such performance in the Gita. II. 42-45 यमिमां पुष्पितां वाचं etc., IX 20-21 etc. Vide also *Bhagavatam* XI 21; I 5-15 and 17, V 5-15 and 17, etc. *Mundaka* V 2-12 etc.

Now let us know the inter-relation between the Nitya and Kamya karmas as rationally understood from the spiritual standpoint. According to Sayana (*vide* Introduction to *Sukla yajur veda*) the *pratyavaya* or defect that results from non-performance of Nitya karmas is spiritual in nature. It consists in the dullness or weakness of the Buddhi. This is to be removed by performance of Nitya karmas. When the defect is present a man does not have any taste or inclination for realisation of truth, as it prevents the development of discrimination (*viveka*) and dispassion (*vairagya*). When this defect is removed *satvaguna* develops, the heart becomes pure, *viveka* and *vairagya* result. These in their turn create a taste for realisation of Brahman which is the highest goal of life.

cf. ग्रन्थवायेन बुद्धिमान्ये सति नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकं वैराग्यदीनामनुदयात् ब्रह्मविविदिषा पुरुषस्य न जायते, तदनुष्ठानेन चित्तमालिन्ये अपगते सति सत्त्वगुणरूपस्य नैर्मल्यस्योदयात् विवेकवैराग्यादिसाधनसम्पत्तौ सत्यां परमपुरुषार्थरूपेण तत्त्ववेदने अभिरुचिर्जायते. The spiritual significance of Nitya karmas is clear from the above passage. These Nitya karmas include all those rituals which are specially meant to spiritualise a man's outlook on life. They appeal only to those persons who have already developed a capacity to appreciate a spiritual conception of their goal, but the majority of the people do not have any such capacity. They are too dull and slovenly, or too selfish, to take advantage of these Nityakarmas. They are prepared to exert themselves only if some more tangible result is promised in the shape of immediate satisfaction of sense pleasures

which their petty minds aspire for. To induce even such people to take to spiritual practice, the Srutis present spiritual practice as capable of even satisfying their selfish desires. cf. *Bhagavatam* XI. 21. 23. फल श्रुतिरियं नृणां न श्रेयो रोचनं प.म् श्रेयो विवक्षया प्रोक्तं यथा भेषज्य रोचनम् Also *Ibid* XI. 3. 46. 'रोचनार्था फलश्रुति'

Thus we find various 'phalas' or fruits of action are promised to these lower class aspirants. When such fruits are promised the rituals become Kamya; but even here the real purpose is to make these people take to spiritual practice. Even in modern days we find these tactics employed by spiritual teachers. Thus Sri Ramakrishna refers to it on page 70 of *Gospel*—'Worldly people will never listen to you if you ask them to renounce everything and devote themselves whole-heartedly to God. Therefore, Chaitanya and Nitai, after some deliberation made an arrangement to attract the worldly. They would say to such persons, "Come, repeat the name of Hari and you shall have a delicious soup of magur fish and the embrace of a young woman.' Many people, attracted by the fish and the woman, would chant the name of God. After tasting a little of the nectar of God's hallowed name, they would soon realise that the fish soup really meant the tears that they shed for the love of God, while the young woman signified the earth. The embrace of the woman meant rolling on the ground in the rapture of Divine Love. The Rishis were prompted by the same spirit when they promised Swarga, *putra* etc. as a reward for performance of the ritual. The Swarga or the *putra* that the Rishis had in mind was only *satvaguna* and *chittasudhi* and the desire for 'Atma-jnanam' that results. The *Bodhayana grihya sutra* quotes the following words of Vyasa पुन इति नरकस्य आख्या दुःखं च नरकं विदुः पुदि त्राणात् ततः पुत्रः इहेच्छन्ति परत्र च न मांसपेशलः पुत्रो नाऽविद्वान् नाऽप्य कर्मकृत् स्वयं न याति यः स्वर्गं कथं स पितरं तरेत्

According to this opinion of Vyasa 'पुत्र' means 'नरक' which he equates with दुःखम्.

Only that which is capable of saving from पुन deserves the name पुत्र. A physical child does not constitute a 'putra'. Without Vidya and Karma no one can be saved from नरकः 'How can man', asks Vyasa, 'save another when he is not able to save himself?' पुत्र thus may refer only to the चित्तशुद्धि and सत्त्वगुण and the resulting desire for आत्मज्ञान, as it is only these that can save him from नरक. Bhagavan's definition of नरक in *Bhagavatam* XI 19. 43. as नरकस्तमोनाह. (Naraka is the growth of Tamas) shows that it is that which removes this Tamas that constitutes the *putra*. As per Sayana's passage quoted above, it is *satvaguna* and *chitta suddhi* and *vividisha* that result from the performance of ritual and therefore, पुत्र may stand only for this.

Similarly, the Swarga that is offered as a reward for performance is only सत्त्वगुणोदय as Bhagavan defines it in *Bhagavatam* XI 19. 42. स्वर्गसत्त्वगुणोदयः cf. also Santi Parva, chapter 190, where Bhrigu speaks of Swarga to Bharadvaja as स्वर्गः "प्रकाश इत्याहुः" cf. also *Niralambopanishad* सत्संसर्गस्वर्गः The paradise of celestial pleasures, which the ordinary man understands by the word 'Swarga', is only an imagination and is really non-existing. *Vide*. Bhagavan's words in *Bhagavatam* XI. 21. 31. स्वप्नोपममसुं लोकं हि असन्तां श्रवणप्रियं etc. The above passages show that real Swarga is a spiritual state and the ritual only promises this spiritual elevation when it offers Swarga. The very word स्व of स्वर्ग suggests that it has something to do with स्वम् or one's real nature. Kapila's words to Devahuti in *Bhagavatam* III. 30. 29. "अत्रैव नरकस्वर्गः" show that the Swarga is only a purer state of the mind. cf. Milton's statement in *Paradise Lost* "The mind is its own place! It can make a Heaven of Hell or a Hell of Heaven". We thus see the intimate connection between the so-called Nitya Karmas and the Kamya Karmas. Both are meant only as helps to spiritual

realisation through चित्तशुद्धि, सत्त्वगुण, विविदिषा and साधनचतुष्टयसम्पत्ति.

The Vedic rituals in their original simplicity have gone out of use or have changed their forms in the course of centuries. Sometimes the transformation is so thorough that it is very difficult to recognise what they originally were. But, in spite of all the changes, they have preserved their fundamental basis of 'Tyaga and Yoga'. The really spiritual nature of these practices may be better understood if we examine a typical karma prescribed by the Karma Kanda which is still kept up to the present day even though the spirit is lost.

The seeds of spiritual practice are sown when the child is first initiated into the Brahmacharya or spiritual life by the father or the Acharya in a special ceremony called Upanayanam. It consists of a ritual formulated for the purpose of rousing up the sleeping Atman in the child which contains in itself, in an embryo form, all the main elements of *sadhana*. We find therein the first steps in Tyaga as well as in Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga and Jnana yoga in their *kayika*, *vachika* and *manasa* aspects. The child is taught to worship God, to serve man and to meditate on God and to pray to Him for guidance in a spirit of love and devotion and to exercise himself intellectually through study of the Vedas. Even in their advanced stages Karma yoga is nothing more than service of man as worship of God; Bhakti yoga is only the development of love and devotion and self-surrender to God through prayer, meditation, japa, sakirtana etc.; Jnana yoga, likewise, is only the exercise of the intellectual powers through study, rational and philosophical enquiry into truth and self analysis cf. संस्कारस्य तदर्थत्वात् विद्यायां पुरुष श्रुतिः Jaimini VI 1-35. This samskara is only for the purpose of vidya or realisation of truth.

As in all rituals the ceremony begins with a preliminary *sankalpa* which is expected to remind us of the purpose of the ritual. The three main purposes of the ceremony as per

the *sankalpa* are द्विजत्वसिद्धि, वेदाध्ययनाधिकारसिद्धि and श्रीपरमेश्वरप्रीति. 'द्विजत्वम्' represents a second birth or regeneration. It is character and conduct that makes a man a Dwija. Thus in Anusasana Parva 143, Siva says to Devi. "न योनिर्नापि सत्कारः न श्रुतं न च मन्तव्यम् । कारणानि द्विजत्वस्य वृत्तमेव तु कारणम् ॥ — Neither birth nor ceremonial purity nor the study of the Vedas nor taking birth as a son can produce Dwijatva. Dwijatva is based only on character and conduct. Yudhisthira also says in his answer to Yaksha in the Vana parva, "शृणु यक्ष कुलं तात न स्वाध्याया न च श्रुतं । कारणं हि द्विजत्वं च वृत्तमेव न संशयः ॥ 'My dear Yaksha, please listen. It is not one's family nor study nor repetition of the Vedas that can make a man a Dwija. There is no doubt that only character and conduct can make one a Dwija'. So also in Vana Parva II 15-13. Dharma Vyadha says, "यस्तु शूद्रो दमे सत्यं धर्मं च सततोत्थितः तं ब्राह्मणमहं मन्ये वृत्तेन हि भवेत् द्विजः ॥ A sudra, who always practises self control, truth and dharma, I consider as a Brahmin. It is by character and conduct that a man becomes a Dwija. In *Vahni purana*, Vasishtha says to Ambarisha "न जातिर्न कुलं राजन् न स्वाध्यायः श्रुतं न च कारणानि द्विजत्वस्य वृत्तमेव तु कारणम् ॥ O King, it is neither birth nor family nor study nor repetition of the Vedas that produces Dwijatva. Only character and conduct can be its cause. All these passages show that the Upanayana ceremony aims at development of character and conduct in the boy through a well-disciplined life and practice of virtue under a competent guru. 'Dwijatvasiddhi', therefore, is a part of Karma yoga, as it deals with actual life. Adhikara means अधिकार and सामर्थ्य, desire and capacity. 'Vedadhyanaadhikara', therefore, means desire and capacity for the acquisition of knowledge. It means the same thing as the *vividisha* produced through development of *satvaguna* and *chittasuddhi* and *sadhanachatuskthayasampatti*, which Sayana refers to in the passage quoted above. This has reference to Jnana yoga. Sriparameswarapriti refers to love and

devotion for God and therefore, refers to Bhakti yoga. It is thus clear from the very *sankalpa* itself that the purpose of the ceremony is to enable the child to realise God in the long run through the various yogas. This shows the spiritual aim of the whole ritual: Cf sutra विद्यार्थं उपाध्यायस्य समीपं आनीयते । It is for the purpose of realisation that a boy is brought to a teacher.

The first main element of the ceremony is a formal dedication of the boy to the protection of Prajapati or God. The student is then told to consider Agni as the visible representative of Prajapati and to consider the Agni or Prajapati as the real teacher. The human teacher declares himself only as representative of this God Agni-Prajapati. Vide *Satapatha Brahmana* V. 4. "अग्निराचार्यस्तवाहमाचार्यस्तवासी" etc. Then the teacher formally touches the heart of the disciple and exhorts the Atman in the boy to rise up and guide him from inside with the mantra, *Rig Veda* III 8.4. तं धीरासः कथयः उन्नयन्ति etc. Him the wise, realised souls raise up spiritually. Sri Ramakrishna has shown us how by a mere touch spirituality can be communicated to a *sisya*. The child is then made to put a fuel stick silently in the Agni as an offering to Prajapati or God. Some texts prescribe also a mantra to accompany this offering which means, 'To Agni I bring a fuel stick. By this fuel stick may you increase and may we grow spiritually through Brahman, Swaha'. This is the first formal rite which a child performs and it is this that fructifies into all the elaborate Vedic sacrifices which a *grihastha* is expected to perform. In this we have all the spiritual elements of the Vedic ritual in its simplest form. These elements are condensed in the aphoristic statement, which explains a *homa* or *yagna* as दत्ततोद्देशेन द्रव्यत्यागः Renunciation of material pleasures for the sake of God. This represents the positive and negative aspects of spiritual *sadhana*, *yoga* and *tyaga*, symbolically.

In every *homa* the sacred exclamation 'swaha' is uttered to indicate the negative

aspect of *sadhana*, namely, sacrifice of the ego. Swaha denotes स्वत्व हनन, complete destruction of the sense of I and Mine. This is explained in express terms at the end of each offering in such expression as इदं अग्नये न मम, इदं ब्रह्मणे न मम. Yaska explains the word in VIII 21. "सु आहा इति वा स्वा वागाहेति वा स्वं प्राहेति वा स्वाहुतं हविर्जुहोति इति वा." According to this the word means "well said" or it denotes "the renunciation of one's own ego as an offering to God". Every *homa* consists of offering something as a symbol of one's own desire for material pleasures. It may be a 'Samit' (समित्) or other vegetable, such as rice etc. or some animal or part of the animal such as milk, ghee etc. or the ego in itself. That the 'samit' is representative of the pleasures of the three worlds is clear from *Atharva Veda* XI 5-4. "इयं समित् पृथिवी द्यौः द्वितीयोतान्तरीक्षं समिधा पृणाति" Parts of the animal are symbolic of the animality or brutality in man. The *purusha* in *purushayajna* represents the individuality itself. That it is these things that are to be offered is clear from Bhagavan's saying in the *Bhagavatam* XI यद्यदिष्टमं लोके यच्चातिप्रियमात्मनः तत्तन्निवेदयेत् मयं तदानन्त्याय कल्पते. Whatever is most desired by oneself or whatever is considered as valuable in the world, all those things are to be offered to me. This leads to endless bliss. Gita Chapter IV makes this symbolic significance of sacrifice clear in slokas 24-31. 'ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविः etc..... यज्ञशिष्टाश्रुतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम्'

The Devatas to whom the offerings are made in the various sacrifices all represent the Atman. This Atman works in three planes in a realised man. cf. *Gospel* page 515. 'Chaitanyadeva used to experience three moods. In the inmost mood he would be absorbed in samadhi, unconscious of the outer world. In the semi-conscious mood he would dance in ecstasy but could not talk; in the conscious mood he would sing the glories of God'. It is also noted, on page 113 of the *Gospel*, that Sri Ramakrishna also passed alternately through these three moods of

divine consciousness, the inmost, when he completely lost all knowledge of the outer world, the semi-conscious and the conscious. In the ordinary man also we find these three states of consciousness represented in the 'susupti', 'swapna' and 'jagrat' states. The Atman functioning in these states is differently named in the *Mandukyopanishad* as Esvara, Taijasa and Viswa. Sometimes they are named as Brahman, Hiranyagarbha or Prana, and Vaiswanara or Virat. All these represent only the same Atman. The Karma kanda represents these three, symbolically, as Aditya, Vayu and Agni, working in three 'lokas' भूर्भुवः स्वः, the earth, atmosphere and heavens, (corresponding to the three states). Vaisvanara is represented as Agni, Prana is symbolised in Vayu and Savita or the sun represents Brahman or Isvara, vide *Nirukta* VII 5-1 and 2. "तिस्र एव देवता इति नैमैरुक्ताः । अग्निः पृथिवीस्थानो वायुवाइन्द्रो वाऽन्तरीक्षस्थानः सूर्यो ब्रह्मस्थानः ।" When the Atman is conceived of as the power behind the ten senses and the mind, it takes eleven forms in भूर्लोक, eleven forms in भुवर्लोक and another eleven in the स्वर्लोक. The Devatas are, therefore, represented sometimes as thirty-three in number, representing the ten *indriyas* and the mind, working in the three planes. Vide *Chhandogya* III 16.1-3 and 5, where these '*indriyas*' in the three planes are referred to as 'Vasus', 'Rudras' and Adityas. 'प्राणा वाक् वसवः प्राणा वाक् रुद्राः प्राणा वाक् आदित्याः This shows that the thirty-three gods of the Vedas consisting of Vasus, Rudras and Adityas represent only the one Atman working behind all senses and mind in the three planes. These are represented externally by various phenomena on the earth, in the atmosphere and in the heavens. This is the reason why the multitude of gods of the Vedas are first reduced to thirty-three and then to three and lastly to one by Yagnavalkya in *Brihadaranyaka* III 9. So Yaska says in VII. 4. "माहाभागात् देवतायाः एक आत्मा बहुधास्तूयते" and in VII 18. "इममेवाग्निं महान्तमात्मानमेकमात्मानं बहुधा मेधाविनो वदन्ति. इन्द्रं

मित्रं वरुणमग्निं दिव्यं च गन्धमन्त्रम्” This view of Yaska is based upon *Rig Veda* I. 164-46. एकं सन् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति, *Rig Veda* 114-5 सुपर्णं विप्राः कवयो वचोभिः एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति : *Sukla Yajur Veda* 32-1. तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यः तदायुः तद् चन्द्रमाः, *Atharva Veda* XIII 4-12 and 21. स एष एकः एकग्रहेण एव सर्वे अस्मिन् देवा एकग्रहो भवन्ति । This is corroborated by all the Upanishads as in *Aitareya* III. 1. “एष ब्रह्म एष इन्द्रः एष प्रजापतिः एते सर्वे देवाः”, *Brihadaranyaka* I 4-6. “एष उ ह्येव सर्वे देवाः etc.” Manu also corroborates it in XII. 122 and 123 प्रशामितारं सर्वेषां..... एतमेकं वदन्त्यग्निं.....

It is thus clear that the *homa* represents symbolically only the spiritual *sadhana* consisting of renunciation of the ego, and worldly pleasures for realisation of Atman. This preliminary rite which the child does at the beginning of the Upanayana ceremony is followed up in the whole period of Brahmacharya by the daily अग्निकार्यं both morning and evening, symbolically representing the practice of renunciation in daily life. The mantra with which the offering is made ओं भूर्भुवस्स्वः shows that it represents *Nityanilya vastu viveka* etc. which makes a man an Adhikari for Brahma Vidya. It shows also the connection of the whole process with Om or प्रणव, which represents the Atman in the three states. When the boy grows up into a *grihastha* he is expected to worship God as fire in the three forms गार्हपत्याग्नि, दाक्षिणाग्नि and आहवनीयाग्नि. These three fires represent the Atman in the three states. To represent

‘Surya’ as the Atman and the unconsciousness of the outer world, the ‘*garhapatyagin*’ is worshipped in circular a pit because the sun’s disc is round and it represents zero. The *Dakshinagin* representing semi-consciousness is worshipped in pit which is semi-circular in form and the ‘*Ahavniyajin*’ is worshipped in a square pit to represent the Vyuthana or Jagrat, the conscious state of the Atman; where the *grihastha* is to sacrifice himself for the good of the world through the performance of his duties as service to the four ‘*varnas*’ in a spirit of *samatva*. The square is symbolic of समत्त्व, because all its sides and angles are equal and it has four sides and four angles each resembling the other. When his mind is sufficiently ripe, and he leaves all attachments to the world, the *grihastha* is asked to perform a *yajna* called प्राजापत्येष्टि in which he is asked to give away everything he has and to give up his ritual along with it and to devote himself entirely to spiritual *sadhana*. This is symbolically done by re-depositing the Agni in the heart from which it was taken out first. cf. Manu प्राजापत्यां निराप्येष्टिं सर्ववेदसदक्षिणामात्मन्यग्निं समारोप्य ब्राह्मणः प्रव्रजेत् गृहान्. If the Brahmachari develops sufficient love of God and spirit of renunciation by the end of the period of Brahmacharyam, he can straightaway become a sannyasin as a Sankara or Madhwa did. In this case all the rituals of the Grihasthasrama are unnecessary. This shows the spiritual significance of Upanayanam.

AN EDUCATION RELEVANT TO OUR NEEDS

Education and Religion have been the two closely inter-woven influences that made the greater human societies possible. We find religion often borrowing its legs from education and education identifying on religious inspiration. Whenever one thought too much of its self-sufficiency and felt sure of its efficiency in society without the help of the other, it has failed. The secret is that their soul is one: Education is the preparation of the individual for the community, and his religious training is the core of that preparation. With the great intellectual restatements and expansions of the nineteenth century, an educational break up, a confusion and loss of aim of education, was inevitable. We can no longer prepare the individual for community when our ideas of the community are shattered and undergoing reconstruction. Hence today the task of education is two-fold. It has to prepare the individual for the community and secondly it has to reconstruct the community. Or, which is the same thing, education today is called upon to prepare individuals who will rebuild society. It is in this twin aspect that education was placed before the *alumni* of the Annamalai University by Sri T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar, Minister of Education, Madras, in his convocation address the other day.

‘Our Education should be man-making’ he averred. It should serve the society also. ‘Our saints have said,’ he continued that “we are born to get an opportunity to serve the world.” Let our universities spread this great lesson’. Service of the world is a religious ideal. How beautifully has the Minister deified education by assigning to it the function of religion. If, instead of being cramped by book-knowledge, the youth of the nation is infused by the holy enthusiasm and wider sympathies of world service, they will go out of the Universities as heroes, as leaders.

Education should be a training for leadership. Universities should never be satisfied by manufacturing doctors, lawyers, and scientists; they should give to society self-sacrificing men, men fired with the idea of doing good to their country, political sannyasins. To raise such heroes Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar exhorted the *alumni*: Our Universities must teach our young men and women, the duty that every one of us as members of this great country should render to the other members and to the world in general.....The Universities and the colleges are maintained from the revenues collected from the poorest of the land. Having had the education through their help do we not owe a duty to them, the duty of raising the down-trodden millions of this great country? I want the students especially to think on this problem’.

To enable them to solve this problem the Minister asked the students to equip themselves with the three sovereign virtues which Swami Vivekananda required of every leader. ‘First feel from the heart. Through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates. Then, instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, find a way out. Have you any practical solution to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Then, thirdly, to crown, all, have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If you have all these three things, each one of you will work miracles.’ A hundred men with these sovereign virtues and India would march forward to forge a destiny that will bedim all the brilliance of her past records.

If our Universities are to shape such men, philosophers, leaders, heroes, they must be *reshaped* first, the Minister observed. It is unfortunate, he said, that our Universities today are not in touch with life. Again, ‘Our Universities should be representatives of our civilization and culture; they must be the instruments through which our

culture and civilization can spread.' India wants her sons and daughters to bear the distinctive mark of her culture; she wants leaders through whose veins course the blood of her hoary culture. She is sick of importations from abroad and exotic graftings on Indian soil. Now that India is on the road of self-determination and self discovery, it is hoped that her sons of light and leading will shape her patterns after her pristine models and usher in better days for which we have been waiting.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ON THE REIGN OF TERROR IN EAST BENGAL

We are terribly shocked to read the newspaper reports of harrowing sufferings on a mass scale, in the Noakhali districts and certain parts of Tipperah district, caused by all sorts of barbarous atrocities perpetrated obviously by an organised gang of armed hooligans belonging to a certain community. It is simply unthinkable that murder, loot, arson, abduction and forced conversion and marriage on such a vast scale can go on unchecked for any length of time under a civilised and well-established government of the twentieth century. In the name of helpless suffering people of the orgy-affected areas, we appeal to the authorities concerned to lose no time in bringing to book the lawless elements and stopping their anti-social bestial activities. Any dilatoriness in this regard may easily be misconstrued as apathy or even unwillingness.

To the oppressed we are sending succour as far as circumstances permit. We expect that they should defend their hearths and homes, and particularly the honour of their womenfolk, as best as they can, as enjoined by their Scriptures. The duty of the common man is something quite different from that of the man of realisation. Inertia must not be confused with equanimity. Manu, the great lawgiver of ancient India, advises even killing in self-defence. And Swami Vivekananda, quoting the following passage from the *Mahanirvana Tantra*: "To his enemies the house-holder must be a hero," commented on it saying, "Them he must resist. This is the duty of the house-holder. He must not sit down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense

about non-resistance. If he does not show himself a hero to his enemies, he has not done his duty." (Karma-Yoga, ch. II)

They should also know that forced conversion cannot be a bar to re-entry into their own fold. Religion is a matter of deep-rooted conviction which no external acts of violence can take away. As humble followers of Swami Vivekananda, we firmly believe that the Hindu society is about to shed the last vestiges of exclusiveness in the shape of untouchability, the ban on re-conversion, and other social restrictions in the name of religion that no longer have any meaning and are eating into the vitals of a society that was once strong enough to absorb alien races like the Greeks, Scythians and Huns. We need hardly say that abducted women should be taken back into the society with all honour. Failure to do so would mean punishing the victims instead of the aggressor, which is absurd. Society should not make the innocent victim the scapegoat of its own impotence.

Lastly, we assure the oppressed that, after all, the well-being of humanity is in the hands of God and not in those of designing men, however powerful they may seem to be at the moment, as the last World War has proved. It is an unfailing spiritual law of life that evil although it may triumph at the beginning, is bound to be vanquished in the end. May God give courage and strength to the oppressed and rationality and human feelings to the oppressors!

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Bengal's Agony

Incredibly inhuman massacres, abductions forcible conversions to Islam, looting and arson on an unprecedented scale are reported from Noakhali and Tipperah districts of East Bengal. It has become impossible for human ears to hear anymore of Bengal's agony.

Bengal had just breathed a sigh of relief after the great famine that swept away much of Bengal's human material in quality and quantity. Then came with a thud the news of the 'Great killing' in Calcutta and its suburbs. Calcutta had not returned to normal when the plague of this bestial and inhuman frenzy of violence has spread to defenceless village areas of Noakhali. Wholesale butchering of Hindu aristocratic families have been reported. At this rate Bengal will go out of existence, the Bengal of Sri Ramakrishna, Ram Mohan Roy and Tagore.

We have every reason to believe that the same elements that were responsible for the Calcutta riots are at the back of this outbreak of violence. The League Ministry has disowned all responsibility! But why did the Prime Minister of Bengal take all the trouble to drop leaflets from the aircraft deprecating lawlessness, and 'appealing especially to Muslims for peace' if the Muslims there are all quiet and peaceful. The head of an aristocratic family of Begumganj in Noakhali organised a resistance and twice the hooligans were repulsed. The leader then appealed for Police aid and spent the night in vigil and panic. The help never came and the family along with other refugees was wiped out in the morning. Is there any Government at all in those parts of Bengal or is it under the heels of hooligans?

The Congress Working Committee has correctly laid its finger on the responsibility of the Muslim League in the matter. In its resolution on 24th October it says, 'this outburst of brutality is the direct result of the

politics of hate and civil strife that the Muslim League has practised for years past, and of the threats of violence that it has daily held out in the past months.' We have it from someone who escaped the Calcutta massacres that a photograph was published in some Calcutta papers of a coupon for 6,000 gallons of petrol purchased by the Prime Minister on the eve of the riots. (The hooligans were moving about in armed lorries). Perhaps this quota of petrol was not used up and he wanted it to be used in Noakhali!

No, the time has come to face facts about Bengal squarely if that province is to have a future. Like Sind it has been afflicted with an administration which has repeatedly and lamentably failed at crises of which Bengal has had too many in recent years. The conclusion is borne in on us that continuance of the Ministry will only mean repetition of the tragedy at intervals. The Congress Working Committee has rightly said that the responsibility for permitting a civil calamity of such proportions to befall the people of the province must rest on the Provincial Government. It adds, 'further, the Governor and the Governor-General who claim to possess special responsibilities in such matters must also share the burden for events in Bengal.'

But the time for fixing the burdens has long gone by. The time has come to stop this deadly rot eating up Bengal. A major crisis is hanging over the allocation of portfolios and until actual power comes in the hands of the Congress it cannot set things right. Bengal cannot wait. Its agony cries out for immediate redress. During the indefinite period of transition infinite harm can be done by an administration which has already earned a reputation for lawlessness and violence directed against Hindus. We are much relieved to hear that Mahatma Gandhi is going to visit Bengal immediately.

It is earnestly hoped that he will bring pressure on the Viceroy to intervene and save Bengal from this terrible trauma.

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Over-population or under-production

Dr. Willcox's powerful book, *Nations can live at Home* is a challenge to the modern wisdom that makes inter-dependence a great virtue. With a staggering array of facts and figures, he establishes that each nation can, if it wants, be self-sufficient in the matter of food. India, it is hoped, will certainly turn to effective methods of increasing her soil fertility, stung by the lessons of the famines. Some remark that India's crucial problem is that of over population and that however much we increase India's productive capacity she will not be in a position to meet the demands of her ever-increasing stomachs. This theory has been exploded and it is proved that India's undeveloped potential of food production can more than answer the needs of her growing population for a good while yet to come. We give the following figures from a correspondent's letter to the *Harijan*:

1. It has been demonstrated by experiments in Government Agricultural Farms that by sowing improved seeds, 29 per cent. increase can be effected on the existing yield.

2. If the export of oil-seed, oil-cake, bones etc. were stopped and the animal droppings saved for the soil as manure by providing the villagers with wood fuel instead of cow-dung for domestic cooking etc., the existing crop output could be doubled.

3. By further development of canal irrigation and by building sufficient wells and tanks, two crops could be grown where at present there is only one. Out of 245 crores acres in India, at present only 32 crores are under double crop.

4. A comparison of yield per acre in India and other countries respectively points to the same thing.

Here are figures for rice per acre:

Egypt	3447 lbs.
Japan	3909 „
Italy	4810 „
Formosa	2409 „
India	939 „

The figures for wheat are:

Japan	2010 lbs.
Italy	1374 „
Canada	1197 „
England	2085 „
India	774 „

5. Government statements further indicate that owing to lack of proper storage facilities, the annual loss of food grains due to the inroads of rats, insect pests etc. comes to about 10 lakhs of tons per year.

6. The extent of cultivable land which is at present not under cultivation is 9 crore acres.

7. Lastly comes the invasion of 'money crops'. In 1900 the area under commercial crops was 165 lakh acres. In 1930 the figures rose to 240 lakh acres. During this period the land under oil-seeds increased from 130 lakh acres to 160 lakh acres. In 1942, 32% of the entire field of oil-seeds and jute was for export, of linseed 71% and of ground nuts 15%. In other words, so much soil fertility was bartered away for commercial gain, without the possibility of returning in any shape or form to the soil what was taken out of the soil, thus impairing it permanently. This is not agriculture but downright robbery of the soil at the cost of posterity. If our agriculture could be rescued from the invasion of 'money crops' it would go a long way towards meeting the recurring threat of food shortage.

Hand-spinning vs. Mill-spinning

Madras Government's Textile Policy

To the Madras Ministry belongs the unique distinction of giving the lead to other Provincial Governments in the matter of 'effectively' implementing the khadi scheme, an important item of the constructive programme. To this end the Madras Ministry has initiated its textile policy banning the starting of new textile mills and the increase of spindleage as a safeguard for the khadi scheme. In view of the many considerations in National planning as uniformity of Industrial policy between provinces and the like, other provinces have deferred touching this knotty problem. The Madras Government must be congratulated for its courage and quickness of action. It has also to be congratulated for its strict adherence and devotion to the words of Gandhiji. Gandhiji in the *Harijan* of October 6th writes: Now that the Provincial administrations are in full swing, the question has arisen as to whether these Governments can admit new mills and, at the same time, promote hand-spinning on a national scale. My answer is emphatically in the negative, if the encouragement of hand-spinning is meant to be sincere. For a third thing the Madras Government deserves praise: Just the other day we heard an honest khadi-devotee saying that to-day the Gandhian concept of the sacredness of khadi has been proved to the hilt by its extreme rarity and by the severe penance it demands of its devotees. The people are already in the grips of a terrible cloth-famine and the scarcity of khadder has made matters worse. The Madras Government deserves praise for the courage of conviction with which it is thinking and planning to make this rare commodity all-pervasive. Perhaps it firmly believes in the spiritual principle that sacred things are all-pervasive!

Jawaharlal Nehru while tracing the early days of the National Planning Committee in

his *Discovery of India* (pages 447 and 458) has time and again stressed the fundamental need of joint and co-ordinate action between provinces in all matters of Industrial policy. He quotes the resolution of the Congress Executive in August 1937 soon after the formation of Provincial Governments:..... 'Many of these problems cannot be dealt with efficiently on a provincial basis as the interests of adjoining provinces are inter-linked. The development and control of industries require joint and co-ordinate action on the part of several provinces.' We didn't hear hitherto of any other province initiating a textile policy banning the starting or increase of mills. Are we to conclude that those provinces prefer the wisdom contained in the above principle of National planning enunciated by Pandit Nehru to Gandhiji's teaching or that Madras Government have found it wise to sacrifice that wisdom to obey Gandhiji's words to the letter? There has been a quite volley of criticism and opposition to the textile policy both from the mill-owners and from the public. But none of them has noted the above violation of a fundamental principle of National Planning, the necessity of inter-provincial uniformity in matters industrial.

For acting independently of the other provinces, Madras can seek support in Gandhiji's words. He writes, 'Another question has arisen as to why the Working Committee should not, at any rate, declare a uniform policy to be followed by all the Congress Provinces. There is nothing to prevent the committee from doing so. But it is open to them to say that the Congress policy has been enunciated times without number. Each province has to measure its own belief in the Congress scales. The Working Committee might not go into details.' But what about the resolution of the Congress Executive of August 1937 quoted above where it is definitely said that India's Industrial problems

cannot be solved on a provincial basis, but that the development and control of industries require joint and co-ordinate action on the part of several provinces. Mahatma Gandhi says that 'the Central Government represents all India and all parties and therefore may not lay down any exclusively Congress policy, much less a policy in a matter wholly within the jurisdiction of the provinces.' Is not the textile policy of the Madras Government an exclusively Congress policy? Then again, although the textile policy is in the jurisdiction of the province, a policy can be drawn up only in consistence with the line of action adopted by other provinces.

This decision of the Madras Government and its repercussions have focussed our attention on deeper questions as the Congress attitude to machines, the limit of its preference of handicrafts etc. Jawaharlal Nehru writes under the caption: 'The Congress and Industry. Big Industry vs. Cottage Industry, in the *Discovery of India* (pages 484, 85.)

'The Congress, under Gandhiji's leadership, had long championed the revival of village industries, especially hand-spinning and hand-weaving. At no time, however, had the Congress been opposed to the development of big industries, and whenever it had the chance, in the legislatures or elsewhere, it encouraged its development. Congress

Provincial Governments were eager to do.....

'The Congress has thus always been in favour of the industrialization of India, and at the same time, has emphasized the development of cottage industries and worked for this. Is there a conflict between these two approaches? Possibly there is a difference in emphasis, a realization of certain human and economic factors which were overlooked previously in India.... The kind of medium-scale industries that were being started in India, under the prevailing economic system, resulted not in absorbing labour but in creating more unemployment. While capital accumulated at one end, poverty and unemployment increased at the other. Under a different system and with a stress on big-scale industries absorbing labour, and with planned development this might well have been avoided..... There is no necessary conflict between this (utilization of manpower for production) and the introduction of machinery on the largest scale, provided that machinery is used primarily for absorbing labour and not for creating fresh unemployment.'

Will it not be wise for the Madras ministry to keep before it these views of Pandit Nehru whose responsibility for India's Industrial future is two-fold to-day, as vice-President of the Interim Government and as the illustrious chairman of the National Planning Committee?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR:
PUBLISHED BY THE RAMANASHRAM,
TIRUVANMAMALAI. PRICE RS. 15. PAGES
496.

It is now fifty years the Eternal Day dawned on Sri Ramana Maharshi. The completion of fifty years of the timeless realizations of the Maharshi—how can the timeless be measured by time—is taken by his devotees as an opportunity to place at his feet this chorus of devotion and adoration.

Like all modern sages of India Sri Ramana has many Western disciples and the contributions from them make a bright feature of this sumptuous volume. There are some among them who have settled down in Tiruvannamalai and who have adopted Hindu names like Dr. G. H. Mees. He has written two articles under the name Sadhu Ekarasa. Other contributors from the West worth mentioning are Ella Maillart who writes on the Sage's activity in inactivity and Eleanor Pauline Noye who has also contributed two papers. Their homage to Maharshi is the homage of the West to Indian Wisdom.

Another bright feature of the volume is the article from the pen of Sir S. Radhakrishnan who pictures Sri Ramana as the sustainer of the spiritual tradition of India. Religion should energise our consciousness, he says, transform our character and make us new men. The Maharshi calls us to this perennial religion of India by recalling us to that larger dimension of Reality to which we really belong. A third capital feature is the learned paper from the pen of Swami Siddheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Paris. He pictures the Maharshi as the true child of Vedantic tradition. Of the two aspects of reality spoken of by the Vedanta, Saguna Brahman and the Nirguna Brahman, writes the Swami, Maharshi acceded to the realization of the Nirguna without passing through the preliminary stages of discipline known as Saguna upasana. The Maharshi was a daring, uninitiated soldier on the path of Truth and had to hew down a path for himself as he had no knowledge of the traditional paths in the scriptures. The Maharshi used to tell Swami Siddheswarananda that after his realization, when he read the scriptures he found his realizations exactly tallying with those mentioned in Upanishads and the Gita.

Amongst other contributions from Indians mention must be made of those from Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Manu Subedar, Dilip Kumar Roy, Dr. M. H. Syed, K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, C. S. Ragi and A. S. P. Iyer. The many coloured plates of Sri Maharshi at different times of his daily routine give a living touch to the volume. The volume is

a fitting memorial to Sri Ramana and commends itself not only to devotees of the Maharshi but to all lovers of religion.

SRI AUROBINDO MANDIR
ANNUAL, No. 5. JAYANTI NUMBER:
SRI AUROBINDO PATHA MANDIR, 15
COLLEGE SQUARE, CALCUTTA. CLOTH
BOUND RS. 6. PAPER RS. 5. PAGES 152.

This yearly reminder from Sri Aurobindo, reminding the world of its *Divine Life*, is, as usual, a substantial summary of his distinctive contribution to life and thought. Sri Aurobindo is in his 74th year and his genius is as bright as ever, shedding valuable light on topics of yoga and literature. The volume opens with a contribution from his masterly pen entitled 'Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol', which is a supreme piece of mystic poetry. This is only Book one and we look forward to the remaining parts. A second contribution from Sri Aurobindo is *Mystic Poetry*, being letters in reply to questions from a disciple, where he shows his deep understanding of the world's poetic lore and lays his finger exactly on the truly mystic springs of the world's poets.

In 'Consciousness as Energy', Nolini Kanta Gupta, shows how the yogi while throwing open the flood-gates of consciousness, releases the great force of Becoming, the energy that is behind this world, the Pranaaya Prana. Sri Anilbaran Roy in the course of a learned paper discusses the greatest problem of modern times, the problem of a pattern for the new world, the spiritual basis of world order. True religion, he avers, wants to build the new world through the regenerated individual, through the superman—not the superman of Nietzsche which has made a Nazi Germany, but the superman of Sri Aurobindo. 'The supra-mental change', he quotes Sri Aurobindo, 'is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness..... The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone reach the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering, Truth and Light and Life Divine and the Immortal's Ananda'. Dr. S. K. Maitra in his study of Sri Aurobindo and Hegel brings out the points of concurrence and divergence between the two. He concludes by saying how Aurobindo's *Abolition*, unlike Hegel's is something beyond the categories of thought and how by its grace it gathers men to its bosom, an idea totally absent in Hegel.

Other papers like, *An Introduction to the poetry of Sri Aurobindo*, by Sisir Kumar Ghose. *The Aim of Integral Yoga*, Akbar the unifier and Light on the

Veda, add to the value and excellence of this rare memorial to the yogi of Pondicherry.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EIGHTEENTH INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS, LAHORE—1943. PART II.
EDITOR: DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

By bringing together these valuable papers Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan has placed not only all lovers of philosophy under a deep debt of gratitude, but all men who want to order their lives along right lines. For philosophy is not the exclusive food of the one in the ivory tower; it is the friend, philosopher and guide of the man in the street as it solves his persistent problems of every-day life and takes him by the hand to the ultimate.

Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar in his presidential address stressed the need for synthesis, for the 'meeting of the extremes' between the various sections of philosophy and pleaded for synthetic thinking and synoptic vision, so that the present antagonisms based on differences of race, culture and religion will be banished and the ideal of the federation of mankind will be achieved.

Thirty learned papers from eminent professors of the various Universities of India make this volume a treasure-trove of wisdom. It is not possible within this small compass of a review to do justice to any of them. However, mention must be made of Madhva's Absolute by Raghavendrachar, Public Opinion, by S. N. Roy, Freedom and Truth by J. N. Chubb, The Logic of Scientific Verification by D. M. Datta, Some Problems of the Mandukya-Karika by T. M. P. Mahadevan, What is Sin, by J. R. Puri and Crisis and Delinquency by N. N. Sen Gupta.

STUDIES IN THE MIDDLE WAY:
BY CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS, LONDON.
LUZAC & CO., 46, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W. C. I. PRICE RS. 6.

There is quite a considerable band of writers both in the East and in the West who are keen on cultural and intellectual understanding of problems confronting the world. Only through understanding the great dream of spreading sweetness and concord from pole to pole, throughout the world, can be realised. Our author, Christmas Humphreys, is one of these enthusiastic and intellectual thinkers, who are busy in founding a perennial fellowship of intellectuals in the world. This writer has written a large number of books: Karma And Rebirth, Poems of Peace And War, Seagulls and Other Poems, and The Development of Buddhism in England. All through the theme is one and

that is perfect realisation of the One in the Many and of Many in the One. As Swami Brahmananda would say, "Begin your spiritual life in real earnest. If you can gather all the forces of the mind and direct them toward God, God will be revealed. Do it through japam or through meditation or through discrimination. Know that all these means are equally effective. Take any one of them and drown yourself in the ocean of bliss. Don't question any more. First do something; then come and ask questions, if you have any".

Swami Brahmananda has rightly asked his disciple to concentrate on meditation and on reality. After sufficient thinking the day of illumination will dawn with the result that the reality behind this shadow of Maya will be revealed. The great truth will be realised. The religion behind all religions will be crystal clear and then one will be following the *Middle Way*, the narrow way to perfection. Justly by our author it has been observed: "All that we think and say and do is short of perfection, for it is ever at least a hair's breadth to the one side or the other of the median ideal. Yet to find and then to tread this *Middle Way*, unswervingly, untiringly, is the oldest, hardest, and most enjoyable game in the world. Whether viewed as a religion, a science or an art, a habit, or as the only thing in a dismal world which is 'worth the wear of winning', this ceaseless effort to bstride and ride the Bird of Life is a whole time job for any man, and its own supreme reward." (Page 95)

Here is a just realisation. Man is a bundle of imperfections and he has to grow perfect through japam, knowledge and knowledge translated into deeds, ever illumined by virtue and sacredness. The emphasis on sacredness is there because our belief is that man is come from God and his constant endeavour has to reach perfection by revealing the divine essence that is in his make-up. It is true that this is an ancient idea but on that account to say that this is not modern, too, is rather too much, almost bordering on untruth. In our own time there are many who are inculcating this idea in the mind of man. One can not forget the work done by Swami Vivekananda. His one work was to emancipate man from the worldly bondage and slavery. In other words he wanted man to be face to face with his divine essence. The thesis, as contained in *The Middle Way*, is the same. The emphasis throughout the book is on realisation and becoming. Realisation, rather an attempt at realisation, desires a close unfolding of what is inside us and that is, indeed, becoming. But the pity, rather the great tragedy, is that we are not able to realise our essence. Why? Are we not lost in earning and spending money? The *Gimme* attitude must go. If such a thing is possible, if

materialism is asked to retire, never to come back, readily we are passing through this difficult, but necessary, *Middle Way*.

The book, under review, is a naked attempt to revive spirituality by making constant references to the sayings of the Buddha. I am sure a careful reading of this book, followed by an intenser realisation in our concrete acts, thoughts and deeds, will tell us that mountains are not mountains, but mere occasions to show our wisdom and grasp to overcome them. The belief that man's history is nothing but a record of man's conquest of difficulties is a positive truth.

One thing more: religion does not teach discontent or conflicts. In fact attempts have to be made incessantly to revive the study of all religions. 'It has been said that no man understands any one religion until he has studied two.' This is true. Behind all religions there is one religion as throughout the universe there is one God. There may be different names. But what is there in a name? The thing matters. Even those who do not believe in God believe in Truth or Beauty or Reality.

B. S. MATHUR.

KAVITANJALI: BY T. V. KAPALI
SASTRI. SRI ARAVINDO LIBRARY, MADRAS.
PRICE RE. ONE.

This slender and daintily got up volume is an offering of sanskrit poetry at the feet of Sri

Aravindo by a devotee. It contains three poems in English of Sri Aravindo, closing with lines taken from "The Prayers and Meditations of the Mother." The first poem "Who" is cast in the manner of the Rigvedic hymn "Kasmai devaya havisha vidhema", as also the well known creation-hymn. The second is a short poem, "Invitation" in four stanzas, and the third is a long one in fifty six verses on the duality of Heaven and Earth, the Spiritual and the Material, East and West, Science and Philosophy, prophesying the triumph of the latter over the former.

Sri T. V. Kapali Sastri's command over Sanskrit and ability to compose in it are well-known; but translation is a very difficult work; the force or felicity of the original lines is very faint in their Sanskrit garb; comparatively speaking, the Anusubhs are better, and the five verses which close the volume have also come off better. Instead of a word-for-word literal translation, it would give greater results if one would draw out the ideas and their significance and body them forth in an idiom more authentic to Sanskrit. When a pure student of Sanskrit reads these renderings, without the aid of the originals, he finds the lines cast in a strange diction. As we have however no doubt about the skill of the translator, we hope to have from him further and more successful renderings of the Master's poems.

V. RAGHAVAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

WORSHIP OF THE DIVINE MOTHER AT THE MATH

Worship of the Divine Mother, Durga, was performed as usual at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore from 5th to 10th October. There was special Puja, Homam and Bhajans.

RIOT RELIEF

Ramakrishna Mission's Appeal

Readers of newspapers are aware of the terrible lawlessness that has been raging in the Noakhali and Tippera districts of Bengal. Slaughter, loot, arson, abduction, forced conversion and marriage, and other acts of savagery on a mass scale are being committed obviously by armed and organised hooligans belonging to a certain community. As a result of this, thousands of men, women and children have been subjected to indescribable sufferings and indignities; hundreds have been killed, and those who are alive have lost their belongings and are frantically seeking refuge in

neighbouring areas. They need to be immediately helped in all respects with food, clothing, shelter, and encouragement.

The Ramakrishna Mission, despite its pre-occupation with flood relief work in Cachar and Sylhet, has sent a batch of workers to Chandpur, in Tipperah, to organise relief, wherever and in whatever form it is possible, in aid of these innocent sufferers. The task is a gigantic one, and since our resources are very limited, we appeal to our generous countrymen to supply us with funds without delay. Contributions will be thankfully accepted by The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

THE COSSIPORE GARDEN HOUSE

The nucleus of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was formed in the Cossipore garden house, where in the year 1886 Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna

spent the last days of his glorious life with his disciples, and entered into Mahasamadhi. Foremost among these disciples was Swami Vivekananda, whose contributions to the spiritual advancement of the world are well-known. The house and its compound of about 3½ acres, where they used to live in the service of the Master and practise spiritual exercises under his divine inspiration, have been intimately associated with his hallowed memory. The disciples and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and the general religious-minded public of diverse faiths look upon this site as a place of pilgrimage, and visit it from different parts of India and abroad. Swami Vivekananda also was keen on securing the place.

For the above reasons it has been decided to open a branch of the organisation on the site and preserve the house as an international memorial to Sri Ramakrishna.

We have been able to purchase the northern half of the garden on behalf of the Belur Math at a cost of about two lakhs of rupees, through the kind help of devotees as also the benevolent public. The other half is in process of acquisition through the local Government, which will cost about one and a half lakh of rupees, and a sum of rupees fifty thousand is required to work out the scheme. A friend has kindly promised to pay one lakh of rupees; another lakh is urgently required for the purpose.

We earnestly appeal to the generous public as well as to our friends and sympathisers to lend us a helping hand in materialising this noble object. Contributions will be thankfully accepted by The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSIONS BOYS' HOME—P. O. RAHARA—24 PARGANAS

Report for 1945

'Children are the real assets of a nation.' This is the root mantra of this institution, this timely mother to the victims of the devastating famine of 1942-43. The year opened with 119 boys and ended with 158 boys on the rolls.

The boys live as in a family and get a training for an active and efficient life. All the boys belong to the residential Extended M. E. School of the Home. They are regularly taught weaving, toy-making, tailoring, paper-making and leather-embossing. The boys are induced to help them-

selves in minor house-hold duties suitable to their age and physical capacity and thus learn the dignity of labour.

The total receipt during the year in all departments come to Rs. 1,46,844-6-6 and the expenses amounted to Rs. 1,11,201-6-6.

More lands to the extent of 25 acres and a permanent Fund for the maintenance of the orphans are the immediate needs of the institution.

SINGAPORE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S RELIEF TO 'DEATH RAILWAY' ORPHANS

Indian orphans whose parents were innocent victims of the notorious Siam-Burma "Death Railway" are being cared for by two orphanages operated by the Singapore branch of the Mission. When the war ended the Mission felt called upon to look after the unfortunate orphans of Indian labourers on the 'Death Railway'.

Now there are 86 boys at the Orphanage Home at Bartley Road and 48 waifs ranging in age from 4 to 14 in the Girl's Home. The orphans are provided with free food, lodging, clothing and Medical relief. They are also taught Hindusthani, Tamil, the history of India's culture and ancient Civilization and other subjects.

It is hoped that the munificent public will come forward and help substantially this much-needed humanitarian work of the Mission for the unfortunate orphans.

LATE SWAMI SOMESHWARANANDA

Swami Someswaranandaji entered Mahasamadhi at the Cawnpore Ashram on 29th Sept. His previous name was Haricharan Mallik. He was born in 1867 at Rangpur village in 24 Parganas in the renowned Talukdar Mallik family. In his childhood, he had the greatest good fortune of his life to see Bhagawan Sree Ramakrishna. The Master then told him, 'You will come here, but yet there is some delay'.

He was initiated by Sree Mahapurushaji Maharaj and Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj gave him Sanyasa. Till the last day of his life, he worked as treasurer and Homoeopathic physician in the Cawnpore Ashram.

His end was very peaceful. He passed away remembering the Lord. His body was carried to the Ganges to the accompaniment of Keertan and there the last rites were performed. We pray for the peace of his soul at the hallowed feet of the Master.

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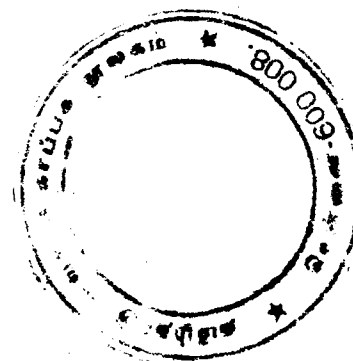
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To the sanyasi or ascetic just clothing to cover nakednessto the Vedanti something to cover the body.....to the man and woman of the world still something to cover the body, but neat and decent in itself.....to the art-minded, the same utility garment but fabricated to please the eye.....to the fashion-minded, primarily, almost, to conform to conceptions and conventions of civilised life.

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CONTENTS

	PAGES
CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA	267
THE EVER-EVOLVING (POEM) ... By Dilip Kumar Roy	270
TEMPLES OF MEN	271
BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD ... (An Unpublished Lecture of Swami Vivekananda)	275
"MY YOGA" ... By Dilip Kumar Roy	278
CONCEPT OF MOKSHA—II ... By Kumar Pal, M.A.	279
THE POET IN SRI RAMAKRISHNA ... By S. Sivaraman, M.A., L.T.	286
THE DRINK HABIT—ITS CAUSES ... By Dr. Anjilvel V. Mathew, M.Ed., Ph.D.	289
GLIMPSES OF THE MINDS OF MEDIAEVAL MYSTICS ... By Wolfram H. Koch	294
THE LIVING EARTH ... By Villager	295
NOTES AND COMMENTS	299
REVIEWS AND NOTICES	302
NEWS AND REPORTS	304

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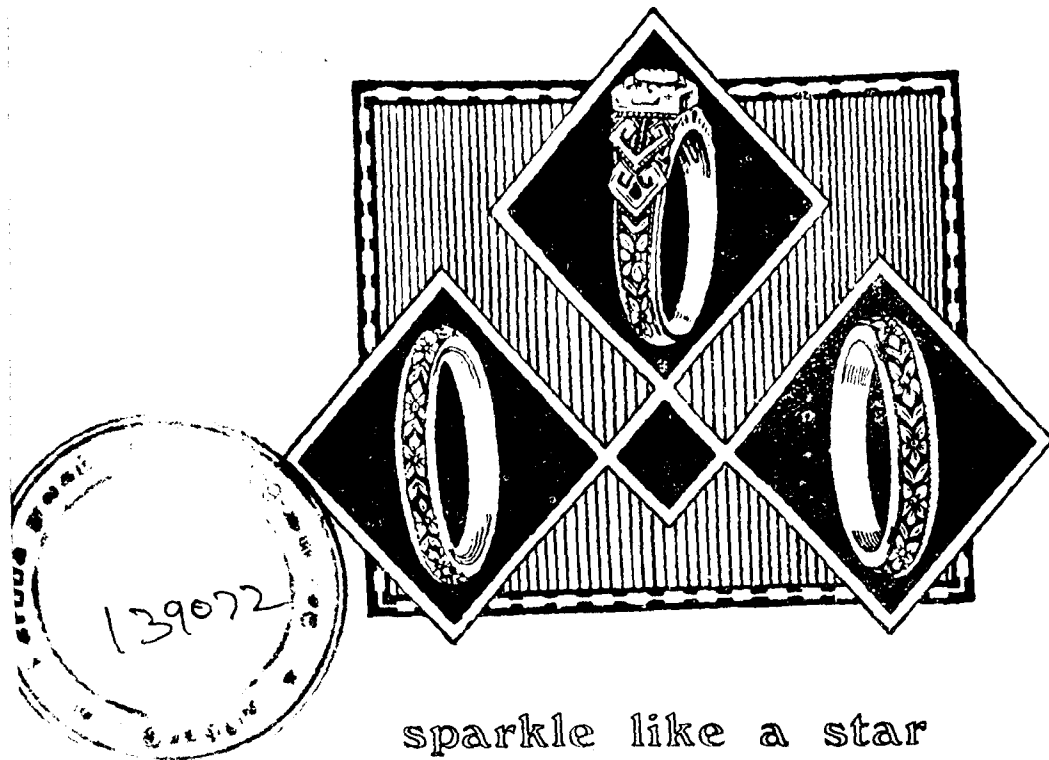
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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

For a long time Latu was keeping within himself his desire to go on pilgrimage. The Master knew his mind. One day while Latu was shampooing the Master, he said :

Sri Ramakrishna : Leaving the sacred food here (Dakshineswar) where will you go? Don't allow your mind to wander. If you go outside, it is so difficult to procure food. Where will you go for food? If you are keen on going somewhere, go to Calcutta, to Rambabu's.

Latu then went to Calcutta. But Calcutta did not appeal to him. There he could not get that freedom which he had with the Master and so after three days' stay he returned to Dakshineswar.

After some time again, the desire for pilgrimage became strong in Latu. The Master knowing this, said one day smiling : 'You are here for a long time. Why don't you stir out a little.'

Having got the permission unasked Latu considered himself very fortunate. But where will he go; he could not decide. In the end he asked the Master.

Sri Ramakrishna : For a few days you can go to Baburam's (Swami Premananda) village,

Auntpur. Baburam is there and so you needn't worry about anything.

Accordingly Latu went to Auntpur and stayed there for ten or twelve days. About his stay there we have heard from Baburam Maharaj and we give it here.

'You know, when Latu came to our village first, he used to tell me almost everyday that the place did not suit him. My mother, finding that Latu is not quite happy asked me to enquire of Latu why he was feeling uncomfortable. I could easily make out the cause of his discomfort: The Master was not there. How can a *sevak* like Latu live without the Master. One day Latu burst out weeping and said, "To-morrow, I will go away to Dakshineswar". Seeing Latu crying, my mother did not object to his going back to Calcutta.'

When Latu returned to Dakshineswar the Master asked : 'Oh, you have come back so soon'

Latu (in a respectful tone) My mind did not allow me to stay there.

Sri Ramakrishna : How is it; your mind did not allow you to stay there? That is a very good place. Baburam's mother is a very

good devotee. She likes to serve the *sannyasins* very much. Even in such a place you did not feel happy?

Latu: What do I know. There my mind was pining for you. I could't make my mind settle down and do *japam* by any means. I was feeling as if my whole mind was vacant.

Sri Ramakrishna: (with wonder) I have't heard of such a thing. There you cannot concentrate and here you can. What is all this? God is only here and not there! If you take the name of the Lord wherever you are, you must be able to concentrate your mind on Him. Then alone is your meditation right.

Latu: (non-plussed) you were not there.

Sri Ramakrishna: If I am not there, you cannot concentrate your mind and do *japam*? What is all this? Yes, I am going to be with you forever.

Latu (began to sob and said in a faltering tone). Without you my life will go to waste. Pray, make me such that I feel your presence always—

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling) See, what he talks!

Latu began to weep. Seeing him weeping the Master lovingly told him:

'Look here, it won't do to make this small thing so big.'

★ ★ ★

In the year 1882 the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at Dakshineswar for the first time. All the expenses of the celebrations were met by the devotees, Sjt. Suresh Mitra and Dr. Ram Dutt contributing the major portion. That day there was no end to *Latu's* labours. Having worked very hard from early morning, *Latu* was desiring to take a little rest in the evening when

Manomohan Babu gave him a bit of work. He carried it out with a depressed face. The very next moment the Master asked *Latu* to go to a devotee's house in Calcutta. That devotee could not come for the birthday celebrations. The Master out of his abundance of Grace sent him a little *prasadam* through *Latu*. That work *Latu* did without the least disgust. That night he did not return to Dakshineswar but stayed in the devotee's house. Next day, early morning, on his way to Dakshineswar *Latu* stepped into Naren's house. Naren used to visit Dakshineswar often in those days.

Naren: Wherefrom, so early? What all news over there (Dakshineswar)?

Latu: Yesterday, what a great festival was there! why didn't you come? How many times He (the Master) sought for you! Come with me to-day, He wants to see you.

Naren: I have no time to go there now. Examination is approaching. Can I afford to waste time with that 'mad Brahmin'.

Latu: (With great surprise) whom are you calling 'mad Brahmin'. He is not a mad Brahmin. Who can keep his head so steady as he?

Naren: (Smiling tauntingly) yes, yes, that is why he can scarcely keep his cloth on his waist; and his hands and legs shiver. The moment he hears the name (of the Lord) he begins to jump and dance. He has no sense of shame or self-respect; everywhere he goes naked. Again, this side he conjures up some magic, that side he hypnotises some, he mesmerises some and what not.

Naren: (Suddenly getting into a respectful mood) well, you stay with him night and day? Let me ask you one thing: Is he always in this absorbed mood? Does he not sleep at all during nights?

Latu: Day and night, I am always with him. I have never seen him doing anything wrong or improper. Not only that, he never conjures up tricks on anybody. What you have heard is all wrong. All these days I am with him and I have n't heard that he is a 'mad Brahmin'. Moreover, how many respectable people are going to him these days. The other day, 'Kishub Babu' (Keshab Chandra Sen) had been there and that Dadivala Babu (Captain Cook) was also with him. How long did they talk.

Naren: What did they talk about?

Latu: That day how much did he (the Master) tell Kishub Babu about meditation and contemplation. And how much did he praise you before Kishub Babu? Even Kishub Babu spoke for a long time.

Naren: (Cleverly changing the topic) Is Rakhal going there?

Latu: Yes: sometimes he stays there for a day or two. The Master loves him very much. Sitting near him, how much he feeds Rakhal. How much he plays with him. The other day Master took Rakhal to the Holy Mother and said, 'you see, your child is come. Please take him'. Then she was immensely happy. How much she made us eat.

Naren: He called Rakhal her child?

Latu: Yes, indeed—I heard it with mine own ears—

★ ★ ★

We give below an instance of how *Latu Maharaj* strove scrupulously to make his life of service perfect in every detail.

One day after midday meal the Master asked his spiritual son, Rakhal to prepare a *pan* for him.

The Master: O, Rakhal, there is no ready-made *pan*, prepare one for me.

Rakhal: I don't know how to prepare *pan*.

The Master: What is this; what is there to know in it? Is there anything to learn in preparing *pan*. Go, get the *pan*.

Even after this, Rakhal did not move. Seeing this *Latu* became very much disgusted with Rakhal. Rakhal did not care a fig for *Latu's* unpleasantness. Rakhal began to argue.

This was too much for *Latu*. He said in the presence of the Master:

Latu: What are you talking, Rakhal Babu? In his presence should such words be spoken. You are not obeying him, and more than that you are speaking so much. This is the way you behave?

Hearing the hot words of *Latu*, Rakhal became very much annoyed. He bawled out:

'If you feel so much, go and prepare. I cannot do it. In my life I have never done such work and today am I to do it for him?'

Latu on hearing this became very much upset and began to speak in a language half Hindi, half Bengali which was symptomatic of his anger.

Seeing this the Master became very happy. To enjoy the fun he called his nephew, Ramlal: 'Oh, Ramlal! come, come, if you want to see the fight between Rakhal and Leto'

Ramlal appeared on the scene. The wordy war was in progress. Seeing Ramlal the Master questioned him in a funny tone:

The Master: Tell me, which is the better devotee, Rakhal or Leto?

Ramlal: (Understanding that the Master is in a jocular mood, said smilingly) It seems Rakhal is the greater devotee.

Hearing these words *Latu* became all the more angry and said:

' Yes, he did not obey the Master and he is a great *bhakta*.'

Finding Latu angry the Master began to laugh all the more.

The Master (to Ramlal) what you say is true. Rakhal is the better devotee. See, how Rakhal is smiling and how he (pointing to Latu) has become wild with rage. How can he whose devotion is great, show anger before this (pointing to himself). Anger is *chandala*. When anger comes, devotion, faith and everything take to their wings.

The plight of Latu can better be imagined. His condition was like that

of a leech on whose face salt has been put.

With tears in his eyes, and unable to contain in himself the mingled feelings of anger, shame and discomfiture, he spoke :

' Never more will I show anger in your presence. This time you will kindly pardon me.'

The Master (seeing tears in Latu's eyes said in a consoling tone) you see, Rakhal is right. This (pointing to the body) had a desire to eat *pan*, is it not? That is why Rakhal set aside its words. He who dwells inside this, if he desires to eat *pan*, is it possible for Rakhal to set aside his words?

THE EVER-EVOLVING

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

The birds bathe in the sunset gold
And hop on the lawn in peace...
A soft wind blows and the creepers nod
Ableit daytimes decrease.

The dusk's at hand and soon the birds
Will furl their wings in nest...
The flowers will shed their petals as
Earth-life will pause in rest.

But, Sleepless Sentinel, thou wilt
Still forge in the crypt of Night
Raptures no darkness can surmise
In replays of song and light!

Thus rolls the drama of Consciousness
Through leaps of joy and pain
Yet in our sorrow we forget—
Thy wizard Art's unslain.

TEMPLES FOR MEN

Temples are for men, not for gods. This is no socialistic idea, but man's deepest need and hence God's behest. God does not need temples to live in, but man requires them in the early stages of his religious life to help his consciousness to evolve towards unity-consciousness, the cream of religion. Any intelligent temple-goer must have noticed the four concentric circles or squares of buildings round the deity. These four concentric layers are intended to remind the devotee of the four strata of consciousness, the waking, dream, deep sleep and the ultimate experience (the fourth or Turiya) which is symbolised by the deity. Even as the devotee passes through the three outer temples and goes to the deity, he must get at the *Chaturtham*, the fourth, the ultimate experience which in reality is the Atman. Every temple is a standing exhortation to man to turn within for this Turiya experience, the Atman, the grand *finale* of all spiritual endeavour. Where does God come into the picture here?

There is a section of orthodox opinion which maintains that temples are for gods and for none else. They are responsible for the building of dark, dingy, ill-ventillated sanctums for unbreathing idols. They forget that idols can be made to breathe.

Whether mankind was conscious of these spiritual potentialities of temples or not, the coming of temples marked a definite stage in man's ascent to civilization. 'The beginnings of civilization and the appearance of temples are simultaneous in history', writes H. G. Wells. 'The beginnings of cities is the temple stage in history. The city community arose round the altar of the seed-time blood sacrifice'. This temple stage had within its bosom a rich harvest of man's social, artistic and educational consciousness. Temples then were not only observatories, libraries and clinics, but were also museums and treasure-houses, says Wells. Whatever there was of

abiding worth in the life of the community was sheltered there. This was more true in the case of temples in India. Buddhist temples, the pioneers of temple building in India and other temples after them, were veritable museums of sculpture, architecture and painting of the highest order. Not only that, temples in South India during the glorious reigns of the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Cheras were the centres of great revival in music, art, dance and literature. The temple was the scene of the *debut (arangettam)* of new musicians and poets. A rising poet read his first composition before the deity in the temple to an admiring audience of devotees. Sangita, viz., music, dance and *abhinaya* (posture) was an invariable item of all temple festivals. The Devadasi system which has now unfortunately become the back-waters of the society's emotional life, was once the nursery of the society's best artistic talents. Thus temples were the divine patrons of arts and letters, were transformers of men through aesthetic experience. They fulfilled a high cultural function in society, by maintaining men of arts and letters and serving as cultural conduits to society. Whether we accept the spiritual view or the social view of the origin of temples, the emphasis is on man's need not on God's. Maybe, man wanted a quiet corner where he can have more spiritual vibrations, more of *sattva* particles and built a temple and kept flowers. Or, to state the social view, temple is a milestone on the road of man's evolving social and artistic consciousness. The temple is for man, not for gods.

The close association of arts and letters with temples, which we have sketched above is pregnant with a high moral and spiritual purpose. The *kalas* (arts) gathered in the outer temples were, as it were, the body of the Kalanatha, the Lord of arts, the deity in the inner sanctum. The arts are there to take us by the hand to the citadel of God.

experience. For, art is worth the name only when it fulfills this high spiritual function. And temples in India rejuvenated the arts with divine fervour so that they may discharge this divine duty of affording to man the aesthetic *cum*-cathartic opportunity for self-transformation. A second purpose is served by this juxtaposition of art and temple : art is protected from unartistic influences. Art and music when not yoked to a divine end deteriorates into the sensual. No age as ours has reaped this lesson and not learnt it. Temples, thus, were miniature moral worlds helping man to amass the fullness of artistic and social consciousness and direct it to final spiritual realization. The Alvars and the Nayanmars who were saint-poets were the sustainers of this tradition and poet-saints like Kambar and musician-saints like Tyagaraja were some of its finest flowers. That is the tradition typical of Indian genius that found a necessary place for all artistic expansion, nay for all expansion, in the scheme of religious consciousness.

Today the picture is reversed. Temples as culture and art arteries have dried up. Temples today present a sorry spectacle of disuse, dilapidation and desertion. A chain of causes political, social and religious has brought about this decline. Amongst the political factors must be reckoned India's passing into foreign hands which meant the death of all princely patronage from indigenous Rajas and Kings to temples, and to arts and letters nurtured by the temples. Amongst the social and religious causes for the decline of temples, the decline of institutional religion and secularization of religion, figure prominently. Now that the government of the country has come into Indian hands, most of the causes of decline can be combated. A national government must see that the temples are given back their pristine health and vigour, that they regain their importance in the cultural life of the country and

renovate and elevate society's cultural and spiritual life. To achieve this objective the Provincial governments will do well to keep before them a definite programme.

The Government must formulate and follow a uniform policy of renovation of temples and must start a central fund towards which all rich temples will make substantial contributions. All dilapidated poor temples must be reconstructed by this central fund for both the rich and the poor temples are God's and must be equally cared for. Such a policy will not countenance the diversion of temple funds for starting universities for all religionists when a poor temple lies dilapidated and uncared for within one mile radius of a rich temple.

Decline of institutional religion may affect other religions but not Hinduism. For Hinduism does not build itself on institutions, but on principles. Even if all the temples are destroyed it would not affect Hinduism a grain, says Swami Vivekananda.

But who cares for its principles today and the scriptures that enshrine the principles. An average Hindu youth knows nothing of the Gita or the other scriptures. The rich Hindu temples if they want to justify their existence must start schools and colleges for the study of Hindu scriptures and provide for a general course and a special course. The special course will be for training priests and preachers. No purpose is served by crying from house tops that institutional religion is on the decline. We must ask ourselves why it is so and try to remedy it. Institutions are simply bodies enshrining the soul, the principles. When the soul departs finding the body uninhabitable, institutions rot and stink. This is exactly what has happened to religious institutions to-day. The remedy is the study of the principles of Hindu religion and the creation of institutions where these ideals can be practised. The highest stage of

life according to Hinduism is the stage of *sannyasa*. In this stage the highest ideals are practised and hence other *ashramas*, the social stages, derive their sanction and sustenance from the super-social ideal of *sannyasa*. Rich Hindu temples as the custodians of the society's wealth earmarked 'religious purposes' have a great duty by the society to finance monasteries and Maths where the *sannyasa* ideal is practiced, as also to encourage the starting of new Maths for making the *sannyasa* life possible for other aspiring souls. It is these *sannyasins* by their *tapasya*, *swadhyaya*, renunciation and spiritual life that keep the light of spirituality ever-burning and pay the price of the vitality of Hinduism. The monasteries and Maths are the nurseries of real religions and must be kept up in vigour if Hindu religion is to survive. It is very unfortunate that the Madras Government instead of subsidising monasteries and Maths is thinking to tax their income. May be that in some cases where funds are lying idle, taxing the income and diversion into fruitful channels are necessary. But a uniform policy of taxing all Maths and monasteries is very unhelpful.

The diversion of temple funds brings us to the contemplated measure of the Madras Government to found a university at Tirupati by the funds of the temple. The Government must be congratulated for its wisdom of combating secularisation by secularisation. There is a general cry that religion is being secularised, that religion is leaving behind its spiritual realm and invading fields of secular activity, owning property, running secular institutions etc. This charge can never be levelled against Hinduism. For Hinduism is both secular and spiritual, pragmatic, and idealistic and what not. It climbs up from the empirical to the Absolute (Paramartha) and presses both into service to reap the ultimate experience. It meditates on the uncreate, timeless reality and at the same time

worships the God in man by feeding the hungry, by clothing the naked and by educating the illiterate. For such a religion there is nothing secular; everything is spiritual. And diversion of temple funds for secular education for all religionists is quite in keeping with the universal spirit of Hindu religion. But—and it is a big *But*, for a spiritual religion that considers nothing secular, there must be at least a thin core of spirituality. Without this soul, the body cannot live. People who set about the task of combating secularisation of religion and who are anxious about maintaining its health must see that this core of spirituality is in tact. This is done by strengthening the current of Hindu thought and life, by creating institutions devoted to the study of scriptures, to *tapas* and *swadhyaya*. Much remains to be done by way of consolidating Hindu society and strengthening it. To launch on schemes of starting universities for all religionists before this work of inner consolidation and health is touched is to indulge in a universalism that is suicidal.

There is an avenue of activity which once religion claimed as its own and which has long since been untrodden by it. India has no health. More urgent is the need for health services in India than educational institutions. The relation between medicine and religion is a blood relation. The priests of old in Europe were medical men. The authors of Ayurveda Sastra, the science of healthy life, were *rishis*. Names of *rishis* like Chyavana and Agasthya have been immortalised not only as saints, but as the discoverers of immortal Ayurvedic specifics named after them which confer health and longevity on man. Neo-Hinduism which is anxious to accept all that is best in the past will do well to join hands with its old neglected brother, medicine, and initiate the much needed health services for the Hindu community. The health problem has been for

years and years crying aloud for attention and it has been a cry in the wilderness. We earnestly hope that the urgency of the health issue and the sacredness behind the close intimacy of religion and medicine will appeal to the Madras Government and prevail upon it to give precedence to health services over educational services. It must see the wisdom of diverting temple funds to starting hospitals and dispensaries as a side activity of the temples and make true the synonym of God as the bestower of life and health. The Ramakrishna Mission has proved itself to be a true branch of the tree of Neo-Hinduism by its very successful work in this field of socio-religious activity. Almost every centre

of the Mission has got attached to it either a dispensary or hospital. And the Mission views them as *Temples of health* where the health needs of *rogi-narayanas* are to be attended to with religious devotion. Here is a line of work that immediately invites the attention and resources of our National Government.

A National Government in India must make the glorious history of temples repeat. It must restore to them their prestige and status as temples of art and learning and, more than that, make them *Temples of Health*. Our ancients were doubly wise when they said that health is the first step on the road to Dharma.

THE TWO WINGS

By two wings, a man is lifted up from things earthly, namely, by simplicity and purity.

Simplicity ought to be in our intention; purity in our affection. Simplicity doth tend toward God; purity doth apprehend, and as it were, taste Him.

If thou wert inwardly good and pure, then wouldst thou be able to see and understand all things well without impediment.

—Thomas A. Kempis.

Purify yourself and the world is bound to be purified. This one thing requires to be taught now more than ever before. The world will change if we change. For it is an effect; and we are the means. Therefore let us purify ourselves.

—Swami Vivekananda.

BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD¹

(AN UNPUBLISHED LECTURE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA)

Buddhism is historically the most important religion—historically, not philosophically—because it was the most tremendous religious movement that the world ever saw, the most gigantic spiritual wave ever to burst upon human society. There is no civilization on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other.

The followers of Buddha were most enthusiastic and very missionary in spirit. They were the first among adherents of the various religions not to remain content with the limited sphere of their Mother Church. They spread far and wide. They travelled east and west, north and south. They reached into darkest Tibet; they went into Persia, Asia Minor; they went into Russia, Poland and many other countries of the Western world. They went into China, Korea, Japan; they went into Burma, Siam, the East Indies and beyond. When Alexander the Great, through his military conquests brought the Mediterranean world in contact with India, the wisdom of India at once found channel through which to spread over vast portion of Asia and Europe. Buddhist priests went out teaching amongst the different nations, and as they taught, superstition and priest-craft began to vanish like mist before the sun.

I

To understand this movement properly you should know what conditions prevailed in India at the time Buddha came, just as to understand Christianity you have to grasp the state of Jewish society at the time of Christ. It is necessary that you have an idea of Indian society six hundred years before the birth of Christ, by which time Indian civilization had already completed its growth.

When you study the civilization of India you find that it has died and revived several times; this is its peculiarity. Most races rise once and decline forever. There are two kinds of peoples: those who grow continually and those whose growth comes to an end. The peaceful nations, India and China fall down yet rise again; but the others, once they go down, do not come up—they die. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall enjoy the earth.

At the time Buddha was born, India was in need of a great spiritual leader, a prophet. There was already a most powerful body of priests. You will understand the situation better if you remember the history of the Jews—how they had two types of religious leaders, priests and prophets, the priests keeping the people in ignorance and grinding superstitions into their minds. The methods of worship the priests prescribed were only a means by which they could dominate the people. All through the Old Testament, you find the prophets challenging the superstitions of the priests. The outcome of this fight was a triumph for the prophets and the defeat of the priests.

Priests believe that there is a God, but that this God can be approached and known only through them. People can enter the Holy of Holies only with the permission of the priests. You must pay them, worship them, place everything in their hands. Throughout the story of the world this priestly tendency has cropped up again and again—this tremendous thirst for power, this tiger-like thirst seems a part of human nature. The priests dominate you, lay down a thousand rules for you. They describe simple truths in round-about ways. They tell you stories to support their own superior position. If you want to thrive in this life or go to heaven after death, you have to

¹ Reproduced from *The Voice of India*.

pass through their hands. You have to perform all kinds of ceremonies and rituals. All this has made life so complicated and has so confused the brain that if I give you plain words he will go home unsatisfied. You have become thoroughly befuddled. The less you understand, the better you feel! The prophets have been giving warnings against the priests and their superstitions and machinations, but the vast mass of people have not yet learned to heed this warning—education is yet to come to them.

Men must have education. They speak of democracy, of the equality of all men, these days. But how will a man know he is equal with all? He must have a strong brain, a clear mind free of nonsensical ideas; he must pierce through the mass of superstitions encrusting his mind to the pure truth that is in his inmost self. Then he will know that all perfections, all powers, are already within himself, that these have not to be given him by others. When he realises this he becomes free that moment, he achieves equality. He also realizes that everyone else is equally as perfect as he, and he does not have to exercise any power, physical, mental or moral, over his brother man. He abandons the idea that there was ever any man who was lower than himself. Then he can talk of equality; not until then.

Now, as I was telling you, among the Jews there was a continuous struggle between the priests, and the prophets, and the priests sought to monopolise power and knowledge till they themselves began to lose them and the chains they had put on the feet of the people were on their own feet. The masters always become slaves before long. The culmination of the struggle was the victory of Jesus of Nazareth—this triumph is the history of Christianity—Christ at last succeeded in overthrowing the mass of witchcraft. This great prophet killed the dragon of

priestly selfishness, rescued from its clutches the jewel of truth and gave it to all the world so that whosoever desired to possess it would have absolute freedom to do so, and would not have to wait on the pleasure of any priest or priests.

The Jews were never a very philosophical race; they had not the subtlety of the Indian brain nor did they have the Indian's psychic power. The priests in India, the brahmins, possessed great intellectual and psychic powers. It was they who began the spiritual development of India, and they accomplished wonderful things. But the time came when the free spirit of development that had at first actuated the brahmins disappeared. They began to arrogate powers and privileges to themselves. If a brahmin killed a man he would not be punished. The brahmin, by his very birth, is the lord of the universe; Even the most wicked brahmin must be worshipped!

But while the priests were flourishing, there existed also the poet-prophets called sannyasins. All Hindus, whatever their castes may be, must, for the sake of attaining spirituality, give up their work and prepare for death. No more is the world to be of any interest to them. They must go out and become sannyasins. The sannyasins have nothing to do with the two thousand ceremonies that the priests have invented. Pronounce certain words—ten syllables, twenty syllables, and so on! All these things are nonsense.

So these poet-prophets of ancient India repudiated the ways of the priests and declared the pure truth. They tried to break the power of the priests, and they succeeded a little. But in two generations their disciples went back to the superstitions, roundabout ways of the priests—became priests themselves—"You can get truth only through us"! Truth became crystallized again, and

again prophets came to break the encrustations and free the truth, and so it went on. Yes, there must be all the time the man, the prophet, or else humanity will die.

You wonder why there have to be all these roundabout methods of the priests? Why can you not come directly to the truth? Are you ashamed of God's truth that you have to hide it behind all kinds of intricate ceremonies and formulas? Are you ashamed of God that you cannot confess His truth before the world? Do you call that being religious and spiritual? The priests are the only people fit for the truth! The masses are not fit for it! It must be diluted! Water it a little!

Take the Sermon on the Mount and the Gita—they are simplicity itself. Even the streetwalker can understand them. How grand! In them you find the truth clearly and simply revealed. But no, the priests would not accept that truth can be found so directly. They speak of two thousand hea-

vens and two thousand hells. If people follow their prescriptions, they will go to heaven! If they do not obey the rules, they will go to hell!

But the people shall learn the truth. Some are afraid that if the full truth is given to all, it will hurt them. They should not be given the unqualified truth—so they say. But the world is not much better off by compromising truth. What worse can it be than it is already? Bring truth out! If it is real, it will do good. When people protest and propose other methods, they only make apologies for witchcraft.

India was full of it in Buddha's day. There were the masses of people, and they were debarred from all knowledge. If just a word of the Vedas entered the ears of a man, terrible punishment was visited upon him. The priests had made a secret of the Vedas—the Vedas that contained the spiritual truths discovered by the ancient Hindus!

(To be concluded)

LOVE AND LIFE

Not to love is not to live, or it is to live a living death. The life that goes out in love to all is the life that is full, and rich and continually expanding in beauty and in power. Such is the life that becomes ever more inclusive, and hence larger in its scope and influence. The larger the man or the woman, the more inclusive they are in their love and their friendships. . . . The small nature is the one that continually strives for effect. The larger nature never does. The one goes here and there in order to gain recognition. The other stays at home and draws the world to him. The one loves merely himself. The other loves all the world, but in his larger love for all the world he finds himself included.

—R. W. Trine.

CONCEPT OF MOKSHA—II

By KUMAR PAL, M.A., Sarvadarshanacharya

[In this second part Sri Kumar Pal gives us a lucid comparative study of the philosophical aspect salvation in the different schools of Indian philosophy. The concepts of Videhamukti (salvation after death) and Jivanmukti (freedom in this very life) are analysed at length. The writer concludes by presenting the view of Gaudapada according to whom even the idea of salvation is unreal. 'There is nothing beside us. Whatever appears is unreal and false. Hence the talk of release therefrom too is unreal, false, and born of ignorance. It is a dreaming person's dream like of a hard escape from a bug bear'.—EDS.]

"MY YOGA"

(MAHARSHI RAMANA EXPLAINING)

(Put in a poetical garb by SGT. DILIP KUMAR ROY)

"What was my yoga process?—By whom empowered?

I know of no high mantra or Guru or vow.

The Bliss that had lain in bud within—outflowered

Spontaneously and took my soul in tow.

"Since then I simply *am* in my self at home

With open eyes or closed—but lo, they said:

'He is a Sage and therefore will not roam,

But, bulwarked in God's Grace, lives loan, unafraid!'

"Words, words, words—bulwarks, fear and sage and Grace!

You ask, I answer—in words—as best I can

To seize with words what no words shall appraise.

And make them see who have only learned to scan!

"Breath-taking things I never saw nor gained

What never I had: what happened simply was;—

My thoughts and ego left and there remained

The Timeless Self of Peace in endless pause."

Ontological status of Moksha

The foregoing remarks raise the problem of the ontological status of Moksha itself and it seems not inadvisable now to take up this problem for some detailed consideration.

It would not serve any useful purpose here to recount the different conceptions of Moksha held in different schools. Almost each prominent thinker has his own peculiarities to put forward. As many as twenty-eight chief types of Moksha or Nisreyasa have been enumerated in the *Nyaya Kosha*, which any one may consult casually if he likes to gather mere information. What is wanted is not mere chroniclic information, but a philosophical exposition of the whole problem as dealt with in Indian Philosophy.

It may be said without an inkling of doubt that, Moksha is a doctrine which is common to all schools of Indian Philosophy, in some form or other. It is not that merely the use of the word is my support in this statement, as some are inclined to believe. It is pointed out, for example, that the Mimamsa school particularly has nothing to say about this subject. Taking it has a typical case, I would like to prove the contrary. It is maintained by many prominent writers that Jaimini did not face the problem of ultimate release and only advocated the ideal of 'Heaven' in which there is unalloyed bliss. Some commentators have tried to equate this very state with liberation, for in essence

the description of the two is very much similar. I do not hold a brief against this view or otherwise. But I regard it as unnecessary in view of the explicit proof of Jaimini's adherence to the concept of Moksha as separate from heaven, which we find in the third and fourth sections of Chapter IV of the *Vedanta Sūtras* of Badarayana. As regards later Mimamsakas, there is an agreement among present day writers that they gradually came to recognise release as the highest good (Nisreyasa). Bondage according to the Mimamsaka consists in soul's connection with things other than itself and release signifies separation from them once for all. The Mimamsaka, however, does not accept the unreality of the world as in the Vedānta. Nor does he subscribe to the Sāṃkhya concept of the unreal relation between the world and the individual. Moksha according to him means only the realisation that the relation though real is not necessary. Further interpreters of Kumarila do not agree with Parthasarathi's description of the state as devoid of all characteristics like consciousness, pleasure and pain. *Manameyodaya* considers Moksha as a state of bliss or *ananda*. What may look more surprising to those who regard Mimamsa as no philosophy at all, is that in this system Moksha is regarded as the restoration of the self to its natural condition. In his *Indian Philosophy*, Radhakrishnan quotes Prabhakara as maintaining that 'Moksha is simply the natural form of the self' स्वात्म स्फुरण स्वयः.

¹ Note. On 4-10-'46, Sri D. S. Sharma, Principal 'Vivekananda College, Madras asked Sri Ramana Maharshi a question about his sadhana and yoga etc. which evoked this.

Prahhakara, moreover, not only accepts the need of *jnana* as a means of release, but he considers it as the sole means for the attainment of release. He calls this by the name of '*ksaimika sadhyata*' the sustenance of that which is already attained. This in its essentials differs but little from the '*prapta prapti*' of the Shankara Vedanta.

This is the result of my examination of the Mimamsa conception. Very much the same is the view of the Nyaya Vaisesika, Jainism and Buddhism, if we do not lay much stress upon mere words and try to grasp the meaning which they are intended to convey. Every school explicitly or implicitly conceives the self as in itself intrinsically free and blissful, now fallen in bondage due to ignorance. Right knowledge is regarded as the means to release from these limitations.

Strictly speaking, both release and bondage are relative concepts, though thoroughly antagonistic to each other. One is not intelligible without the other. In fact, one derives its meaning from the other. Moksha would lose all significance if it were not conceived negatively as a release from some limitations. A man cannot be said to be released if he has never been in bondage himself—or if not, may not be likely to be its object sooner or later or if others are not in bondage at the time. Likewise bondage too is not at all felt if one has never been free before, or may be not likely to be free in future, or again, if others are not free. None, however, maintains that the soul was in the beginning free and then imposed the bonds upon itself. This cannot be intelligibly explained. Evil or ignorance is considered as beginningless by every shade of opinion whatsoever. We can trace no genesis of our primal ignorance and the resultant evil. So if any meaning is to be ascribed to the universal feeling of suffering and bondage, we must postulate, either that, in a multiplicity of *jivas* some are free and others

are bound. But this is not the verdict of experience, nor has it any logical warrant. The very admission of duality constitutes a limitation. Or then we have to presume that the future vouchsafes for everyone a life of freedom and bliss as distinct from the present. The question naturally arises as to what kind of future can it be. It has already been said that Moksha cannot be desired by anyone at all if it means a complete departure from the present and so an annihilation of our own self, for nobody, not even a worm courts destruction. And presuming it to be discontinuous with the present we cannot legitimately make any assumption about it. If, then, release is possible and the human impulse has any significance, it must avoid both, mere continuity and radical discontinuity.

There is however only one possible position which does not militate against this conclusion, namely that the future released condition is not merely future. It is here and now, but not realised as present. Not release but the fact of realising it belongs to the future. Bondage is not fundamentally related to the self. Freedom alone is real. This view is very obvious in the Samkhya and Vedanta schools. But the same is implicit in almost every other system with minor variations which I have no time to elucidate. Ignorance is recognised as the only cause of our pains and sorrows. Mere realisation of the truth would lead directly or indirectly to the desired experience there and then.

Looking at it psychologically, this spiritual attainment may appear as a finite event in time. The experience in itself has nothing in it which smacks of the now and here. There is no feeling in such an experience that I was in bondage and now I am free. This experience has no content or object at all to relate it with others. This total cessation of *ajnana* is not, however, such a simple concept as we are apt to think. This

is riddled with many complications. Being given a beginningless existence, how does it completely cease to be? Is not the cessation itself a definite object set against the spirit? Does the disappearance of the world-illusion imply a simultaneous collapse of all that is based on it? If not, what is there to support the residue? Again, does the cessation of my ignorance mean the cessation of all ignorance which is the basis of the world? Finally is the cancellation of my ignorance equivalent to the annulment of the ignorance of individuals who are suffering like myself?

These questions have been very puzzling to every profound thinker here as elsewhere and cannot be brusquely brushed aside as irrelevant. It was in the effort to find solution to such problems that differences of opinion sprang up even in the orthodox schools based on intuitive experience. There is the one-soul theory (Siddhant M) एकजीववाद which holds fast to the oneness of ignorance and self consciousness. On this theory there is no Mukti for the souls as there is only one individual, all others being dreamlike entities. There is the Vivarana theory of Prati-bimba which accepts a diversity of Jivas as illusory reflections of the same Brahma or Sakshi in different *antahkaranas*. Besides, the authors of the *Advaita-Siddhi* and *Vedanta Paribhasa* place before us a peculiar theory of as many ignorances as there are individuals. It was to face many more such difficulties that Anandabodhacharya regarded the cessation of ignorance as a fifth category and the author of *Advaita Dipika* as indescribable, अनिवचनीय.

Samkhya and the other schools contend that ignorance which is the cause of bondage may be destroyed by knowledge, but the primal nature which supplies the fetters therefore persists after release. This 'not-self' as it were, is called *prakriti* or *pradhana* in Samkhya and Yoga, the *karmic*

matter or *pudgala* in Jainism. In Buddhism it consists of four adjuncts. In Mimamsa too the foreign material encumbrance is threefold, e.g., the body, the organs and the world. According to each of these schools the element of not-self continues to exist even after the cessation of nescience and for that matter the release of the self. The Advaita Vedanta treats *ajnana* as both the cause as well as the material of the bondage. This not-self is according to Vedanta made of the stuff of ignorance. So with the rise of knowledge nothing remains behind. Maya is interpreted by some as a distinct universal entity besides *avidya* which is the *upadhi* of the individuals. But no evidence is available to prove the existence of Maya apart from *ajnana*. Maya is a creation of my false suppositions, my *avidya*. The very word literally connotes that which is not, नृ नृ. Yet the co-existence of Maya with release cannot be avoided at least by those Advaita schools which admit a plurality of *jivas*.

This difference between the Advaita system on the one hand and the other systems on the other gives rise to a fundamental disagreement as to the conception of release. The difficulty concerns the distinction between Jivanmukti and Videhamukti. It is to be noted here that the distinction is not admitted in many schools. And there is much confusion in all, over this issue. My personal contention in the matter is that whereas the distinction may be allowed in other systems, may be said to be quite essential to them, it cannot be intelligible at all in Advaita Vedanta.

Jivanmukti is a state after the attainment of right knowledge when man enjoys freedom while living. Freedom is regarded as not incompatible with the embodiment. Without ceasing to be an ego the liberated spirit has a foretaste of complete liberty. There

exists a wide divergence of opinions about the tenet of Jivanmukti, some vigorously denying it and others defending it with no less vigour. The upholders of this belief would say that the embodied spirit continues to exist for some time on account of its previous momentum despite the disappearance of the cause of its connection with the body. We may acquire right knowledge which dissipates our nescience, yet we may continue to live in the body for a short time just as the potter's wheel goes on rolling even when the potter has stopped turning it. The world, they say, may persist for a while even after the disappearance of its cause, Maya. More precisely what they assert is that the body has arisen because of definite causes, the *karmas* of the *jiva*. By knowledge, *karma* is not destroyed in its entirety. A portion of it which has begun to fructify and effectuate, called the *prarabdha karma* has to be worked out by experience. This experience may last as long as several births or even *kalpas*. There is no time limit to the period of its expiation. A few amongst the supporters of this tenet state that even *prarabdha* is consumed, but that it leaves behind residual impressions which bear up the body for a while, though they have not the power to bind. When they are exhausted one enjoys disembodied freedom, Videhamukti. There is no justification for the general conviction that the occurrence of death of a Jivanmukta ushers a period of Videhamukti for him.

All this may be quite cogent so far as the dualistic and pluralistic systems are concerned. Ignorance, according to them is merely the cause of the soul's bondage or connection with the not-self which is assigned an independent, real status of its own. So that, the cessation of nescience by knowledge does not necessarily imply the extinction of the not-self. Body being a part or evolute of the not-self, there is no inconsistency in

postulating its continued existence when ignorance is destroyed.

The Jainas, however, may intercept me here and say that according to their philosophy release is possible only on the complete freedom of the Atman from *karmic* matter. This is not possible before actual physical decease. The decay of the body which is only an organised and materialised form of *karma*, is essential for Mukti. So, in a way, Jainism may be said to reject Jivanmukti.

But according to this school perfection is said to have grades and degrees. The state of a Kevali muni may very well be compared to what the other schools regard as Jivanmukti.

In Buddhism too, there is no clear adherence to this tenet. It has even been said that with the complete cessation of *ajnana* all *vasanas* come to an end and without this no activity or life is possible at all. All the same it is claimed by all Buddhists that Lord Buddha was enjoying Nirvana even during his life time. With their nescience and yearning extirpated the Buddhas live and incarnate for the sake of leading others to the right path. This claim does not go well with their rejection of Jivanmukti. The four *skandhas* are regarded as real in themselves. They do not necessarily cease with the extinction of ignorance, for there is no causal relation between the two. Only if desires disappear, the enlightened person may quite intelligibly lead a life of detachment and disinterestedness. In fact, such a benevolent life is very essential to the very conception of the Buddha.

Similarly in the Nyaya-Vaisesika Darshan, which you know upholds the *asatkaryavada* doctrine of causality, there is no discrepancy at all in maintaining the continued existence of the effect after the destruction of its cause. Strictly speaking, according to the

Nyaya school the effect springs into being only when the cause has ceased to exist. The effect is a new thing altogether and will disappear only when it has run its natural course. Knowledge removes ignorance, attachment, pursuit, birth and pains serially one after the other. After the cessation of ignorance the pursuit for objects stops because of the lack of attachment there. One does not any longer perform the *sakama* and *nisiddha karma*. The *sanchita* is rendered ineffective owing to the loss of egoistic feeling. Only the *prarabdha* remains to be consumed. Knowledge cannot interfere with its working out, for once the body which is a collection of different substances, is set in motion it goes on in obedience to its own laws, even if the self's attachment terminates. It may be pointed out that without the Atman, the body can no longer sustain and with the dawn of wisdom the self does not feel bound to retain its connection with the body. But I would rejoin, 'nor does it feel compelled to bid adieu to it merely because it has known the reality.' In fact discarding the body is as much due to attachment as utilising it for selfish ends. When ignorance vanishes, the Atman is obliged neither to live in the body nor to leave it. The soul has indeed no concern with its continuance or death. The body goes on for a time in strict observance of its own laws of cause and effect, while the Atman too lingers as a pure spectator thereafter. When the body collapses in the end automatically after the exhaustion of the forces supporting it, there is the disembodied state of release. These two kinds of *Nireyasa* are also known in the Nyaya Vaisesika school as manifest (*dristam*) and non-manifest (*adristam*) or *param* and *aparam*.

The Samkhya doctrine brings with it peculiarities of its own. It seeks to maintain the *satkaryavada* theory of causality, the plurality of spirits and the unreality of the

soul's relation with the Prakriti. The soul is in fact not bound at all and is never released therefore. It merely thinks itself to be bound or released due to non-discrimination (*aviveka*). The spirit does not affect the body in any way. As a corollary to the transformation theory the effect cannot persist at all for a single moment, after the disappearance of the cause. The effect really exists in the cause. So then, if the cause goes away the effect too vanishes forthwith. But in Samkhya, we should bear in mind, ignorance is the cause merely of the self's illusion of its bondage. With the rise of true knowledge, therefore, this illusion is destroyed and the Atman knows itself as it really is—ever free, never bound and independent of Prakriti. It is only the Prakriti which binds itself or releases itself. And this Prakriti is not the effect of ignorance. So if the *ajnana* is ousted away the Prakriti still persists and so does the body which is only a special evolute of it. There is no inevitability of death with the dawn of discriminate knowledge.

It is wrong as some suggest that Videhamukti alone is most in conformity with Samkhya-Yoga school. It is impossible to defer the onset of knowledge, in all cases till physical collapse. Prakriti always transforms itself according to its own laws and may bear up the body of a man even after his attainment of knowledge. But there is one more consideration. The primal nature is set in motion only with a specific purpose in view. This purpose is twofold, i.e., to provide enjoyment for the spirit when it is under illusion and also make way for its release therefrom. Thus during the two stages the evolution of the Prakriti serves two purposes. Naturally, therefore, some may be inclined to say that both purposes having been fulfilled the process should stop at once. The evolutes should be reduced to their non-manifest condition. The body having been

created by certain causes should cease with their disappearance. Otherwise the causal principle will be violated. But this would mean confusing the material with the final cause. Though, no doubt, without a final cause the Prakriti does not undergo transformation, yet once transformed for some purpose there is no urgent necessity that the transformation should stop all at once when that purpose is accomplished. Just as the evolution follows a definite course, which is determined by the purposes of the Purusha, as well as the inherent character of the Prakriti, the dissolution too adopts a particular channel and is governed by the laws of the Prakriti. The involution of one's body in the Prakriti too is possible only when the *prarabdha* has been consumed. For that period the soul's existence as a detached seer is sufficient to keep the body alive for the necessary transformations.

The Mimamsa concept of bondage and release resembles the Nyaya conception to a very great extent. The two are in entire agreement in so far as Moksha represents the condition of the enlightened in this life. But the acceptance of the *parinamavada* by the Bhatta school is responsible for some deviation in its theory of release after death. It is maintained that the capacity of the self for manifesting *jnana*, pleasure and pain persists even in release. Lest this should lend to a misunderstanding of the Samkhya position of Kaivalya, it is necessary to note that the Atman of the Samkhya school is intrinsically free from pleasure and pain and has only the characteristic of *jnana*. We have dealt with the Mimamsa position in detail already and so need not repeat the same here.

The situation is quite different in Advaita Vedanta. There is neither the duality and plurality of self and not-self, nor the plurality of spirits (selves). In so far as the not-self is taken into account, it is regarded only as superposed on the self by ignorance and not

as an independent reality. Nescience is both the cause and the stuff of the superimposition. The whole world is nothing but an illusory appearance. The appearances, however, hang on nothing but ignorance. They are in fact nothing but products of ignorance made of ignorance. Knowledge removes the whole show at one stroke. There is a discrepancy in speaking even of the removal or support of an entity which is not real. The dissolution of the body or its continuance is of no account and serves no purpose in the Advaitin's scheme of salvation. Strictly adhering to the principles of the Advaita Vedanta not one of the previous explanations can be accepted without violating the more fundamental principles of causality and illusionism which are the soul of Vedanta. Neither the world, nor *karma* in any form whatsoever, nor their impressions can survive nescience. To talk of the disappearance of nescience and the persistence of the world or the body is meaningless in Vedanta. The two things are not at all different but one. The cessation of *ajnana* means the cancellation of the whole world drama.

Here some thinkers have sought to make a distinction between two types of illusion, the *nirupadhika* and the *sopadhika*. The former illusion, as of the rope snake has no stable medium as a conditioning factor and so the appearance is completely cancelled with the rise of true knowledge. The latter kind differs in having a constant conditioning medium, as the mirror or water in the reflection of my face or the water in the bent image of a straight stick inside it. The world illusion is considered by them as more akin to the latter and so the difficulty of the continued existence of the illusory body after *jnana* is regarded as solved. The absolute truth, all the same, cannot be explained away by such metaphors, which though always have a great practical importance for lucid expression cannot be pushed to the very end.

Examples like these always presuppose a particular position and station in life as distinct from others. This is incompatible with Reality in the Advaita Vedanta. Our experience may be conditioned in many ways by many things. But there is no other to condition the Brahman. The cessation of the world illusion or the identification of our self with the body brought about by the Akhandavritti is identical with Brahmahood. No condition stands in the way. There is no process of our becoming Brahman, or getting rid of ignorance. We are Brahmaswarupa. Death does not serve to remove any bit of our ignorance or aid in the revelation of our nature any more. There are no degrees or stages of reality. It is not that appearances have some different kind of reality from that of Brahman. Reality can be only one. All else is not real. Brahman is the reality of all things whatsoever.

In another school of Vedanta, we find a tantalising effort to get rid of the difficulty by holding that a faint trace of ignorance (*avidyalesa*) is left which enables the body to live and consume the *prarabdha karma*. What is known by some as the Badhitanuvritti cannot be anything different from this. The whole train of their reasoning presumes a dogmatic prejudice in favour of the *prarabdha karma*. They find it hard to accept, we know not why, that the *prarabdha* must be consumed and cannot be brushed aside by knowledge. As this consumption implies the experience of pleasure and pain which are incumbent upon and inevitable due to one's past actions, it is concluded that the person should also possess the feelings of attraction or repulsion from objects, because without them no such experience is possible. And these attitudes of *raga* and *dvesha* are based on our ignorance. So it is argued that there must be some element of ignorance which makes all this experience possible for *jivan-mukta* too or for one who has acquired right

knowledge. But a knowledge of this type which can subsist with such a remnant of ignorance does not mean perfect knowledge according to the Vedanta. Nor, therefore, can such a state be termed as release. The co-existence of *tattva jnana* and *avidyalesa* is inadmissible in the same person.

Let me here clarify a very probable and important confusion to which the phrase 'Cancellation of the world' may give rise. It may be argued that since the whole multiplicity of the world is sublated in deep sleep, what remains there to distinguish it from Moksha.

In fact, as I personally think, it is an ancient prejudice to believe that release is inconsistent with embodiment. The very notion of cancellation or release is incomprehensible. It is really absurd to talk of the obstruction of that which is not and never was. Maya is unreal. It is not real. It is nothing. All objects are false. Brahman alone is real. It is wrong to say that Brahman is this only or that only. It is in truth, "All This" सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म and not this alone or that alone. This statement should not be construed to interpret Brahman as a collection of all, but what I mean is that whatever is real is Brahman. Nothing else is real. All reality is but Brahman. The reality of any one thing is the reality of all things. It is ever the same and does not change. Atman as such neither falls into bondage nor is ever released. It is in itself always as it has been and will be. This state, the present state, is non-different from the past or future. It is beginningless and endless. It is immutable, imperishable, ever free and so never to be liberated. All bondage is unreal. There is no bondage for the self. It may appear as real to the ignorant due to ignorance. It is strictly speaking nothing but ignorance. There is no other real entity to be misinterpreted by ignorance. There is nothing beside us. Whatever appears

is unreal and false कल्पित. Hence the talk of release therefrom too is unreal, false and *kalpita*, i.e. born of ignorance. It is like a dreaming person's dreaming again of a hard escape from a bug bear.

In the end I beg to draw your attention to a possible remark that if all that I have said be true, the declaration of the Sruti should

be unfounded. I humbly beg to submit and it will surprise you all, that in none of the ten authoritative Upanisads, there is any mention whatsoever of the words Moksha, Mukti, Nisreyasa, or Apavarga as understood by us. Even in the *Brahmasutras*, it occurs but once (IV, iv. 2) and there too it is attributed to Sruti which is therefore groundless. Or it may easily be understood in a different way.

THE POET IN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By S. SIVARAMAN, M.A., L.T.

"Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these", so said Jesus the Saviour, combining poetry with religion. The poetic beauty of the lovely lilies scattered in all their charm in the green fields like gems of dazzling lustre set off by a most suitable foil, has impressed the great spiritual truth of the care-taking of the creator with indelible firmness upon our minds' tablets. This is but one of the very many instances of lofty spiritual gems set in lovely poetry by the Poet-Saviour.

Indeed, not only has Jesus spoken his messages of poetic sweetness, but all over the world in the course of the history of the ages, great seers and prophets have sought the aid of poetry to add to the power and charm of their inspired out-pourings of the life beyond the ken of the ordinary man. In this aspect, the religious teachers of India have achieved outstanding eminence, for they have been poet-seers in the profoundest sense. Many a great scholar has remarked that no poetry can be more pristinely simple and yet more captivating than the verses of the Vedas and the Upanishads dating back to the dim ages of pre-historic humanity, as it were, and recording the reactions of the greatest of the human race to the thrilling glimpses of the infinite. Coming down to modern times, the

spiritual ecstasies of the great Vaishnavite and Saivite saints of the middle ages are in sound, form, and matter, as poetical as any other formal poetry, but attuned to a harmony from above—the choir of the angels and the music of the spheres.

A little reflection will clearly reveal that this association of poetry with religion or the voice of the spirit is not confined to the spoken word only. The fusion of the poetic and religious genius is quite conspicuous in religious symbolism and sculpture. What idea can be more poetic than God as the Eternal dancer in this Dance-hall of the universe— as Nataraja? What idea can be more poetic than the supreme Shakti as the Divine Mother dancing her dreadful dance— as Kali? The concepts of most of the Hindu deities such as Siva with his serpent-ornaments and begging bowl, Vishnu lying on the ocean of Amrita, Lakshmi standing upon the many-petalled lotus, and Saraswati playing on her veena, form the high water mark of poetic symbolism.

The reason for religious purity and poetic loveliness entering into alliance is not far to seek: poetry and religion are but different expressions of the one reality. In poetry, man tries to sense the real and eternal through beauty; in religion he tries to sense the same through goodness and wisdom. The one truth seen through the aesthetic faculty

of man is poetry; the same truth seen through the moral faculty is religion. Beauty, goodness and truth are but different facets of the one reality—the cosmic chandelier prism. True beauty can never breathe life if divorced from goodness; for beauty is harmony, and harmony is goodness. True goodness can never have charm except through beauty. Thus the apparent antagonism between poetry and religion is found to be as false as an evil dream, conjured by the ugly chimeras of pseudo-poets masquerading as genuine children of the Muse.

What is true of the saints and sages of the world in general, and of India in particular, cannot but be true in the case of the flower of sainthood in the modern world—Sri Ramakrishna. Most certainly the great soul has beheld the Supreme in its poetic aspect as well as in its other aspects. There is no greater testimony to this than his ecstatic revelry in the most poetic songs of the great poet-saints of the land. Whether he himself broke out in his musical voice reciting a poetic hymn or whether his chosen disciple, the golden-voiced Naren, sang a poetic prayer at his behest, the great soul danced in delight and slid into self-forgetful *samadhi*. Who dares to say that the poet in him was less moved than the saint in him at the soul stirring word and sound?

Though Sri Ramakrishna never wrote down his experiences or thoughts, though he spoke always in simple gossiping conversation with ordinary folk, yet his recorded sayings contain not a little of the poet's observations and the poet's pictures. A few will suffice to enable one to appreciate Sri Ramakrishna in the aspect as a poet.

The great seer has, with a poet's eye, observed the simple surroundings of his life—the earth, air, and sky—and housed many of his spiritual truths in their poetic loveliness. The son of Bengal has, many a day, watched the sun being suddenly obscured by the monsoon-clouds with all his beauty

shorn, and again suddenly emerging from them in all his effulgent splendour. Here is the saint's use of this lovely phenomenon. 'As the cloud covers the sun, so Maya conceals the deity. When the cloud moves away, the sun is seen; when Maya is removed, God becomes manifest'. The dark cloud of Maya and the bright sun of God are indelibly impressed on our memory's page.

In the vast shady groves of Bengal, the light, dry, gossamer-like leaves are driven about hither and thither on the ground by the winds in autumn. Here is a use for this picture. 'As dry leaves are blown about here and there by the wind and have no choice of their own and make no exertion, so those who depend upon God move in harmony with His will, and can have no will and put forth no effort of their own'. The absolute self-surrender of the Bhakta is vivified by the analogy of the autumn picture of the woods.

The dweller in the low plain sees indescribably varied vegetation, as short as a blade of grass and as stately as a pine-tree. But climbing up the mountain, he beholds them all as one level green mass spread below him. This lovely contrast is woven into a grand spiritual truth, concerning the difference between the vision of the man in the low vale of life and that of the man who has reached the heights of realization. 'When a man is on the plains, he sees the lowly grass and the mighty pine-tree and says—"How big is the tree and how small is the grass!" But when he ascends the mountain and looks from its high peak, the grass and the pine-tree blend into one indistinguishable mass of green verdure. So in the sight of worldly men, there are differences of rank and position—one is a king, another is a cobbler, one a father, another a son, and so on. But when the divine vision is opened, all appear as equal, and there remains no distinction of good and bad, or of high and low.'

In extolling the passing into Sanyasa from boyhood, the saint of Dakshineswar, with a master-poet's eye combines the best elements of the morning loveliness—the free air, the fresh flower, and the glistening dew-drop: 'Blessed is he that remains a boy throughout his life, free as the morning air, fresh as a new blown flower, and pure as a dew-drop.'

Some of the loveliest pictures of insects and birds have not escaped the seer's scrutiny. The honey-sipping bee, a favourite of the poets of all climes, is drawn to bring home the futility of vain discussions. The caterpillar imprisoned in its own cocoon, in contrast with the brilliant butterfly flitting from flower to flower, is made use of to illustrate how man can break through the bondage of Maya only with the twin wings of Viveka and Vairagya.

The holy son of Bengal has ever lived within sight of the lovely Ganges and within hearing of the mysterious Ocean. Both naturally play a large part in contributing to the poetic element of his sayings. To illustrate how inward peace in the midst of the world's turmoil marks the saint, Sri Ramakrishna says, 'The waves roll on the surface of the ocean, but the deep expanse of water lies unruffled beneath. Explaining the difficult concepts of Brahman and Maya, he says 'The ocean in its tranquility is Brahman and in its moving state is Maya.'

As frequent as the pictures of the sea, are the pictures of the river. Speaking of the exceptional power of the Avatar as contrasted with that of the mere Siddha, the Paramahansa says, 'When the tidal wave comes, it inundates rivers and streams and makes one watery surface of all the adjacent lands; but rainwater merely flows away through the usual channels'. In another passage, he compares the heart of the Jnani to the holy river in even current and that of the Bhakta to the ocean with its ebb and flow. To illustrate the inability of the worldly man's heart

to reflect God, the poet—saint brings in the picture of the incapacity of the disturbed surface of rolling waters to reflect the full moon. The momentary despondencies of the devotee are compared to the eddies and whirlpools of a swift flowing current. Such illustrations can be culled in any number.

Of the poet's emotional ardour, there are fine instances in Sri Ramakrishna's yearnings for a vision of the Lord. His impassioned utterances require only the music of numbers, of metre and rhyme, to be called poetry, for the substance is already there in the idealized emotion. To give but an instance or two, out of legion:

'O Mother Divine! I want no honour from men, I want no pleasure of the flesh, only let my soul flow into thee as the permanent confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna. Mother, I am without Bhakti, without Yoga, I am poor and friendless, I want no one's praises; only, let my mind always dwell in Thy Lotus feet.'

Again, 'On hearing the sounds of gongs, bells, cymbals, etc. at the evening worship of the goddess in the Dakshineswar Temple I would run to the bank of the Ganges and cry out to the Divine Mother, bitterly weeping, 'O Mother! another day is gone, still Thou hast not revealed Thyself unto me!'

To sum up, the greatest religious teachers of the world have utilized poetry for embellishing and picturing the truths of their spiritual experience. This has been done by the great poet-rishis of mountain-topped, and forest-bosomed, and meadow-footed India to the greatest extent possible. And Sri Ramakrishna, a true descendant of the great seers of the past, the finest flower of Hinduism, has set his gems of spiritual wisdom on the background of poetic pictures of Nature and Life. And it is but most appropriate to seek the aid of poetry for religious exposition, for poetry as the manifestation of beauty and religion as the manifestation of wisdom are but two sides of the same Truth.

THE DRINK HABIT—ITS CAUSES

By DR. ANJILVEL V. MATTHEW, M.ED., PH.D.

[*Here is an interesting psychological survey of the causes of the drink evil which is being tackled by the Congress Government. The writer with insight suggests that the habit is only the symptom and not the disease. Hence instead of labouring to cure the symptom, it would be wiser to strike at the roots of the malady that lie deep in psychological and social maladjustments.—EDS.*]

In the discussion of this subject I shall try to take as dispassionate a view as possible. At the outset I should like to state that I never drink any wine or spirits. I do not look down upon anyone who drinks moderately and occasionally, if he has the means to drink with, and if he can control any desire that may come on him to drink excessively. I am a Christian and at least in theory—though not anyway completely in practice—I regard Jesus Christ as my Master and the ideal of life. His demand on his disciples has been a very high one and sometimes very exacting. 'Take up your cross and follow me', he used to tell his disciples, and he says so to-day. But I also find that he did not set at naught the joy of friendship and social life; and that, though he was never a slave of the habit of taking any special kind of food or beverage, he freely partook of the joy of social life and drank wine on festival occasion and that he himself provided wine for others on one such occasion. This is no injunction to anyone that he should drink, but it does mean that a person cannot be immediately condemned if he drinks moderately.

The Congress Policy in regard to Drink

The first Congress Ministries throughout India tried to enforce prohibition and succeeded to a remarkable extent in their immediate object of preventing people from drinking, and I must admit that it did much good especially to working class people who

used to squander on drink a considerable portion of their slender wages. All the same I have never been a whole-hearted admirer of the Congress policy in this regard. I consider that the emphasis they placed on combatting the drink evil at that time was an exaggerated emphasis, especially when the time and the energy and the money that was involved in the pursuit of this project could and should have been first devoted to remove the colossal amount of illiteracy that prevailed in India. In my opinion it is the educational backwardness of India that retards her progress much more than the amount of alcohol drunk in the country. As a matter of fact the drink-evil is more rampant in western countries, and yet it has not prevented them from prospering in civilization and cultural progress and from out-distancing in this respect countries that are more abundantly endowed with natural wealth and that used to be more prosperous in former times. It is the poor state of education of the naturally well-endowed eastern countries, apart from political reasons, that has more disastrously contributed to their national backwardness than the fact that their people spend, as people in western countries also do, a part of their private income in providing themselves with intoxicants. To have left the problem of illiteracy practically untouched and to have spent all this money and energy on prohibition was due to the popular ministries following the behest of a national leader who, though he has done more service to India in the political field than any one else had done for a number of generations, has also shown

that his leadership is characterised by his personal likes and dislikes and by his personal ideals. These he has been able to impose upon national leaders through his unquestioned hold over the imagination and emotion of the vast millions of people in the country. Our great national leader is an ascetic in his personal habits, and he is loved and adored by people for his ascetic way of life; but to lead popular governments into the pursuit of prohibition irrespective of the cost it involves, while leaving such an essential nation-building enterprise as education practically in the same extremely unsatisfactory conditions as had prevailed for several decades in the past, did not at any rate indicate the wisest use of the great opportunity of service that the situation offered.

The Congress ministries have come back to power in most of the provinces, and it is more than likely that they will set out again on the path of prohibition, though this time in many places there are indications of a will to do greater justice to such nation-building enterprises as the rapid spread of literacy in the country and the need of extending adequate financial support to such enterprises. Frankly I do not regard the imposition of complete prohibition—though some kind of control there should be as we shall see later on—to be one of the primary and immediate needs of a country like ours which is vastly illiterate, has no adequate medical help in many of its seven lakhs of villages, and has an industrial system which is far from being extensive enough to cope satisfactorily with the task of converting its limitless resources into finished modern goods. The profits of even the few industrial concerns that exist in the country are assumed to be the unquestioned property of the capitalists, with the result that workers in all departments of life fail to get decent living wages.

The Drink Habit—its Economic Aspect

The contention here is not that the habitual use of intoxicants is not an evil. It is an evil, an undoubted and a grave evil; and it is the purpose of this paper to study some aspects of this evil. I shall, however, try to make this study as unbiased as I can, and one of the first statements I should make is that if a man can economically afford to drink, and if he drinks with such moderation as would leave his commonsense and self-control unaffected and if he does not drink with such gusto and ostentation as to suggest to those who are likely to admire him that to drink is one of the finest things in life, then I shall have no quarrel with him about his moderate drink habit. The trouble, however, is that the conditions (the 'ifs' here presupposed) are more often violated than not, and that through this violation many drinkers—not only habitual drunkards—do things harmful for themselves and for others, which, except for the drink habit, they would not have done.

Consider the economic aspect of drink. Many people who drink cannot afford to drink. The house I live in is on a road that leads from the city into the country, and not rarely I see, especially on market days—some villager, having drunk so heavily that he cannot keep his physical balance, led back to his village home by some neighbour or relative who also is drunk but not so helplessly as the former. The scene is often rendered more pathetic by a sad, perplexed, helpless woman who follows—who knew what was coming when her husband set out to the town with the week's earnings, and therefore kept herself in readiness to give what poor aid she might give in case her man fell helpless on the way, though well she had anticipated that she would in no way be able to prevent him squandering the major portion

of the week's earnings in the cheap liquor shop he visits every week. The poor woman accepted the situation as inevitable, and took it also for granted that, on reaching home, if the man had still enough strength and vigour left in him to use his tongue and limbs, he had the right to speak abusively to her and to the children and to beat or kick them as his drunken fancies might suggest. Next day he would get up and begin another week's hard toil, but not with the strength that would have been his if he had spent his previous week's earnings in purchasing food and other necessities of life. This is what takes place not in isolated but in hundreds and thousands of instances in our country as well as in many other countries. Differences of course there are in the local setting—for instance my description particularly applies to a drinking man who lives in a village near a small city. The details may be different when we take examples of drunkenness of a man who lives entirely in the city, or in different social and economic conditions in other lands. The fact, however, remains that the drink-habit prevails not necessarily among those who can afford to spend a part of their earnings in the liquor shop without feeling the pinch of it; and that even those who can afford to throw away a little money on the luxury of drowning their worries in a glass of forgetfulness often go far beyond their economic means.

Drunkenness—Psychological Factors

One of the evils of drink, as has just been suggested, is that some who start moderately soon forget their moderation. This is particularly the case with those who take to drink in order to get over some distressing experience. For instance, there are those who are lonely and are too shy or diffident to risk the adventure of making friends. Making social contacts and establishing friendships

requires a certain amount of courage and self-confidence, and also faith in the good will and friendliness of others; but not a few people there are who do not possess this courage and faith and who therefore are tempted to keep to themselves. Drink has the effect of removing inhibitions, and some of the people who need company and friendship, but lack the necessary sense of social adventure, take to drink in order that they may get over their sense of inadequacy. Similarly there are some who drink in order to make their solitariness more bearable. While the former make of liquor a means to be more sociable, the latter make it a compensation for the want of social contacts. Then there are those who have suffered defeat, loss or some other calamity in life's conflicts, which they would like to forget; and they take to drink in order to forget these sad experiences and their unpleasant consequences. They feel defeated in life, defeated by some adversary or by a single or—as more often happens—by a series of unfavourable incidents, and they seek in alcohol a means of escape. If they cannot find in life what they want—a sense of worth-whileness of life with the joy of achieving something—they can at least drown their unhappiness and life-frustrations in a glass of oblivion. As Trotter says: "In the tragic conflict between what he has been taught to desire and what he has been allowed to get, man has found in alcohol, as he has found in certain other drugs an effective peacemaker, a means of securing for however short a time some way out of the prison life of reality back to the Golden Age."¹ Lombroso observes how "after his first imprisonment, the liberated criminal, having lost his reputation and all connection with his family, seeks compensation and oblivion in drink. This is why we find alcoholism among recidivists. The same

¹ Quoted by Norwood East: *Medical Aspect of Crims.* Ch. XI, p. 292.

thing is found among the transported convicts of Noumea, who drink not only from settled habit, but also to forget dishonour, separation from family and country, and the cruelties of the wardens and their companions; and perhaps also to drown remorse. Wine becomes among them a medium of exchange. A shirt is worth one liter; a coat or pair of trousers, two".² A striking illustration of the kind of experience described by Lombroso had been given a few decades previously by Dostoevsky, the Russian novelist of the underworld, evidently from his own personal experience. He has pictured the convicts in a mid-Siberian prison trying to make a little money by some private occupation. They spent part of the time they could call their own on these occupations for days, weeks and months, with the kindly connivance of the sub-officers who were in charge; and, then, wasted all their accumulated savings in a drinking bout arranged by each man for himself on some special occasion. In Dostoevsky's words: "All the convicts had a private occupation, and this occupation was for them a natural and imperious one. They are passionately fond of money, and think more of it than of anything else—almost as much as of liberty. The convict is half-consolated if he can ring a few kopecks in his pocket. . . . Nevertheless money does not remain long in their pockets. Not only is it difficult for him to keep it (as it is often stolen or confiscated), but the prison life, moreover, is so sad that the convict by his very nature thirsts for freedom of action. By his position in society he is so irregular a being that the idea of swallowing up his capital in orgies, of intoxicating himself with revelry, seems to him quite natural if only he can produce himself one moment's forgetfulness. It was strange to see certain individuals bent over their

labour only with the object of spending in one day all their gains, even to the last kopeck. Then they would go to work again until a new debauch (would be possible), looked forward to months beforehand".³

The prisoners here looked forward to some rare occasion when they could drown their unhappiness in a few cups of vodka. The majority of people, no doubt, do not live in prisons; nevertheless many of them are unhappy in their life of freedom. Some have an unadjusted sex life, and they find it difficult to bear the tension. As a matter of fact it is a common psycho-analytical observation that alcoholism is primarily due to latent homosexuality. Whether this is so or not, there is common agreement on the part of all who have studied the problem of alcoholism that sexual maladjustment is at least one of the major factors that tend to produce the state of mental tension for which people try to find a solution in intoxication. Other disturbing situations in life also are capable of producing the "end-result" we call alcoholism. Those who find it difficult through changed economic circumstances to maintain an accustomed life of comfort take to drink to make them forget their altered situation—blissfully unmindful of the fact that this kind of consolation does more harm to them and their dependents than the changed circumstances themselves.

People drink when wages go up, which we can understand; but what is more pertinent here is the well-founded observation that the consumption of alcohol increases also when wages go down; toddy, ale or whatever other liquor that may be available is then drunk as it were to supply the place of clothing and food. People who live a life of hard toil with little leisure try to forget their unhappiness

and hardships in this unwholesome manner. Common observations uphold Dr. Neustatter's view that alcoholism 'is most frequent among those living under the worst social conditions'.⁴

Social related to Psychological Factors

There are again those who first started drinking not because they of their own accord sought for some kind of sedative to ease them of their worried feelings: they began drinking because others around them drank and because they found it difficult to withstand the suggestion. It was supposed in the circles in which they lived or worked that to drink was fashionable and that it was the thing to do among cultured and sociable people, and that not to drink meant being a kind of wet blanket in cheerful company. They thus started the alcohol habit through suggestion. It is worthwhile, however, to note that suggestion in itself does not account for anything. Suggestive influences work on all people, but all people are not equally amenable to suggestion. Nor can it be said that all people who accepted the suggestion of the environment and started drinking yield so helplessly to the habit as to lose all control over their own cravings.

However the practice of drink started, its continuance into a settled habit must be accounted for through something that is within the personality of the drinker. There are many people who drink moderately to provide them with a mild stimulative in life or to serve them as a means of promoting social life. All these do not turn out to be drink addicts. The drink-habit is likely to engender a craving, no doubt; but this craving is entirely under control in the case

of some, while in the case of others, it seems to work in an irresistible manner. Partly it may be due to differences in the physical constitution of people, but a more helpful thing is to seek for the cause of this difference in psychological factors. More often than not, alcoholism bespeaks emotional disturbances in the subject. These disturbances, as we have already suggested, are due to frustrations in any sphere of life such as in the realm of sex or in economic matters, to a sense of inadequacy in social life, or to a sense of incompetence and inefficiency in regard to one's work. Keren Horny cited alcoholism with phobias and depression as a symptom that ultimately results from conflict.⁵ However or which-so-ever field the sense of frustration started, if we come across man who finds life so dreary and uninteresting that without the elixir of oblivion he cannot bear it, we should conclude that he lacks personal courage. Life is an adventure, and no adventure is possible where there is no courage. People who cannot do without artificial prop to support the adventure of life, and that too a props of a particular kind, proclaim by their attitude that they are defeated people. It is a trick of cowardice and defeatism to disguise its intrinsic nature by posing to be its opposite. Good students of human motives are not misled into the mistake of calling drink-addicts daring and adventurous folk in spite of the occasional pranks and bravadoes they display.

To take to intoxicants to escape the frustrations of life turns out to be a remedy worse than the malady itself. The temporary stimulation that a person obtains through intoxication is followed by a sense of depression after a time; and this leads him to still more excessive drinking. Thus an individual gets caught in the meshes of a chronic, pernicious habit. There are some who do

² Lombroso: *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies*, Part I, Ch. VII, p. 96. Heinemann, London, 1911.

³ Dostoevsky: *The House of the Dead* (Prison Life in Siberia). Part I, Ch. IV, p. 46, Everyman's Library.

⁴ W. Lindesay Neustatter: *The Early Treatment of Nervous and Mental Disorders*, Ch. XXXII, p. 341. 1940. J. A. Churchill, London.

⁵ Karen Horny: *Self-Analysis*, Ch. II, p. 69, Kegan Paul, 1942.

not take intoxicants in this chronic manner but turn to them only periodically. They may not touch a drop of liquor for weeks and months together; then there may occur in their life some unusual tension, and they may indulge in orgies of drinking. People of this category exercise self-control in the matter of alcohol most of the time; when, however, they once begin to drink, they forget moderation. Such periodic outbursts of excessive drinking with indifference or aversion to

alcohol during the intervals are particularly referred to as dipsomania by some people who consider it proper that it should 'be carefully distinguished from ordinary chronic alcoholism'.⁶ Excessive drinking, whether chronic or in the form of dipsomaniac bouts, is followed by a number of *sequelae*, which we shall now turn to study.

⁶ M. Hamblin Smith: *The Psychology of Crime*, Ch. IV, p. 110, 2nd Edn., Methuen, London, 1933.

GLIMPSSES OF THE MINDS INTO MEDIAEVAL MYSTICS

By WOLFRAM H. KOCH

"The Spirit of the Lord fill thee with His grace, Dearest Lady, so that thou mayest be able to live according to His most dear will. Despise the world and everything it can give thee of pleasures and profit. Have fear and love of God, love His law and His commandments. Choose Christ for thy glorious Bridegroom who shall remain with you through all eternity. Intend and love a truly spiritual life. Be humble, gentle, and well ordered in all things. Be moderate in eating, in drinking and in dress. Be merciful, compassionate and charitable towards the poor and all men. Be loyal to God and loyal to thyself in eternal service and in eternal veneration."

Shun and flee from all company that might lead thee away from God to sins and to the world. Shun the occasion to sin and everything that might disturb you all in the service

of our Lord. Love to be alone with prayer, with fasting, and with all good works with true insight to the extent of thy capacity. Do not choose a special confessor who might divert thy attention from God. Often it happens that something appears to be spirit and spiritual that later on goes astray deeply into the fleshly as soon as it being attended to too much.

Mark those who draw you away from God and ask gifts and presents of you all: them you have to shun and from them you have to flee. But all those who direct you away from themselves to God, should be your friends."

[The above extract is from a letter written by the Dutch mystic, Jan van Ruysbroeck to a lady of the world in the year 1353.]

THE LIVING EARTH

By VILLAGER

Man was created with dominion over the earth, over all that lives on the earth, over all that lives in the earth. Man has dominion over the birds of the air, over the beasts in the field. The birds and the beasts get their sustenance out of the earth. If the earth is fruitful, the birds and the beasts flourish, and multiply. Even so is man; if the earth is fruitful man flourishes and multiplies. But there the similarity ends. The birds and the beasts can do little or nothing consciously to the maintenance of the fruitful earth. In man's hands is the destiny of the earth.

An eloquent expose of how man has directed the destiny of the earth is to be found in a mere recital of major famines in India. For famine is essentially the result of man's misuse of his dominion over the earth.

In the year 1396 one of the most severe famines on record became manifest. It lasted for twelve years and extended over the whole of South India. Large areas were entirely depopulated.

In 1460 a severe famine affected most parts of the Bombay Presidency.

Upper India experienced what contemporary records describe as a "notable famine" in 1471.

The Deccan had severe famine in 1520, possibly aggravated by military disturbances.

In 1631 famine extended over the whole of India, with extreme severity in many areas. In the Deccan it is said to have been the most severe ever known.

The years 1659-61 saw another all-India famine, followed by still another severe famine over wide areas in 1685.

The eighteenth century has the unenviable record of having experienced more recorded famines than any earlier century. In Bombay Presidency severe famine occurred in 1718,

1747, 1757, 1766, 1777, 1782, 1791-92, the last 'according to the traditions and recollections of survivors, was the severest famine ever known, and it extended in greater or lesser degree to the whole of the Bombay Presidency except Sind, and to Dharwar. It is remembered in the South Mahratta country, as well as in the adjoining parts as the *Dagi Bara* or 'skull famine,' from the vast number of the skulls of those who had perished from famine'.

Madras witnessed a severe famine in the years 1729 to 1733, in 1781-82 in 1790-1792 and again in 1799-1800.

History records that the invasion of Nadir Shah brought famine to Delhi and its environs in 1739. In 1783 famine of the utmost severity infested the whole area from the eastern edge of the Benares Province to the Sutlej, and included Oudh and most of the Central Indian States.

North-Eastern India's worst visitations of famine in the eighteenth century were in 1770 and 1783. In 1770 the distress was most acute in Bihar, parts of Bengal and in Orissa. The death-roll was staggering.

The nineteenth century's record is even worse than the eighteenth.

Madras had famines of greater or lesser intensity, but all severe, in 1805-07, 1811, 1812, 1814, 1823, 1832-34, 1854, 1866-67, 1876-78, 1884, 1889, 1890-92, 1896-97. What suffering the victims must have endured!

In 1803-08 famine spread throughout the Rohilkhand and the Lower Doab, from Farukhabad to Allahabad. Rajputana had severe famine in 1812-13 and again in 1833-34. Upper India had 'the most grievous famine since the commencement of the British Rule, in 1837-38'. The extremest severity was between Agra and Cawnpore. 1860-61 saw a severe famine in the North-

West Provinces and the adjoining districts of the Punjab lying between the Sutlej and the Jumna. The worst area was the tract along both banks of the Jumna between Delhi and Agra.

The great Orissa famine came in 1866. 'Eventually the famine raged so high all over Orissa that local inequalities were almost lost sight of in one-spreading sea of calamity'.

1867-68.69 saw famine in Rajputana, Agra, Allahabad, the Punjab, Central Provinces.

The North-West Provinces suffered in 1873-74 in 1875-76 and again in 1877-78.

The Southern Punjab had famine in 1884, the Central Provinces in 1886-87, Behar in 1889-90.

1896-97 and 1899-1900 saw widespread distress extending over Allahabad, the Punjab, Central Provinces, Bihar.

Bengal's record in the nineteenth century is not so bad, but such famines as the province experienced were very severe. The worst were in 1866, 1873-74, 1892, 1897.

So far, the twentieth century has a better record than the two immediately preceding centuries. But the signs are ominous. All food reserves in the country have been exhausted and famine of a magnitude that has never been seen before is only staved off by imports from abroad.

What an indictment on man's misuse of his dominion over the earth! That is what this appalling record of repeated famines amounts to.

The tragedy is made all the greater by the fact that the majority of mankind are blissfully ignorant of their responsibility. How few are aware of the words written by Professor N. S. Shaler of Harvard University in 1896? 'If mankind cannot devise and enforce dealing with the earth, which will preserve the source of life, we must look

forward to a time remote it may be, yet clearly discernible—when our kind, having wasted its great inheritance, will fade from the earth because of the ruin it has accomplished'. Now, fifty years later, from every part of the world come reports that millions and millions of people face starvation. In Europe, except in a few specially favoured areas, visible supplies are hopelessly inadequate to preserve a reasonable state of health. Most of Asia is similarly affected. China, for instance, has recently reported a death-roll of probably twenty million.

Some people attribute the present state of affairs to the recent War; others to faulty political or economic systems. Those factors are merely symptoms; they are not the disease. The disease is man's misuse of his dominion over the living earth.

The misuse was, and is being, expressed in many different ways. The most common are, the cutting down of trees without re-planting, overgrazing, burning of natural jungle cover, growing of the same type of crop year after year on the same ground, over-concentration of population in large cities. Trees are probably the most important single factor in maintaining the earth in good health. Leaves fall from them, are mixed with droppings from birds in the branches and from beasts taking shelter underneath. The result, through a process of natural fermentation, is a fine powdery loam, full of bacteria and other forms of invisible micro-organic life which are essential for the maintenance of the earth if it is to fulfil its function as the medium of production of food. Winds, blowing through the trees, carry this fine powdery loam on to the surrounding open spaces, there to deposit it on top of the earth. The loam is particularly rich in what is called humus. As we have seen, humus is a product of decomposition of plant and animal residues, through the agency of micro-organisms. In virgin forests a perfect balance

between growth and decay is established, and the fertility of the soil is permanently maintained. When man cuts down the forests and does not plant fresh trees, he upsets the balance between growth and decay. As a result, a direct result of man's misuse of his dominion over the earth, productivity is permanently weakened. This is what has happened in India. India's soil has been permanently weakened through having been deprived of essential humus following man's cutting down of trees without re-planting. The earth is less productive. It cannot produce as much grain as before. India has to look abroad for shipments to stave off widespread famine of an unimaginable severity. All because man has cut down forests!

Cannot India yet learn the lesson, before it is too late and start re-afforestation on a country-wide scale? That would mean the first step in banishing famine from the land for all time.

The process of re-building the life in the earth is much slower than the process of destruction. Some estimates put it as slow as one inch in 500 years. But no matter how slow, the process must be started off if the people of India are not to die by the tens of millions. The process of destruction is known as erosion. Erosion is always going on, even on soils in a good state of fertility. Those soils can stand a certain amount of erosion because fertility is maintained through micro-organic activity in and around them. Such soils are extremely rare in India to-day. All over India the rate of erosion much exceeds the rate of fresh accumulation of living earth. There is not sufficient data available to make even a rough guess at the annual loss of productivity in India's earth through erosion. There is no doubt that the loss is very great indeed. From the Malabar Coast area, for instance, almost certainly hundreds of millions of tons of valuable humus-containing earth is carried out to sea by river or wind

annually. Erosion in the Nilgris also is very severe. The whole appearance of the area has changed completely in the past twenty years. From a fertile-looking, virile country it has become an under-nourished, poor, sick-looking area.

Over-grazing has results very similar to the cutting down of trees. With the addition that in India overgrazing by goats on hill-tops very much hastens erosion. Unlike the other animals, goats eat the roots of various close-growing jungle grasses that help to bind the soil together. When those roots are eaten, the soil loses one of its most valuable binding agencies and is consequently more easily blown away. So another step in man's activities towards the restoration of the fertility of India's soil, (and in his own preservation), would seem to be the prevention of goats feeding indiscriminately on hill-tops.

The burning of natural jungle cover is self-evident as another contributory factor. Some people attempt to defend the burning of natural jungle cover, in which category comes the burning of vegetable and garden refuse, on the ground that the resultant ash is a valuable manure. But not nearly so valuable as the manure that would be produced if the refuse in question were broken down through a natural process of fermentation into a fine loam that would be rich in micro-organic activity. Man can assist that process by putting all his garden or farm refuse in compost heaps. Nature will do the rest.

India's earth suffers very much from the growing of the same type of crop year after year on the same soil. Every crop in the growing from seed to a fully-matured plant extract from the soil certain elements. Paddy removes elements different from those removed by wheat, or tomatoes or pulses. If a form of crop rotation is followed, that is growing a different type of crop each year a field is cultivated, the active micro-organisms

in the soil are given greater opportunity to restore the balance of elements in the soil. Mere crop rotation in itself would not be sufficient to re-vitalise India's soil—the rate of deterioration is now much too serious for that. But it would help and is another indication as to how man might set about starting to repair the damage he has done.

Over-concentration of population in large cities may not, at first sight, be readily recognisable as an important factor in man's misuse of his dominion over the earth. How can it be said a resident in London, New York, Calcutta or Madras is misusing his dominion over the earth? Individually perhaps, the misuse is microscopic. Collectively, it is very great. The misuse finds expression in two general ways, one, by having too large a proportion of a country's population living a parasitic existence so far as food production is concerned, two, by the exercise of political and economic power on a country's policies by city-dwellers, to the detriment of the agricultural community. Take Calcutta as an illustration. Individuals in Calcutta, by virtue of being in control of greater purchasing power, draw from the agricultural areas food which the cultivators themselves would prefer to retain for their own consumption, were they allowed to. They are not allowed to because the political and economic influence exercised by Calcutta's population on Bengal's policies is such in effect as to require the cultivator to part with a larger share of his production than he otherwise would, in order to meet his rent and the cash cost of cloth, kerosene oil, mustard oil and other necessities of life. This influence was well evidenced during the Bengal famine of 1943 when Calcutta drew from the surrounding districts of 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly large quantities of rice while the inhabitants of those districts died.

Another illustration of the harmful influence exercised by city dwellers can be found in the increasing preference all over the world for processed food. Nutritional experts are unanimous that fresh food is of higher food value than processed food such as tinned meats, dehydrated vegetables etc. India so far has not adopted tinned meats to any extent but there is evidence of a growing interest in vegetable dehydration. The only processed food consumed on a large scale in India so far is milled, polished rice which unfortunately, is being consumed more and more. In the process of polishing some of the most valuable food content of rice is lost; so the result of "polishing" is to produce a rice deprived of its most valuable food value which is retained when paddy is hand-ground. Yet the average city-dweller in India to-day considers it quite beneath his dignity to eat hand-ground rice!

To sum up: if the people of India are not, in the words of Professor Shaler quoted earlier, "to fade from the earth because of ruin they have accomplished", through misuse of their dominion over the earth they must

- (1) Start re-forestation on a country-wide scale
- (2) Stop soil erosion
- (3) Feed domestic animals in stalls, not allow them wander at will in search of food.
- (4) Adopt rotation farming.
- (5) Transfer the power of affecting the country's policies from the cities to the villages.

To every people there comes one terrible and final hour, when it must choose between those things by which men live, or those by which they die. That hour is fast approaching India.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

'A Giant among Men'

'A giant among men and one of those who laid the foundation of modern Indian nationalism and year by year, built up, brick by brick and stone by stone the noble edifice of Indian freedom'. These tributes of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the floor of the Assembly to late Malavyaji assess the great loss India has sustained in his death. More than Malavya, the Dharmatma, the Hindu of Hindus, what India wants to-day is the Malavya, the builder of the National University at Benares, the untiring fighter for Indian freedom that he was to his last day.

There was something challenging in Sri Malavyaji's modernity, something undigestible for the moderner. Modern he was, for only a modern genius could have conceived and worked up an institution as the one at Benares that blends all that is best in the West and East. There was a halo of Vedic orthodoxy round him that embarrassed a moderner. In his 71st year the Pandit crossed the seas for his duty to the country demanded it and represented India's demand for self-government convincingly at the second session of the Round Table Conference in London. But he was a very orthodox Hindu even there and carried with him the most sacred things of India.

Since the establishment of the University the Pandit strove ceaselessly to place it on a firm footing, on sound financial basis. Through the University, he sought to preserve the best thought and culture of Hindu religion and philosophy and at the same time, to train experts in science and technicians and Industrial leaders of which he had given enough to the country. He was Vice-Chancellor of the University from 1919 to 1939 when he resigned and was then appointed Rector for life.

Pandit Malavyaji's activities as educationist and politician bore the distinctive stamp

of deep devotion to the Hindu ideals of service, sacrifice and purity. It is left to those of us who admire him and his ways to usher in sooner the India of his dreams.

The limit of self-defence

The Hindu Sastras sanction killing of the adversary in self-defence. 'The one who approaches to kill you, must be killed' says the Smriti. The Penal Code pardons the man who kills another in self-defence. Gandhiji the great advocate of *ahimsa* says that though violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless, it is an act of bravery far better than cowardly submission.' (*Harijan* : October 27).

But there is a limit and boundary for this bravery of violence in self-defence. Self-defence cannot cross time and province and yet be self-defence. It then becomes violence of the worst type and begets violence of a more gruesome type. Many argue in righteous indignation to-day that the Bihar killing is in self-defence of those who were killed in Bengal and quote chapter and verse to support their thesis. Let them not delude themselves thinking that this is self-defence. It is retaliation. Is counter-communalism any answer to the communalism of which all have accused the Muslim League? Is it Nationalism to seek barbarously to crush the fourteen per cent. of the Muslims in Bihar?

Dangers of unscientific regionalism

We had occasion to observe last time how the Textile policy of the Madras Government committed the grievous error of not planning on an all-India basis. The same error was pointed out by Sir N. Gopalaswami Iyengar in the Council of State. Great interest has been roused to-day by his trenchant and very relevant criticism of the Madras Government's textile policy. But how far can the

Central Government dictate the policy of the Provincial Government is the question. Can it ask the Provincial Government to take back the allotted spindlage?

Be that as it may, in these days unscientific industrial regionalism is a national sin. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherjee, famous historian and sociologist, in a recent article stresses the supreme need of central planning and shows how unscientific regionalism brings economic ruin. He writes:

India, cut off from the rest of Asia by the Himalaya wall and by the sea barriers, shows not merely a geographical unity but also an economic unity imposed upon her agriculture by the regularity and distribution of the monsoons. Though the country is divisible into several single homogeneous units, their economic structure and problems are broadly similar. Such similarity of geographical and economic conditions over a vast region offers a most appropriate background for central economic planning and organisation.

Central Planning

The structure and functions of most modern States in the civilized world have broadened to include economic and social planning that is now deemed an indispensable function of modern administration. In India the Centre has, after several years, through establishing panels, committees and conferences, now formulated certain definite all-India plans with priorities and targets for health, education, roads, agriculture and several industries. Provincial plans have been considered as parts and phases of the central plans, while big grants are now distributed to the Provinces from the Centre for both subsidiary and independent schemes for hydro-electric development, irrigation and establishment of basic industries. This centrally initiated and co-ordinated economic

planning has been a matter of discussion between the Centre and the Provinces and the States for more than a decade, and this has to be scraped if economic policy is now shaped and determined by Provinces and Groups.

India's geographical distribution of essential mineral and industrial resources is such that zonal or Provincial planning will be absolutely futile for the development of basic and consumption industries. Industrial planning here would demand a careful co-ordination and control by the Centre of the scattered industrial resources and materials with the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa forming the central core of her future industrial power.

Economic Anomalies of the Groups

On the basis of an economic demarcation of the country into Group A (Hindu-dominated) and Groups B and C (Muslim-dominated), Group A will have a virtual monopoly of coal (90 per cent.) and iron (92 per cent.) and also considerable reserves of manganese, copper, and bauxite. Groups B and C in North-Western and Eastern India will have only a little low-grade coal and iron-ore and some bauxite. It may be estimated that the mineral wealth of Groups B and C (Muslim dominated) will be only about 5 per cent. of that of India as a whole. In the Punjab the fuels are mostly lignites. Coal in Assam also cannot be used for metallurgical purposes.

Coalfields far away from the iron ores or smelting works cannot also provide an economic basis for the development of metallurgical industries. Mica, indispensable for the electrical industries, is found only in Bihar, the Central Provinces, and Madras. The economic development of Group B and C regions (Muslim-dominated) will largely lie in large scale agricultural and pastoral enterprises, and will be based upon the import of manufactured commodities from the industrial regions of Group A.

Sind, Baluchistan, and North West Frontier Province are some of the poorest areas of India, requiring a vast amount of capital for development that neither Group B nor Group C will be able to provide. Rapid industrialization is called for everywhere in India, whether in prosperous Punjab or in overcrowded Bengal, for mitigating agricultural idleness and raising the standard of the people; and this would require that Groups B and C will constantly need the variegated mineral resources and raw materials of the rest of India.

Agricultural Planning

A vast agricultural country of India's dimensions needs for her protection and security agricultural planning, and this, as in the U.S.S.R. will have to be based on crop planning and control of basins of rivers that overreach the boundaries of Provinces and States. It is such kind of total agricultural planning, conceived and implemented for whole river plains that cover more than one Province and State, which can ensure the people protection, ease and security of living. Equally urgent for the mitigation of poverty and improvement of living standards is planned industrialisation, which under the peculiar conditions of distribution of essential raw materials and mineral resources in India can succeed only on an all-India basis with the Centre not too weak or loose as in the Constitutional proposals, but dominant, stimulative and co-ordinating as at present in India, or as in such federations as the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

A strong Indian Union based on the maintenance of the economic unity, continuity and planning for the whole country can alone have the wherewithal for defending the masses of the people against both economic friction and aggression and to wield its proper influence in international affairs. Political independence will lose much of its worth for

the common man in India if it be bought at the cost of poverty and agricultural depression that are sure to result from the economic dismemberment of the country and inter-regional economic confusion and conflict.

★ ★ ★

To what end?

The Minister for Education, Madras, has amply shown that he really means business. Amongst the measures with which he followed up his vehement plea for the application of his educational nostrum, viz. the intrusion in regional languages, the appointment of a representative and competent committee to revise the reports of the former committee and expedite the translation of scientific terms in Tamil, is a significant step. The Committee has on it Sanskrit scholars, Tamil Pandits, English professors and Science professors. This to a large extent promises accurate and quick results.

But in such a committee it is natural that those who have known the richness of Sanskrit and are able to recognise its claims to be the mother of languages will insist on including many Sanskrit terms. *Per Contra* those who are devoted to Tamil argue that purity of the Tamil language must be kept up at all costs and that in cases where Tamil terms cannot be had, English terms are to be preferred to Sanskrit ones! Even when a short and succinct Sanskrit word brings out the ideas of the original term, they insist on preferring a long, outlandish Tamil word! Better they put a board at the entrance of their room with the inscription, "No Admission for Sanskrit".

It will be beneficial to themselves and to the country if the above devotees of Tamil remember that a language like a culture invites slow death by shutting its door in the face of all extraneous influences. A language is a living thing; it is dynamic and has got to prove its dynamism by absorbing all that it

can absorb. To prevent this is to choke its breath. Sanskrit, we must remember, slipped into its present plight as a classical language as the result of the purist convictions of its devotees. And English is going ahead as a dynamic tongue thanks to its capacities of absorption and assimilation. Will not Tamil learn by these lessons?

Readers of the *Harijan* might have seen the weekly instalment of the translation of English terms into Hindi. Acceptance of

Hindi as the national language is an item of the constructive programme and every Congress Provincial Government has to measure its faith in its scales. Will it mean that the student who has taken all the trouble to learn the Tamil equivalents, will be burdened with Hindi equivalents? Or will Hindi terms be preferred to Tamil ones and the latter shoved on to the limbo? That will be a colossal waste of talents. To what end then this zeal and purist love for Tamil?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PRIORITIES IN PLANNING; By K. T. SHAH, VORA & CO., BOMBAY. PP. II-43, PRICE RS. 1/4/0.

'Brilliant, thought-provoking, patriotic and thoroughly practical'—these epithets came to the reviewer's mind as he studied this slim report of the Priority and Development, Sub-Committee of the National Planning Committee. But—and it is very big BUT indeed—the Report is lacking in one important respect, namely, HUMAN ENGINEERING! I shall explain myself presently.

This is an emergency report published with the avowed object of provoking reaction in thoughtful minds. The suggestions in the report, we are told, are not an integral part of the long-term report, but are meant only to serve as 'ways and means to be considered for the relief of immediate problems.' Even so, the neglect of the HUMAN FACTOR in planning is disconcerting. But that neglect is to be found in *all* plans in *all* countries, because planning follows the *wrong lead* of that environmentalistic, materialistic and hedonistic minded country, the U.S.S.R.

The report under review gives first priority to Food, and to the methods of producing food in sufficient quantities in order to make our country self sufficient in this regard. That is as it should be. All the world over men and women, governments and governed alike are food-minded. Food we must have, and have it at once, and also enough of it. So, the committee rightly tackles first the question of agriculture, land revenue, fishery and forests.

Education receives second priority, and this is heartening. This much-neglected *essential service*, the Cinderella of all governments and governmental

policies, has after all been given high priority in this patriotic report. How to finance the nationwide scheme for making every one literate and for training the teachers who will make the whole nation literate? Well, that state must find the money, and the reviewer for one is happy to find that the sub-committee do not countenance the view that the school is to be run as a commercial concern on a profit making or self-supporting basis!

Housing comes third in the priority list. This again is due to the acute shortage of living accommodation in urban regions.

To the mind of the reviewer the appendix setting forth the revised instructions and directives to sub-committees appears to be pregnant with inspiring ideas. The importance of *research in science and technology* is recognised, and it is pointed out that highly trained scientists with first class qualifications will have to be employed in increasing numbers by the governments for their plans. The Universities, it seems after all, are not negligible factors in national life. THE STATE MUST CONSIDER UNIVERSITIES AS HAVING THE FIRST CLAIM ON ITS REVENUES.

And the Planning Committee have touched on the *Moral Factor* in Industry. Well, will any planner in the U.S.S.R. have the courage to speak of moral and spiritual factors in life? That courage is the saving feature of our country. We must lead the world in this matter.

But our planners have neglected the PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS in planning. Man is a psychological animal, and any attempt at planning for his welfare in disregard of psychological forces will fail in the long run. It will not do to plan for the ordering of the factors in the environment alone. Raw material, finance, administration etc.

are no doubt important, but they are not everything. So, the most pressing need in the field of Indian planning is its orientation anew on PSYCHOLOGICAL foundations. HUMAN ENGINEERING ON SOUND PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES should be given first priority in our plans if schemes for producing food, for spreading education and for building houses are to succeed. Let us lead the world in making our plans PSYCHOLOGICAL.

—P. S. NAIDU.

FAMINE OR PLENTY: By 'VILLAGER' PUBLISHER: SAHITYIKA, CALCUTTA. PP. 168 PLUS VI. PRICE RS. 5.

Except for the recent growth in the Industrial activities of the country, the bulk of the Indian population is still mainly agricultural. With the absurdly low income of Rs. 23/- per annum with the greater part of his produce going into the hands of the Zemindars and the absentee landlords, with the Government always running at his heels for taxes, with no system of irrigation assisting him in his agricultural activities, the Indian agriculturist somehow ekes out his existence by a hand-to-mouth livelihood. The result of such a strain is the load of debt with which every cultivator in our country is saddled with. The cultivator in the end succumbs to the money lender who swallows his land for failure to repay his debt with compound interest. Such a state of things along with other factors for which the Government is directly responsible (such as the unbalanced state of Indian currency) led to the disastrous famines in various parts of India, particularly in Bengal in 1943.

It was then thought that other countries of the world would come forward with their generous help and save the situation. The prospect seemed to brighten with the formation of the UNRRA Grain Procurement Commission. But the facts were otherwise. Except for the very insignificant help which came from outside, India was left to her fate and millions died an ignominious death like flies. Though now we are told that India is safe from famine, what assurance is there against the recurrence of a similar catastrophe in the near future? The root cause of the food problem is the existing system of land tenure. Unless these two existing system of land tenure, receive adequate attention from the authorities, the problem cannot be solved, and it would be no use looking for outside help from other nations, faced as they are with similar problems arising from the War.

The first step towards this, the author suggests, is the abolition of the Permanent Settlement which is the most vicious device of the Government for

sucking the life blood of the peasant. The second step would be the increase in the productivity of the soil. The author is dead against any artificial system of manuring like the use of Chemical fertilisers, which he says, leads to the gradual deterioration in the productivity of the soil. The soil, he says is not a chemical unit but a biological unit; it is a living organism. The main factor that contributes to the productivity of the soil is the humus-producing bacteria. The use of chemical fertilisers, he says come in direct conflict with the organic process natural to the bacteria. The author therefore advises the use of compost manure and the rotation method of farming, the abandonment of both of which has cost the advanced nations of the West very dearly. Mechanization of agriculture is at a great discount with the author. Thus the author holds opinions that would seem to be entirely at variance with the views held in scientific circles. The devices suggested are no doubt applicable to India, considering her present position,—because the devices involve only minor changes in the present methods of cultivation. But we feel that the scientific aspect of the question of the superiority of these methods over the highly mechanized methods of the West has not been adequately dealt with. We feel that the contentions of the author may be supported by a better array of data. However the book is valuable and suggestive.

SHORT STORIES OF PREMCHAND: TRANSLATED BY GURDIAL MALLIK. NALANDA PUBLICATIONS, BOMBAY. PAGES 166. PRICE RS. 4/4/0.

Premchand, (*nom de plume* of Dhampatrai Srivastava) the beloved story-teller of the Urdu and Hindi knowing world is the father of the modern short-story technique in Urdu and Hindi. He had written over 220 short stories. As a true Indian he held up the mirror for the growing national consciousness of the Indian people and always dipped his pen in the ink of village realism.

The present collection contains perhaps some of the best stories of Premchand. Of the eleven in the volume special mention must be made of *Laila*, *The Shroud*, *Story of two Bulls* and the *Voice of God*. *Laila*, a self-sacrificing girl full of idealism is anxious to serve the country, but meets with cold in difference from all quarters. *The Shroud* is a satire on idleness and the *Story of the Two Bulls* is a moving story of two intelligent, very intimate bulls who stood by each other in weal and woe.

Sri Gurdial Mallik has placed the English reading world under a deep debt of gratitude not only for making this interesting, delicious fare available for

non-Hindi readers, but also for retaining in the translation the verve and spicy humour of the original.

The Nalanda Publications deserve praise for the fine get-up and excellent printing.

FALL OF MEWAR: BY DWIJENDRA LAL ROY: TRANSLATED BY HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA AND DILIP KUMAR ROY: NALANDA PUBLICATIONS, SIR PHIROZSHAH MEHTA ROAD, BOMBAY. PRICE Rs. 3/12.

Here is the English translation of Mewar Patan, fall of Mewar, from the pen of that great dramatist, Dwijendra Lal Roy, who rose to eminence among the playwrights and poets of Bengal, who along with Rabindranath Tagore, made the Bengali literature a thing of beauty and perennial joy. The play, as it is in our hands, is a great consummation as it has been the work of three intensely intelligent minds. Dwijendra Lal Roy wrote it: Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Dilip Kumar Roy have beautifully rendered it into English, all the time retaining the beauty and freshness of the original.

The play is based on the historical truth of the fall of Mewar as a consequence of the attack by the great Moghul King of Delhi. As might have been expected the play has nothing to do with religious hatred and jealousy. Because of his desire to rise above the battle and the ordinary feelings of

indignation Dwijendra Lal Roy has worked into the texture of the play, aided by his intense grasp of things, as indicated in his tremendous, appealing philosophical observations, the great ethical and useful universal truths and verities of life. The great idea behind the play is of freedom: it may be freedom from domination in public or in private life. If Mohabat Khan was responsible for the mass slaughter of life and property in Mewar it was so because of his inner urge to teach a lesson to Rajputs who behaved badly towards his deserted wife who continued to be devoted to him in spite of his desertion. The fact that the Moghul King was keen on the conquest of Mewar has been minimised and the great killing has been elevated to a war for principles.

There is intensity of thought in the play: all female characters are capable of great heights of thought. Perhaps it has not been given to the dramatist to conceal himself in his work. In every line he is clearly seen. One thing more. To the mind of the dramatist there is an unceasing urge to action because female characters are inclined to action. If we have the hesitating Rana Amar Singh we have the unhesitating Satyawati, who every time works the king to the heights of heroic action. Yet I cannot help mentioning a fault. There is ever an opening for thought, and there is comparatively little dramatic action. This has to be. The genius in India is given to thought. Nevertheless, the play is a combined appeal to our emotions and thoughts.

—B. S. MATHUR.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BENGAL RIOT RELIEF

The public is aware that the Ramakrishna Mission sent last month a batch of workers to Chandpur, in Tippera, to organise relief for the sufferers from the riots in the Noakhali and Tippera districts. They have started the work in right earnest at Chandpur by taking charge of two of the refugee camps started by the Government. With supplies from the Government, they have fed daily about 1,500 persons and given dry doles to another 1,500, besides attending to their other needs as far as possible.

Government supplies of dry doles having stopped, we are distributing foodstuffs daily to about 1,100 refugees, and giving pecuniary help to some.

We have been able, with Government assistance, to visit some of the worst affected areas in the

Tippera district like Haimchar, Hanarchar and Karsituli, and study conditions there at first hand.

Arrangements are being made to start a relief centre immediately at Haimchar, a pretty large area with a population of about 20,000. Later, if circumstances permit, another centre will be started at Ramganj, in the Noakhali district. Difficulties of supply and transport are considerable.

We appeal to the generous public to help us with adequate funds to relieve these unfortunate sufferers. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, (Bengal).

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

The birthday of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, falls on Saturday, the 14th of December.

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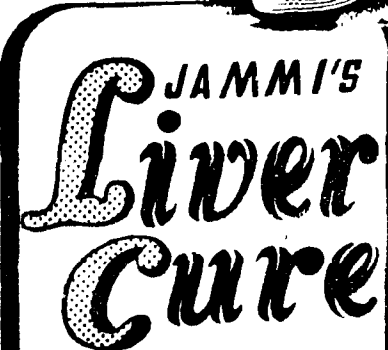
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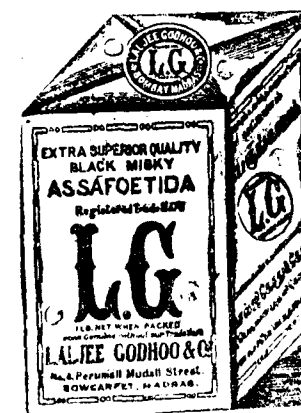
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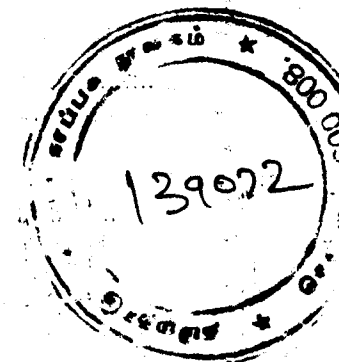
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