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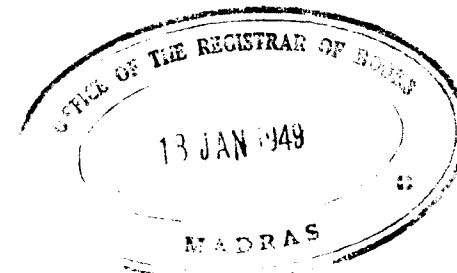
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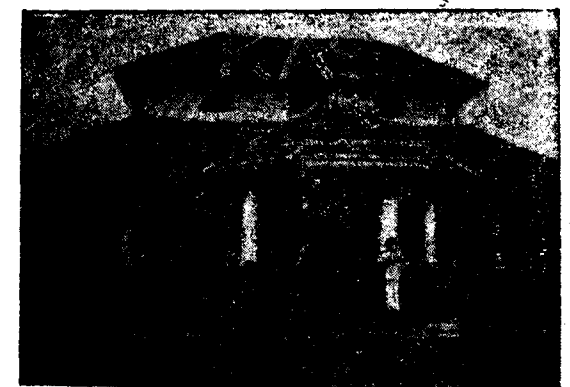
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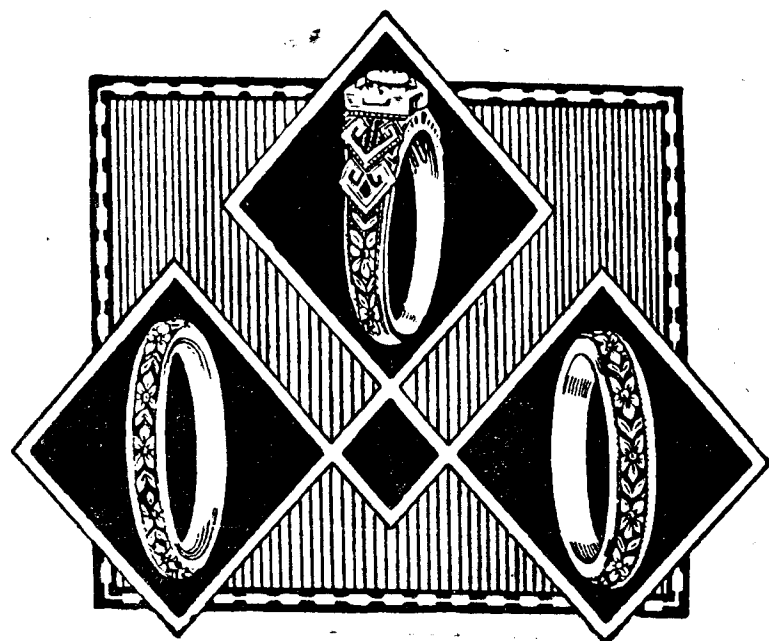


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NUMBER 9

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HYMN-FLOWERS

इच्छाया एव यस्येयत् फलं लोकत्रयात्मकम् ।
तस्य ते नाथ कार्याणां को वेत्ति कियती गतिः ॥
अयं ब्रह्मा महेन्द्रोऽयं सूर्याचन्द्रमसाविमौ ।
इति शक्तिलता यस्य पुष्पिता पात्वसौ भवः ॥
भ्रमो न लभ्यते यस्य भ्रान्तान्तःकरणैरपि ।
दूरगैरपि यस्यान्तो दुर्गमस्तं स्तुमो मृडम् ॥
नमः स्तुतौ स्मृतौ ध्याने दर्शने सार्शने तथा ।
प्राप्तौ चानन्दवृन्दाय दयिताय कपर्दिने ॥
किं स्येनेति मत्वापि मनसा परमेश्वर ।
स्येन त्वन्मयोऽस्मीति मामि नात्मनि किं मुदा ॥
चिन्तयित्वापि कर्तव्यकोटीश्चित्तस्य चापलात् ।
विश्राम्यन्भव भावत्कचित्तानन्दे रमे भृशम् ॥
सूक्ष्मोऽसि चेत् त्रिलोकीयं कलामात्रं कथं तव ।
स्थूलोऽथ किं सुदर्शो न ब्रह्मादिरपि प्रभो ॥
वाच्य एषां त्वमेवेति नाभविष्यदिदं यदि ।
कः क्लेशं देव वाग्जालेष्वकरिष्यत्सुधीस्तदा ॥

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O Lord! Of you whose mere Wish has borne this fruit of the three worlds, who knows how far the reach of your (actual) Acts is!

This Brahma (the Creator), this Indra (King of Gods), these the Sun and Moon, He the creeper of whose Energy has blossomed forth as all these, may this all-becoming Lord protect (us).

He whose circumambulation is not finished even by those who go round with their minds, He whose border is hard to reach even to those that travel far; He whose mystic Illusion is hard to comprehend to those that have been confounded by It, He who is still afar even to those of high realisation, that Lord of the Form of Happiness, we extol.

In His praise, memory and contemplation, in His sight, touch and realisation, He who is a heap of bliss, obeisance to Him, Lord Siva our Beloved.

O Supreme Lord! I have no doubt decided in my mind that egotism is of no use; but in the egotism that I am you, I am unable to contain myself with joy. Is it not so?

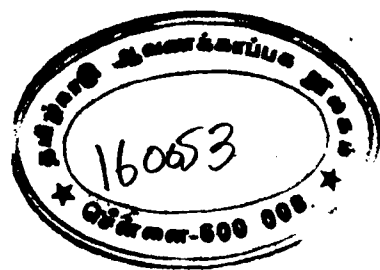
Having thought of, in the fickleness of my mind, crores of things to be done, I (now) rest, O Siva, in the bliss of your consciousness and delight intensely.

If you are subtle, how is it that the three worlds are but a fraction of you! If you are gross, O Lord! how is it you are not easily visible even to Brahman and other gods!

Were it not that you alone are the meaning to be conveyed by all this, which wise man, O Lord, would trouble himself with this verbiage?

BHATTA NARAYANA, STAVA CHINTAMANI,
32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.

—V. RAGHAVAN.



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THE CHARACTER OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S LEADERSHIP

“स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्”

Even very little of this Dharma protects from the Great Terror

IN THE GREAT NECESSITY OF MAN

There are leaders and leaders. There are leaders born and leaders made. There are leaders by merit and leaders by manipulation. There are leaders by profession and dealers in leadership. Also there are leaders and misleaders. Then there are great leaders and great misleaders.

Should we look, unbespectacled of course, around us, we shall find each type thriving in this world, in each country, in every age, India, no exception. Can we say with our hands on our hearts that we have not our saving great leaders, and to balance that, as it were, our undoing great misleaders, our clever leaders by manipulation and our cunning leaders by profession? We see, they know, they are there. There is no wrong in seeing the truth. A flower denied smells no less sweetly, 'a thorn denied pricks no less keenly.'

In fact, the world events of each day, which is going to become history, that impersonal force, tomorrow, are the resultant of the actions, reactions, counteractions, interactions and superactions of these different types of leadership set in motion in relation to each other. Our crusades, wars, movements and revolutions have their genesis in the individualistic germs working differently in the heads of these different types of leaders. Our leaders aspire nobly and we are roused to great actions. Our leaders hate and there are pillage and throat-cutting. Our leaders

covet and there is the giving over of a nation's liberty. Our leaders commit enormous blunders and we groan—a whole nation—our bleeding mouths swirling in the eddies of insult and misery. They are all men of outstanding ability. They leave their marks behind. Men cannot forget them easily. Born of earth, each of them, we cannot deny their blood relation to each other—their brotherhood. We cannot say that one of these types does not help the rise, growth, flourish and decay of the other types. Perhaps if one were not there, the others would be absent. But when one comes, in rush the others too, with the same velocity and strike against one another giving birth to great conflicts, in the attempts of solving which greater conflicts arise, and still greater ones with fresher attempts and the world staggers—men, plans, politics, monuments, parliaments, victors, vanquished, leaders and all. Perhaps a civilisation goes to the wall. This is the great malady which humanity suffers from from time to time.

Amidst this encircling gloom Light kindly leads. In this Great Necessity of man when man cannot any more help man, he comes who is more than man. But he comes as a man.

THE DESCENT OF THE MOST HIGH

At such a time, not long ago, we know, he came. For “the time was ripe for one to be born, who in one body would have

the brilliant intellect of Sankara, and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart of Chaitanya; one who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God; one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the outcast, for the down-trodden, for every one in this world inside India or outside India and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects not only in India but outside of India and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence. Such a man was born. The time was ripe, it was necessary that such a man should be born and he came." Him we know as Sri Ramakrishna.

But do you know what he did before he came? Sri Ramakrishna himself narrates: "One day I found that my mind was soaring high in Samadhi along a luminous path. It soon transcended the stellar universe and entered the subtler region of ideas. As it ascended higher and higher, I found on both sides of the way ideal forms of gods and goddesses. The mind then reached the outer limit of that region, where the luminous barrier separated the sphere of relative existence from that of the Absolute. Crossing that barrier, the mind entered the transcendental realm, where no corporeal being was visible. Even the Gods dared not peep into that sublime realm, and were content to keep their seats below. But the next moment I saw seven venerable sages seated there in Samadhi. It occurred to me that these sages must have surpassed not only men but even gods in knowledge and holiness, in renunciation and love. Lost in admiration I was reflecting on their greatness, when I saw a portion of that undif-

ferentiated luminous region condense into the form of a divine child. The child came to one of the sages, tenderly clasped his neck with his lovely arms, and addressing him in sweet voice, tried to drag his mind down from the state of Samadhi. The magic touch roused the sage from super-conscious state, and he fixed his half open eyes upon the wonderful child. His beaming countenance showed that the child must have been *the treasure of his heart*. In great joy the strange child spoke to him, 'I am going down, you too must come.' The sage remained mute but his tender look expressed his assent. As he kept gazing on the child, he was again immersed in Samadhi. I was surprised to find that a fragment of his body and mind was descending on earth in the form of a bright light. No sooner had I seen Narendranath than I recognised him to be that sage." Subsequent enquiry elicited from Sri Ramakrishna the fact that the divine child was no other than himself.

In order to attempt an understanding of Vivekananda's leadership we have to remember this background. Otherwise, we may be able to pierce the flesh but will miss the soul.

Let us make it clear at the very outset that Vivekananda is not a leader in any accepted or applied sense of the word. In leadership he stands alone and apart refusing to be grouped with any. We cannot class him with any leader we have known, great though they are, for we shall see that none so ever lived who led like him.

A LEADER BY COMPLUSION

One is apt to be surprised when told that Vivekananda is a leader by compulsion. But such is the case. "He had not chosen the way of his life. His mission had chosen

him." We have seen how the love for the divine child, 'the treasure of his heart,' compelled him to come down from the superconscious state in which he was blissfully merged in the domain of the Absolute. Readers of his biography know that he was actually born with powers to enter into Samadhi. In fact those two lotus-eyes, but for occasions when they flashed fire, on the droll and dross and dreams of this earth, were always full of the inebriety of that unfathomable bliss, and the eye-lashes ever tinged with the collyrium of the Absolute. Samadhi was his passion and weakness. He was drunk in it and wanted more and ever more of it. He did not want anything else in this world or elsewhere. "One of a party who visited Mont Saint Michael with him on Michaelmas Day, 1900, and happened to be next to him, looking at the dungeon cages of the Mediaeval prisoners, was startled to hear him say, under his breath, 'What a wonderful place for meditation!'" Just think of it! "Oh I know I have wandered over the whole earth," he cried once, "but in India I have looked for nothing save the cave in which to meditate." This is perennial Vivekananda.

One of the days of April, 1886, was a great day for the world. It was not only the day on which Narendranath attained the acme of all spiritual realisations, the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, at the Cossipore garden house, it was also the day on which this man of supreme realisations was commissioned, one might say compelled, by an incarnation of God, the God-man of the age, with a mission of unique character. "After along time Narendranath came to the consciousness of the physical world and found his brother disciples clustered round him. An ineffable peace bathed his soul.

When he came to the Master the latter said, 'Now the Mother has shown you all. But this realisation of yours shall be locked up for the present, and the key will remain with me. When you will have finished doing *Mother's work*, this treasure will again be yours.'"

One can only imagine the state of mind in which Narendranath remonstrated: "Revered Sir, I was in bliss in Samadhi. In that supreme bliss I had forgotten the world. I implore, I pray do please keep me in that state."

Now came out the fire which forged Swami Vivekananda whom the world knows, out of the stuff that was Narendranath. In divine disgust spoke Sri Ramakrishna those metamorphosing words, "Fie upon you! Not ashamed to ask for these things? I used to think that you are a superior receptacle. But alas, now I find, even you too seek to remain immersed in selfish happiness. By the grace of the Mother this state of realisation will become so natural with you that even in ordinary state you will perceive God in all things. You will accomplish great things on earth. *You will impart spiritual knowledge and remove miseries of the lowly and miserable.*"

This was the divine compulsion; or if you do not like the word you may say divine commission. That love for the divine child, the treasure his heart.

THE GREAT CONFLUENCE

Then came about the actual transmission of the spiritual powers and treasures—the emptying of the old casket into the new one. Swami Vivekananda describes it as follows: "Three or four days before the Master's passing, he called me to his bed-side when alone, and making me sit before him gazed intently in my eyes and entered into

Samadhi. I actually perceived a power-current of subtle force like electricity entering into me from his body. After a time I too lost all outward consciousness and was merged in Samadhi. How long I was in that state I cannot say. When I came down to the sense-plane, I found the Master weeping. On being asked he said in great tenderness, 'O my Naren! I have now become a Fakir by giving away my all and everything to you. By the force of this Sakti, you will do many great things in this world, *and only after that you will go back*. It seems to me that it is that Power which makes me work and work, whirling me as it were in the vortex.'

Before this final confluence, the merging of the two spirits could take place, there were five long wonderful eventful years of journeying through hard rocky beds, dreary deserts, sudden slopes and thirsty expanses of plains. Then days in and out limpid streams of unknown experiences, were constantly flowing out gracefully from the rushing Ganga of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual realisations, which falling into the powerful eddies of the impetuous life-current of Narendranath, were being occasionally lifted up in the sky through the sheer reaction of reception, and laying bare in rainbow picturesqueness the potentialities of the properties unsuspectedly incorporated in the drops of that ambrosial water.

IT WAS NOT AN EASY GAME

But it was not easy even for Sri Ramakrishna to buckle this lion. He chafed, roared, showed his paw, perhaps gave one or two scratches too. Bondage he won't accept. Sri Ramakrishna laid bare before him the secrets of the entire universe. He appeared before him like a school boy in an unending series of tests. Ultimately

he was obliged to attorn to him all his treasures earned by those stupendous sadhanas to the last bit. There was a lingering fear lest he should be lost. Therefore the master-archer that Sri Ramakrishna was, he had released the invisible shaft of thousand tentacles which like the pauranic missiles of unsuspected powers enmeshed this Titan and made a slave of him, a slave the like of which was seldom seen on earth. Can't you see the tears in the lion's eyes when he says: "Ramakrishna Paramahansa dedicated me to Her...I loved him, you see and that was what held me. I saw his marvellous purity. *I felt his wonderful love*. His greatness had not dawned on me then." Vivekananda became the slave of 'his wonderful love.' And what is more compelling than love? In his after life the greatest pride he felt was in calling himself the slave of Sri Ramakrishna, 'the treasure of his heart.' Look at the madness of it: "कुर्मस्तारकचर्वणं लिभुवनमुत्पाटयामः बलात् किं भो न विजानस्यस्यान्, रामकृष्णदासा वयम्" "We shall crush the stars to atoms, and unhinge the universe. Don't you know we are the servants of Sri Ramakrishna."!

HIS LEADERSHIP, HIS DISCIPLESHIP

To understand the character of Vivekananda's leadership we have to remember this supreme fact that, 'his wonderful love' which made a slave of Vivekananda of a type seldom known, also made a leader of Vivekananda of a type the world has never known before or after. Essentially Vivekananda's leadership is a *magnum* epic of love. That same old love which brought him down from the regions of the Absolute, also dragged him on in the realms of the relative. What could he do? That wonderful love filled him through and

through leaving not untouched an atom of his being where he could escape from that devouring love. It made him mad. The agony of it! He tried to shake it off. He tried to run away from it. But where could he go? He found that the entire universe is filled with and an expression of that love alone. Imagine the tyranny of it--this constant hounding business! To whom could he appeal? There was nothing else at all.

Suspended in the frenzy of that divine love he took up in his strong arms, as it were, this revolving planet and pressed in its consciousness with his tremorous hands the shape of his Master--his beloved, that 'wonderful love.' The founding of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna he believed to have been the resurrection of the body of Sri Ramakrishna. Hence his behest to his followers is that they should look upon the Organisation with the same eye as they would do on the person of Sri Ramakrishna. The disciple missed the Master, and out of whatever stuff the earth presented before him he fashioned the form of his Master and gave it life, that 'wonderful love.' Vivekananda himself summed up his immense life-work in this simple 'Eternal love and service free.' The deepest note in Vivekananda's heart was his *Guru-bhakti*. Be they moments of most exalted triumphs, or of acutest miseries, his mind is always prostrate at his Guru's feet. One feels oneself uplifted when one reads these ennobling lines: ".....if I have told you one word of Truth it was his (Sri Ramakrishna's) and his alone, and if I have told you many things which were not true, which were not correct, which were not beneficial to human race, they were all mine, and on me is the responsibility." Thus we see his discipleship to

his Master proved to be his leadership of men.

THE MATTER-OF-FACT QUESTION

"Hang your rarefied poetry on the peg of your liesure!", you will cry in impatience we know. "What actuality his leadership or discipleship, whatever you may call it, brought for us matter-of-fact men of this mundane world of million problems and billion miseries?" The question is severely pertinent. Yes, he brought a few facts for us, which, in fact, we were sorely missing, and had we to miss them longer, God knows what would have happened to us. But let us say in this connexion to those who boast to be matter-of-fact men, that there are facts and facts and that there are not many matter-of-fact men in this world. They are indeed a handful. We are mostly *manner-of-fact* men. Whom could we call a matter-of-fact man? One who has known the Reality, the Ultimate, realised the *Fact*, the Brahman. Are there many knowers of the *Fact* among us? Let us not boast. We are mostly creatures in illusion, which is the *manner* of the *Fact* and not the *matter*. By virtue of the grace of his Guru and his realization of Brahman, the *Fact*, Vivekananda was a matter-of-fact man in the truest sense of the term. *ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मेव भवति ।*

One fact of supreme importance should be very clearly understood here. There is always a world of difference between a leader who comes to lead man after he has realized Brahman and a leader who comes to lead man before he has realised Brahman, because of the simple fact that while the former is a man of illumination, the latter is a man in illusion; while the former knows the ultimate Reality, man and the universe in their true perspective, the

latter does not know them so; while the former can see through Time to Eternity the latter, if he is a big one, can at best perhaps look ahead a century; while in all probability the former has been divested of the capacity to mislead, it should be a wonder if the latter, if he is a very big one, does not occasionally mislead. Therefore what follows is this: in the ultimate sense of values the Brahman-become leader, is always a far superior and surer guide than the one who has not realized Brahman. We must remember, supreme wisdom can be utterly unassuming while utter ignorance can be supremely learned. We all know that sugar can only sweeten while salt cannot. The famous analogy in *Kathopanishad* of the blind leading the blind refers to the latter kind of leadership.

Vivekananda, the Brahman-become man, *Satyasamkalpa Jnanaswarupa mahapurusha* brought us a few facts of his own experiences and gave them freely. "With five words he conquered the world, so to say, when he addressed men and women as, 'Ye divinities on earth!—Sinners?' The first four words summoned into being the gospel of joy, hope, virility, energy and freedom for the races of men. And yet with the last word, embodying as it did a sarcastic questoin, he demolished the whole structure of soul-degenerating, cowardice-promoting, negative, pessimistic thoughts. On the astonished world this five-word formula fell like a bomb-shell. The first four words he brought from the East, and the last word he brought from the West. All these are oft-quoted expressions, copybook phrases both in the East and the West.

And yet never in the annals of human thought was the juxtaposition accomplished before Vivekananda did it in the dynamic manner and obtained instantaneous recognition as the world champion.. Vivekananda's gospel here is that of energism, of mastery over the world, over the conditions surrounding life, of human freedom, of individual liberty, of courage trampling down cowardice, of world conquest."*

We are all divine in reality. We are all One in fact. In us is the source of all strength. These are the sovereign facts he brought us. These are no new facts, for facts are the oldest things in the universe. Otherwise they are no facts. Though not new, we had forgotten these supreme facts and were going to make a hell of this earth, being swayed by the manner-of-fact. Vivekananda came and opened up the sky-light with the result that a flood of light rushed inside our mansion of old darkness.

But this reached only the surface of our problems. A few fortunate souls were there in the best room of the house where the light could reach. But there are many a dark dungeon-like room in our father's spacious old mansion and an unfortunate legion were to live in them. What about them, the millions—the masses, the people, who live in virgin darkness, and go to greater darkness everyday, generation after generation, sinking in the abyss of fathomless woe? What did he bring for them?

THE PANG OF THE PIONEER

It was for them above all that he came and laboured. For them specially he was

commissioned by the Master. Did he not say, "You will have to impart spiritual knowledge and remove the miseries of the lowly and the miserable."? This was the *Mother's Work* which his Guru had enjoined upon him. The most formidable task, which can ever be enjoined and imagined. And a few ever understand the pangs of pioneers. It took seven long years, from 1886 to 1893, even for that extraordinary brain that was Vivekananda's to formulate any working basis for the upliftment of the people as a whole. We do not know the full history of his life during these seven years. From what we know we gather that during this period he lived mostly the life of a wandering monk, wandering in cities, hills and villages, some times entering into the thick of forests, sometimes retiring into caves, but always carrying in his head the agony: how to remove the miseries of the lowly and the suffering. These were the years of austere suffering, deadly trials and eager search—the years of experiencing and verifying the truths he had learned and earned at his Guru's feet.

Before he could hit upon any definite plan it was necessary that he should know them, for whom he had to work, by real personal contact. To this end he travelled over the length and breadth of India on foot coming in personal contact with people in all strata of society from kings to the lowest of the 'untouchable', in all ramifications of Indian life, till at last at the end of his journey his mission dawned upon him. He had known every grain of suffering India. He had seen the depth of the degradation. He had also discovered the perennial India, India—the Mother of civilizations, India of the Vedic-Upanishadic glory and the India, the hope of the world to be. The decision had come

upon him now, the actual work was to begin.

A part of his experience he gives us in the words: "I have now travelled all over India. But alas, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and the miseries of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears! It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and sufferings. It is for this reason—to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India—that I am going to America."

FACING THE HYDRA-HEADED MONSTER

Primarily Vivekananda's duty was becoming instrumental for the spiritualisation of humanity. But subtler transformation could not be brought about unless the grosser aspects of life were first made whole. He now understood what Sri Ramakrishna had meant when he said, "Religion is not for empty stomachs." Hunger has its own great ethics. It makes us grateful to the Mother Earth, making us realize, "अन्नं ब्रह्मेति". This economics of Sri Ramakrishna's spirituality was burnt down the disciple's mind as he gathered first-hand knowledge about the masses of India. His was the responsibility of giving away to all, the great treasure which his Master had entrusted to him. But how to give? The hands of the recipients were so feeble—of some, feeble, because of the negative strength; of others, feeble, because of the positive weakness—and the gift was so heavy and rich. Not only that—in his patient search after the causes of these 'empty stomachs' Vivekananda found himself face to face with a monstrous hydra-headed problem of historico-socio-character, which had fattened itself during centuries and seemed insoluble.

* *The Might of Man in the Social Philosophy of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda* by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar.

This situation which seemed so baffling was handled by Vivekananda in such a way that master strategists of the battle-fields of life will marvel at it in ages to come. It will be profitable for all humanists, sociologists and internationalists to study how Vivekananda co-related the complex causes of all human maladies, resolved them into one great cause and then gave one sovereign remedy, the application of which in different fields of difficulties have already shown wonderful results.

An attempt to trace up this will show up the superior calibre of Vivekananda's leadership. During the years of his travel Vivekananda had discovered the soul of India. The Perennial India had revealed herself to him. So he could now diagnose the disease accurately, and could prescribe the remedy infallibly. Here is his prescription, a work of art, a rare symphony! "Each nation, like each individual, has one theme in his life, which is its centre, the principal note, round which every other note comes to form the harmony. If one nation attempts to throw off the national vitality, the direction which had become its own through the transmission of centuries, that nation dies. In one nation political power is its vitality—as in England. Artistic life in another and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the key-note of the whole music of the national life. And therefore if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics and society, the result will be that you will be extinct. Social reform...and politics have to be preached through the vitality of your religion. Every man has to make his own choice; and so has every nation. We made our choice ages ago. And it is the faith in an immortal soul...I challenge any one to give it up. How can you

change your nature?" Do you see how the vision of this Seer penetrated the strata of existence, and where with the light of his eyes he laid the foundation, and how he forged the nation without decrying other nations, on the noblest of conceivable principles? Do you see how he released the pent up soul-force of the nation? This is the master musician's way—one stroke and the soul-soars. 'This faith in the immortal soul', Vivekananda discovered, could successfully strike at the root of all problems, Indian or otherwise. This is why he anchored on Vedanta as his theme.

ONE MORE FACT

Vedanta fulfils another great desideratum. During his travels in the West another great idea had dawned on him. "The other great idea that the world wants from us to-day—more perhaps the lower classes than the higher, more the uneducated than the educated, more the weak than the strong—is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe... the only Infinite Reality, that exists in you and me and in all, in the self, in the soul. The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers...but you and I are really one...Europe wants it today just as much as our downtrodden races do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest social and political aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France and in America." Do you see where he sought to give us the remedy of the world-problem even before the problems came up to the ken of humanity, the problems with which we are beset to-day? This is the way that the anointed of the Most High works.

Now he had seen the world as a whole, the humanity as a unity, and its problems in entirety. And he had found out that ultimately all problems had their genesis, basis, and flourish in man's ignorance about his own inherent divinity and the unitariness of all existence. Once he had discovered the root of all problems, the causes of all maladies the humanity suffers from in this earth and the remedy thereof, Vivekananda brought forth an energy of action, which is incomparable.

Naturally Vivekananda's was the anxiousness to establish man in his inherent divinity and the consciousness of the unitariness of existence. For that, he found, he had to work in the human mind, to change the very stuff of it, so that it might be opened unto the truths of metamorphosing power. He discovered that it was in Vedanta, correctly understood, intelligently lived and faithfully applied that the solutions of the human problems of to-day, to-morrow, nay, of all times could and should be found.

THE POLITICS-OF-NO-POLITICS

Did Vivekananda give any political gospel to the world? He denounced all politics in very certain terms. There is no equivocation in statements like, "Let no political significance be ever attached falsely to any of my writings or sayings. What nonsense!", or "I will have nothing to do with political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and Truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash." This emphatic denunciation* of all

politics as such, which again is substantiated by, 'God and Truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash', one may naively say, is indeed Vivekananda's politics. By virtue of his realisation of Brahman he knew the end of life only too well and could read the worth of all human endeavours in relation to the *summum bonum* of life. By this politics-of-no-politics Vivekananda strove to prove before the erring world that the problems of humanity were *fundamentally* spiritual, and not political, social, economic or otherwise. So the problems could be solved only on the spiritual level. Is not the earth spacious enough to hold us all comfortably? Does she not produce enough food to feed us all sumptuously? Then why all these killing and exploiting business? Why these colonisations and expeditions? Because we have not enough space in our hearts for one another. And this is surely a spiritual problem.

Therefore Vivekananda employed himself heart and soul and every fibre of his being to educate humanity with the knowledge of the spirit, for he knew that if the basic ignorance could be blown off, the plinth of all problems were done away with.

His is the one-word-solution—*Strength!* Not that weakness-misunderstood strength, which builds itself upon the death-traps meant for others. But that strength which comes—with the realisation of one's inherent divinity; with the discovery that there is but One alone,—myriad-looking though—so strike you may wherever you like, you

* In spite of his denunciation how largely Vivekananda influenced Indian politics is brought out by Rev. C. F. Andrews in the following remark: "...The Swami's intrepid patriotism gave a new colour to the national movement throughout India. More than any other single individual of that period Vivekananda had made his contribution to the new awakening of India. Even without being connected with the Congress he very largely shaped its policy and promoted its evolution."

bear the wound on your person, though you may discover it after a century; with the finding that life was for death, and death was for life, while you are everlasting, indestructible, the substratum of the universe.

Naturally his creed is absolute selflessness. If you so understand it you may call it selfishness too, but in just the opposite sense to what it is ordinarily used in this world. Only rarely, at long lapses of time such men are born as may be truly selfish. For how could one be selfish before one knew what was the Self? And when one has known the Self how can one be selfish in the ordinary sense? Therefore one can say Self-realisation is synonymous with Selfishness in a special sense. Only that fortunate soul can be truly selfish who knows that the good of all is the good of his. It is a pity that in the name of self-interest we loose both the self and the interest.

Naturally again *Sarvamukti* came to be the ideal of Vivekananda, for, was not striving for personal liberation an absurdity at the bottom and a futility at the top? It was not only 'One World', it was one universe, it was one man, one God, the One alone, many-looking though. This is the real freedom, freedom from ignorance, fear and slavery, the key to solve the world - problem. The understanding of the unitariness of all existence is the solution of all ailments. Vivekananda places man above all geographical superstitions and historical prejudices. He brings man out in the glare of his own Atman to show that how childish it was to think that he was weak. There was no God if Man

was not. What was creation if not for him?

This is Vivekananda's politics-of-no-politics. The world has seen the powers of the politics of non-violence. But it has yet to see the powers of the politics-of-no-politics, which the genius of Vivekananda has envisaged for the coming races of humanity. Man has to evolve inwardly to be able to walk this new path, but eventually that is the path which humanity is destined to tread if it has not to become extinct.

BECOMING THE LEAVEN

Experience had brought him to understand that solution of all problems had to come from within. Any help that was to come from outside could at best be negative. Therefore, India had to solve her own problems. For that India had to work through the path of least resistance, in the lines of *the theme of the nation*, which in its turn again, was to be the solution of all the problems of humanity. India was not only to survive, but India was to save the humanity swamping down in the quicksands of materialism. Therefore the first thing that was necessary was the Indianization of India. India had to be established in the Self. Destiny was propitious for man, Vivekananda himself became the leaven for this Herculean task.

The three main slogans which Vivekananda constantly used to rouse India from her century old langour are: *हेन्य मा स गमः पश्ये!* - Yield not to unmanliness O son of Pritha!; *नाथमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः* - The Atman is not attained by one who has no strength.; *उत्तिष्ठ जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत* - Arise, Awake stop not till the goal is reached.* These are the words culled from

the depths of the ocean of Indian spirituality, sanctified by the deepest meditations of numberless sages down the ages. The appeal is always to the noblest of human aspirations and could be repeated by all always with benefit. It cannot escape the notice of even a superficial observer that in using these soul-stirring slogans, true to the ancient sages of India, Vivekananda only evinced his eagerness to lead the nation, in the path of *nivritti* and not *pravritti*, in the path of *sreyas* and not *préyas*. At the same time Vivekananda drew pointed attention to the fact that the healthy material prosperity was the first desideratum of the nation; first bread and then religion. The nation was first to be made to stand on its legs.

Abhik! Abhik!, Strength! Strength! Fearlessness! Fearlessness!, Vivekananda dinned in the languid ears of sleeping India. He invoked the power of the soul, the solvent of all problems, seen and unseen. He stood in the open Everest-like, his head held high in the blue, his firm feet planted deep down the strata of time, and spoke in divine poise and mighty dignity, that gaint word—the quintessence of India's past achievements, the medicine for her present ailments, and the elixir for her march-ahead,—that giant word, 'Strength!' India was thrilled and electrified. She had the vision of her soul, nay she had seen her soul throbbing and she felt the throb in her entire body.

'Strength,' he spoke to the oppressor. 'Strength!' he spoke to the oppressed. Strength, he knew could liberate all—the captives of freedom, who make slaves of men; the captives of slavery who make brutes of men. Strength is the realisation of openness of aught that lives. He knew 'Strength' will break bondage

and bless the oppressors. Therefore, he was eager to pour down the lubrication of this idea at the very heart-centre of the imperialistic machinery which held the nation in bondage. He aspired to transmute the machine itself so that it could function otherwise. (This is another phase of Vivekananda's politics-of-no-politics) On the other hand in exquisite tenderness of heart, and hyper-eagerness of soul he thundered forth his epic call, "India, my India, sleep no more. Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached" We saw. India arose. India awoke. And India is on the high way.

"So India was hauled out," we are quoting Romain Rolland, "of the shifting sands of barren speculation wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hands of one of her Sannyasins; and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action.... The world finds itself face to face with an awaking India... Whatever the part played in this reawakening by the three generations of trumpeters during the previous century... the decisive call was the trumpet blast of the lectures delivered at Colombo and Madras... that mighty 'Lazarus come forth' of the Message from Madras... This Greater India, this new India—whose growth politicians and learned men have, ostrich fashion, hidden from us and whose striking effects are now apparent—is impregnated with the soul of Ramakrishna. The twin star of Paramahansa and the hero who translated his thought into action, dominates and guides her present destinies. Its warm radiance is the leaven working in the soil of India and fertilizing it. The present leaders of India: the king of thinkers, the king of poets and the

* The rendering which Vivekananda gave was not literal perhaps because it was meant for the mass-rally.

Mahatma—Aurobindo Ghosh, Tagore and Gandhi—have grown, flourished and borne fruit under the double constellation of the Swan and the Eagle—a fact publicly acknowledged by Aurobindo and Gandhi." Is India fully aware of this? Does India try to reap fully the benefit of this truth? None-the-less India is on the high way.

But how far is the goal? Very far indeed. As far as the spiritualisation of humanity. It is the privilege of India to be so commissioned by History. To fail in this duty is not only to lose the privilege but also to miss the *raison d'être* of the national life. Why 'to him who hath more will be given'? Because he will share it with others. If not, there will be famine at home and famine abroad.

Vivekananda exhorted the idea repeatedly: "The National Ideal of India are Renunciation and Service. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself. The banner of spirituality cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation." But he wanted the religion, 'free of priestcraft'. He wanted 'the religion which was as free and as easy of access as is God's air.' He pointed out with unerring finger the most dangerous diseases in the body-politic of India, the *mlechchavada*, the *asprishyavada* and 'all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of the doctrines of *paramarthika* and *vijavaharika*.'

Education was the only remedy which could cure all these diseases. We hear of craft, skill, play or art centred education. But Vivekananda wanted Atman-centred education. The sooner the different theories on Education with their loyalties to different centres tend towards the centre of the universe, which is Atman, the better for humanity. Otherwise very easily a system

of education, in spite of itself, degenerates into a mere handmaiden to the form of politics in power. In every period of History we find the statement proved. Vivekananda's unique definition of education is, "The manifestation of perfection already in man." Nothing more—nothing less. He wanted man-making education, the education which helps man to conquer Nature both inward and outward. And this education must interpenetrate every strata of the society and reach every individual soul. If the ploughman's little son could not come to the Education, education has to go to him, and walk side by side with him in the fields, where he has gone to assist his father. In the interest of the nation educationists in Free India should thoroughly ruminate over Vivekananda's thoughts on education and thus enrich the national system of education to be.

He believed that no nation could live or rise without worshipping the goddess Sakti. And Sakti could not be propitiated if Her manifestations, the women, were not propitiated and held in honour. He believed that women themselves were to bring about their own regeneration. The only help that could be proffered was to put them in a position so that they can handle their own problems successfully. He held Sita and Savitri as the ideal of Indian womanhood.

In the words of Sister Nivedita, "He had no dogma of his own to set forth. He preached Mukti instead of heaven; enlightenment instead of salvation; the realisation of the immanent unity, Brahman, instead of God; the truth of all faiths instead of binding force of any one....His doctrine was no academic system of metaphysics of purely historic or linguistic interest, but the heart's faith of a living people, who have struggled continuously

for its realisation, in life and death for twentyfive centuries....India to Vivekananda's thinking was a unity—the idea might have been historically current, the British gave it a political significance by gross and subtle exploitation — Vivekananda resurrected its spiritual significance, and gave the nation its pride and honour." Vivekananda's leadership works in thousand flames. He is a pioneer in so many diverse directions of thoughts simultaneously that one cannot enumerate them all adequately in a short compass.

ECCE HOMO

To understand the slightest of Vivekananda correctly we have to read him between these two extremes: 'Why should I care if the world itself were to disappear?' he said once. 'According to my philosophy, that, you know would be a very good thing. But in fact,' he added in tones suddenly graver, 'all that is against me must be with me in the End. Am I not Her soldier?' Again the same Vivekananda says, 'May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God that I believe in, the sum total of all souls.' Does he look self-contradictory? In fact this is Vivekananda's synthesis of transcendentalism and positivism.

Vivekananda emphatically denied any nation's exclusive right over him. Above all he was a Sannyasin *par excellence*. His *swadesa* was *bhuvanatrayam*. "To him as a religious teacher, the whole world was India, and men, everywhere, a member of his fold." Therefore he is for both East and West, North and South and for all times to come and go. He knew that more of East meant West, and *vice versa*.

Vivekananda gave the best part of his energy to the Occident. More than half the period of his ten years' public career, he worked in the West. And we know what Vivekananda's work means. A major portion of the complete works of Swamiji is a harvest from the Western fields.

To the West he gave a Warning and a Word. The Warning was: "The whole of Western civilization will tumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword." We all know the half-a-century history after this warning was sounded. The Word he gave was: Vedanta, the Science of Peace, Perfection and Realisation. His was the lofty aristocracy of giving away, out of free sweet will, the richest treasure to the oppressor.. He felt it was a tremendous obligation to be oppressed. For by allowing the oppressor to carry on his business you rob him of his manhood. No, you cannot thrash the baby for burning its finger; you have to heal the wound. See the heart of the man who said: "I pity the oppressed whether men or women, and I pity the oppressor more." Such in the character of Vivekananda's leadership.

Snailishness was death he knew. So he forcibly brought India out of her shell and threw her destinies in the world current of affairs. While educated Indians were fighting in those days a comfortable and inconsequential battle of indeterminate politics, in one front, he chose another and by the depth-charge of his illumination reached the very heart of humanity and worked wonders there. He won trophies of highly gifted men and women, whom he gently and humbly offered at the feet of India, and in exchange sent out of India

worthy preachers of Indian wisdom to work in the jostling cities of Europe and America. The value of this spiritual commerce in determining the integration of all the forces of good as against the forces of evil is just being understood by the savants of different nations. If amidst the gathering clouds of despair brooding over the humanity, there is any basis for any real hope, it is in the subtle effect of this spiritual commerce which Vivekananda renovated following the ancient traditions of the nation. It is in the grace of those saving words with which he ended his addresses in the Parliament of Religions, "Help and not Fight," 'Assimilation and not Destruction', 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension'."

THE GREAT BHASHYA

In this short unassuming behest, "You will impart spiritual knowledge, and remove the miseries of the lowly and the miserable," Sri Ramakrishna mapped up the life-work of Vivekananda. In the light of the life-work of Vivekananda as we know it, it is possible for us now to understand how it was a behest for world-regeneration. It was a call for striking an equilibrium in the world which was taking dangerous swings to ruinous extremes; it was an imperative to work out a synthesis of apparent contraries.

Vivekananda's genius lay in his capacity to read with wonderful accuracy and comprehensiveness the universe of meaning

which was the potential of that aphoristic behest. Except Sri Ramakrishna, you cannot point out in the whole history of the human race, any man, living or dead, who commanded the powers of accepting, absorbing, synthesising, harmonising and unifying to the extent Vivekananda did.

Rightly does Romain Rolland observe, "In the two words *equilibrium* and *synthesis*, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit; the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught has its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth and he travelled towards Unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy....He himself was the embodied unity of a nation.....and his ideal was unity both of thought and action. His claim to greatness lies in the fact that he not only *proved* its unity by reason, but *stamped* it upon the heart of India in flashes of illumination. He had a genius for arresting words and burning phrases hammered out white-hot in the forge of his soul so that they transpierced thousands. * The one that made deepest impression was the famous phrase, *Daridranarayana* †... 'The only God that exists, the only God

* In this connection we may quote, "No single person in modern India has given rise to so many categories calculated to awaken the *renaissance de l'esprit*, which serves to combat the domination of the region, the age, the *milieu* and the time as has done Vivekananda."—Prof. Benoy Sarker.

† "Vivekananda has said," writes Rabindranath Tagore, "that there is the power of Brahman in every human being; also that it is through the poor and the dispossessed that Narayana seeks and awaits our service. What a grand message! It lights up for man's consciousness the path of limitless liberation from the trammels and limitations of his self. This is no ethical injunction laying down any specific rule of conduct, no narrow commandment for the regulation of our behaviour. Opposition to untouchability is inherent in the Message—opposition not on grounds of any political expediency, but because the Message is incompatible with insult to the humanity of Man, for untouchability is a self-inflicted insult to every one of us. "And because the Message of Vivekananda is a call of awakening to the totality of our Manhood, that it has set so many of our youths on diverse paths of freedom through work and through Renunciation and Sacrifice."

in whom I believe...my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races.' It may justly be said that India's destiny was changed by him, and that his teaching re-echoed throughout Humanity."

DEI GRATIA: DEO GRATIAS

But the height of Vivekananda's constructive genius found manifestation in establishing the Monastic Order which bears the name of his Master. True, Sri Ramakrishna himself laid the foundation of his own Order in the unearthly love in which he held his disciples and taught them to hold one another in, but Vivekananda gave it the structure, systematized its philosophy, mapped its plan of work, taught the technique of training up the 'sappers and miners of God's militia' and breathed into it that energism of practical Vedanta which made the Order one of the most dynamic spiritual organisations of the world. The twin Ideals the Order stands for are: *आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च*, For the liberation of the self and for the good of the world as well. The twin approaches to this ideal are Renunciation and Service. And two techniques are making the means the end and the end the means. The two objectives of the Math and Mission—one can see how Vivekananda translated into action his Guru's twin behest, 'You shall impart spiritual knowledge and remove the miseries of the lowly and miserable'—are:

1. To bring into existence a band of monks devoted to leading a life of purity, renunciation, and practical spirituality under the inspiration of the life of Sri Ramakrishna from among whom teachers and workers can be trained and sent out to serve the world in all possible ways; and,
2. To carry on in conjunction with lay workers, religious, philanthropic and charitable activities, looking upon all men, women and children irrespective of caste,

creed, nationality and colour, as veritable manifestations of the Divine.

"A strong and distinct type", said Vivekananda once, "is always the physical basis of the horizon. It is very well to talk of universalism but the world will not be ready for that for million years." We hear a lot of universalism, one-worldism and the like now-a-days. We have our Olympics and International Airways! We have also our *UNO* and *UNESCO* and other organisations similarly disposed. Perhaps all these are contributing their own noble shares in bringing our dissenting nations together, sometimes to find them dissenting more effectively, sometimes to find them sincerely trying to discover some workable fundamentals.

But it may be told for the sake of truth that the legacy which Vivekananda left behind, is a considerable working basis in this direction. The cultural and spiritual work that his followers have been doing, in the lines laid down by the leader, in different parts of the world, in conditions favourable, and unfavourable in different centres of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, keeping themselves absolutely free and aloof from matters political and without seeking anything temporal is perhaps a transmuting force of no negligible importance, though its manifestation may seem feeble when seen against the organised forces of evil that are a-work in our home-planet. In times to come, if his followers be true to Vivekananda by the grace of the Lord, men will have to discover Vivekananda not only as 'a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present', but also as the path-finder and brick-layer for future man.

Vivekananda's leadership is of a character which remains ever new, though the words he uttered might become old by use. His is the gospel of 'the breath of the Brahman,' which creates things new out of the old stuff, seemingly old due to the

illusion of Time. His is an undying leadership, eternally unfolding like an immortal lotus of numberless petals, from which waves after waves of fragrance are constantly rushing out and energising man whomever and whenever it touches him in sweet benediction and calm blessing, and not unoften like an electric shock.

VIVEKANANDA TRANSCENDS LEADERSHIP

Hardly though one may expect Vivekananda's leadership is even greater than what we have seen. When he found that the 'machine', which he wanted to see 'in strong working order' had begun functioning properly, Vivekananda gradually withdrew his hand from the switch-board, and the shade of his personality from the control of the affairs of the Order so that the latent powers in the followers may find full liberty for development towards perfection, which he believed to be everyone's divine right. "How often," he said, "does a man ruin his disciples by remaining always with them! When men are once trained, it is essential that their leader leaves them, for without his absence they cannot develop themselves." Now that he knew that he had trained disciples, Vivekananda withdrew himself. While his leadership went on functioning Vivekananda spread his wings for regions higher.

After his vision at Kshir Bhavani Vivekananda returned with the words in his lips: "Mother!, Mother! 'All my patriotism is gone, everything is gone. Now it is only, 'Mother! Mother!'" "I have been

very wrong" he said, "Mother said to me 'What even if unbelievers should enter my temple and defile my images! What is that to you? Do you protect Me or do I protect you?' So there is no patriotism. I am only a little child!" The roaring lion had become a lisping baby as it were. The leadership that was Vivekananda's was thus divested of the physical body and it became as impersonal as Truth itself.

In fact the *Mother's Work* which Sri Ramakrishna had entrusted to him was by now over. It was time. The door of the Absolute was to be opened for him. The rushing upsurge of the divinity enmeshed had attained volcanic impetuosity. Vivekananda was to burst forth. The Master was standing at the gate with the key in his hand.

He heard the Master's call, that 'wonderful love.' He communicates not long before passing away, "After all I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; work and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking—love dying, work becoming tasteless—the glamour is off life. Now only the voice of the Master calling: "'I come Lord, I come'." "Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou Me" "I come, my beloved Lord, I come'."

The Light was contracted to its Source. The illumination was left with us. And that is what guides us on without dazzling our eyes.

THE BUILDERS OF REAL INDIA

By SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

The proper study of the history of a nation is not to know the succession of events, the catalogue of invasions, or conquests, the chronicle of the rise and fall of dynasties, but to find out what are the forces that have moulded the thought and life of the nation. Unfortunately we want to judge a nation and country only by outward events. In this we are sadly mistaken. It is something like evaluating the worth of a man by external appearances, by his dress and belongings, while we do not know at all the workings of his inner life. In the life of a nation the so-called historical events are simply superficialities; to understand the nation we must know what are the thought forces which have guided or are supplying the real strength of the nation. That means, we must know the personalities who supply the intellectual or spiritual sustenance of the people.

If this is true, more or less, of all nations in the world, this is more applicable to the case of India. If we study India as a whole, we find that real India is the resultant of a few spiritual personalities: it is their examples and teachings which have pervaded the whole national life and influenced the entire masses.

Some say that people in ancient India had no sense of historical appreciation—they did not recognise the value or utility of history. Yes, they did not care to leave behind records of passing, ephemeral events to fill your archives and thereby to increase your labour. But they left behind them the experiences of their lives, the outcome of their Sadhana, which are influencing us for thousands of years. Think of the Vedic period. We do not know the names of the

Rishis, we do not know the history of their ancestors or the exact years when they were born or when they died. But what does that matter? We have got the Vedas, we have got the Upanishads. People did not take care to record the names of the kings or forms of government and so on, which a modern historian will burn midnight oil to make researches into. But they hugged to their bosom the Upanishadic sayings. Those were the times when there was no printing press, people perhaps did not learn widely the art of writing either. But from generation to generation they passed those teachings, which are known as Vedas, until at the modern times, through the help of printing press they have now spread over the whole world.

Think of the epic period. The two great epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—in the eyes of historians are the history of two great wars. The Ramayana is the history of the Aryan conquest of Southern India. But to the Indian masses, to the Indian nation as a whole, the Ramayana is important because it has given to them the important characters of Rama and Sita. After the day's labour when our so-called uneducated people—but as far as human virtues are concerned much better than the so-called educated people—turn to the pages of that important book, the clash and conflict of arms between the two contending forces are hushed into silence, and instead come before their mind's eyes the character of Rama and Sita, whom they worship as a god and a goddess. To them Rama and Sita are incarnations. Similar is the case with the Mahabharata. To the historians

the Mahabharata is the history of two fighting dynasties—the Kauravas and the Pandavas. To the masses, it is the record of the triumph of virtues over vice, of good over evil. The external battle of Kurukshetra is less important, but the message which Sri Krishna delivered at the battlefield has entered into the very core of our national life.

In the same way we find that the inner life of India is built upon the lives and message of her saints or spiritual geniuses or Prophets, whatever you may call them. Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Nanak, Kavir, Tulsidas, Mirabai, Chaitanya and a few others—these are the figures that have moulded the destiny of India more than any king or emperor. They have shown that emperor after emperor may come and go, kingdoms after kingdoms may rise and fall, but the message of the Spirit lives—it is undying. We have forgotten the historical backgrounds of the lives of a Tulsidas, or a Mirabai or a Chaitanya. But the Dohas of Tulsidas are on every man's lips, the songs of Mirabai reverberate from one end of the country to another, the Kirtans which have their genesis in the teachings of Sri Chaitanya sway a vast mass of people.

When two cultures clash and meet, two things may happen to the indigenous culture. If it be weak, it will go out of existence. If it has got strength, if it has got vitality, it will assimilate the alien culture and come out more powerful from the impact of the invading civilisation. In India, we find that the case is the latter one. In the time of conflict of cultures India has always shown wonderful vitality. That some of the Greek thinkers were influenced by Indian thought, that the traces of the influence of Indian religion

can be found in Christianity are admitted by many. Coming to modern times we find that whenever the invaders or conquering people have brought to India a new civilization or a new culture, India has produced some saints whose lives stood as a bulwark against the onrush of an alien culture. Thus during the Pathan and the Mughal rules, we got some saints whose message not only cemented the feelings between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, but added a new strength to the Hindu culture. They increased the faith, the belief of the Hindus in their culture and religion. They transformed lives of the otherwise neglected backward community among the Hindus.

Under the British rule we were face to face with a culture and civilization which was more dominating and powerful and at the same time more alluring than any that had come before. The wine of Western civilization was too much for our educated people. For, to judge psychologically, behind the Western culture and civilization there was the dazzling material success of the Western nations. Wealth puts a premium on the intelligence of the rich, who may not be necessarily clever. Material success of a conquering race throws a glorious light on the culture of that people. At this time the resisting power of the Hindu race expressed itself in the Brahmo movement in Bengal—where the onslaught of the Western civilization was greatest—and the Arya Samaj movement in the north. And the Theosophical movement, though having origin in a foreign land, was doing some good work in the South.

But whereas the Brahmo movement and the Arya Samaj represented only particular phases of the Hindu religion, there was

born one, at this time, whose life unfolded the whole gamut of the religion of the Hindu race. It is said that Sri Ramakrishna was the consummation of six thousand years of the religious experiences of three hundred million people. Sri Ramakrishna rejected nothing and accepted everything in Hinduism. From image worship—sneered at as idolatry by the unknowing people—upto the highest flight of Advaitism, everything had a place in the Sadhana of Sri Ramakrishna. By his direct religious experiences, he showed the truth of everything—high or wrongly deemed to be low. He revitalised the hidden forces of Hinduisim. Nay, the background of his religious experiences was so very strong that he could step out of the limitation of orthodoxy, and go to worship Jesus or share the experiences of a follower of Islam. Indeed there is no limitation as Hinduisim, Mahomedanism or Christianity for a naked soul. Truth is one—with our limited vision and outlook we see the same truth differently. The same person looks different if photographed from different angles. Thus Sri Ramakrishna came out of the limitations of a particular religion and stood for anybody in any part of the world who had a genuine spiritual hankering. How repeatedly he would say: "Don't limit the aspects of God. If you are on the ground, you see walls, trees, and various other things; but if you can raise yourself high up, everything melts away into one homogenous mass. Sugar tastes sweet whatever name you may give to it. Water is the same though various people call it by various terms."

Thus Sri Ramakrishna not only released the latent powers of Hindu religion, but also stood for spiritual renaissance in general. Nowadays many people in the

West are losing interest in Church religions. They can realise from the religious experiences of Sri Ramakrishna that the churches may not represent the true Christianity but the message of Christ is none the less true. Any Mahomedan who is on the way to lose faith in his religion may find that here is one who in the modern age bears direct testimony to the truths of Islam. Thus the catholicity of Hinduism found a burning illustration in the life and example of Sri Ramakrishna. And his message is spreading far and wide beyond the borders of India. His followers can be found in different corners of the globe. From the standpoint of future historians this is a very strange phenomenon. When Hinduism seemed to be engulfed by a foreign faith, there was born one in the Hindu society, whose message is influencing hundreds of lives belonging to other religions. And it must be noted that Hinduism is not a proselytising religion, and Sri Ramakrishna did not encourage the proselytising efforts of any religion.

Now, what is this Ramakrishna? Where lies his power and strength? What is the source of all his influence? You will be astonished to know that he had nothing great in the modern sense of the term. He was born in an out-of-the-way village where any ray of modern civilization had not penetrated. He had hardly any knowledge of the three R's. His occupation was a temple priest carrying a magnificent salary of rupees eight a month. He was just the antithesis of what a modern man covets for or admires. He was completely untouched by any modern idea or thought. Yet the intellectual giants of Calcutta, the richest men of that premier city of India, would go to him and sit dumb to drink in the words of wisdom that fell from his lips.

Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, the great Brahmo leader and orator said once, "What is common between him and me that I am so attracted by him—I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Maxmuller and a whole host of European scholars and divines; I, an Europeanised, civilized, self-centred, so-called educated reasoner and he a poor, illiterate, half-idolatrous, friendless Hindu devotee. Why should I sit long hours to attend to him?"

Well, the answer can be found in the utterances of Sri Ramakrishna himself. He would say that if a ray of light come from that great Fountain-head of light, all the knowledge of the human intellect seems insignificant—seems trash. If you come in contact with the Source of that Divine Bliss, all the wealth of the world seems no more valuable than the refuses thrown into dust-bins. Sri Ramakrishna had no earthly riches, he had no academic qualifications. But he bathed in the fountain of all knowledge, all wealth and all power. He was the child of nature. He was the child of the Blissful Mother—by which name he would call the Ultimate Reality. This Divine Mother was a much more reality to him than any earthly mother. She was a much more living presence to him than any the material objects of the world. He would say, "This Divine Mother is not an adopted mother—she is the real Mother. She will listen to your prayers, She will talk to you as I am talking to you. You can see Her as you see any sense-perceptible thing." Once when some Sikhs talked to Sri Ramakrishna about the kindness of God, he remonstrated with the words, "Why do you say, God is kind, God is compassionate? Is there anything strange in the fact that a

mother should be kind to her children and take care of them? Do you worship your earthly mother by singing praise to her 'Thou art kind, Thou art merciful and so on?'"

With the Divine Mother whom he worshipped at first in the temple of Rani Rasmani at Dakshineswar, he had the spontaneous relationship of a child with the mother. He would talk to Her, he would feed Her, he would even feel Her very breath.

To a modern mind, to a modern psychologist or a psychoanalyst, the case of Ramakrishna might seem to be pathological, his visions the outcome of heated imagination or the objectification of intense thought. But a tree is judged by its fruits. What was the outcome of his prayer to the Divine Mother—which ignorant people will call a superstition or an idolatry? Any eye-witness like Swami Vivekananda, who was the representative of modern culture and who had an extremely modern mind, said: "In his presence I found that a man can be perfect even in this body. Those lips never cursed anybody, never even criticised any one. Those eyes were beyond the possibility of seeing evil, that mind had lost the power of thinking evil. He saw nothing but good." He was all love, he radiated peace and blessedness. No wonder that people were attracted by him just as iron filings are attracted by a piece of magnet. During the last few years of his life, Dakshineswar was humming with innumerable devotees who would flock to him. Wonderful was the change he brought in their lives. Persons who were despised by society for their despicable character received the touch of love from him and their lives were metamorphosed. By his single touch he could raise the

mind of devotees to a plane far beyond the limits of human thought.

Yet, he did everything unconsciously. He was not conscious of his power. He would say: "I feel as if I am pricked by thorns, when people call me a Guru or a teacher." He was simply an instrument in the hands of the Divine Mother. Time and often he would be heard repeating, "Mother, I am the instrument, Thou art the wielder of the instrument. I am the engine, Thou art the Driver." He did not know what a tremendous power he was wielding. He simply sang the music of his own life. Those who listened to that, remained enwrapped. And the lingering vibrations of that are touching our ears and creating for us the longing for the great Unknown.

Sri Ramakrishna's life falsifies the current belief that people nowadays do not want religion. Then how is it that the message of Sri Ramakrishna is spreading like a wild fire? How is it that the number of his devotees all over the globe is increasing by leaps and bounds? Well, there is religion and religion. Real religion is the constitutional necessity of human beings. Of course much depends on what we mean by religion. A man can no more reject religion then he can jump out of himself. Sri Ramakrishna by his life and teachings has shown what real religion is, and how it is the only panacea for all the ills of life—individual, national or international. The burden of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna was: "Realise Truth, Realise God as a living Reality, then all your problems will be solved."

We are now at a time when the whole world is passing through a great crisis. After the Second World War it seems the Third World War is coming. Many per-

sons are stupefied as to what lies ahead in the womb of futurity. Nobody can suggest any solution of the present situation. We forget that the real solution will come from men who have seen the Ultimate Truth, who have solved the mystery of the universe and the problems of human existence, who stand high above human turmoil and earthly conflict in a plane from where all our fights and struggles seem like a play of ignorant children. Only they can save the world. Only they can give us help to build the world anew.

And one thing we should remember. We must not be deluded by high-sounding words—as national problems, international problems and all that. Well, the centre of gravity of the whole humanity is within each individual self. We cannot transform the world, we can transform ourselves. Society improves, nations attain to a higher scale of civilization to the extent individuals better their lives. A saint lives his silent life and his influence becomes tremendous over the whole of humanity. Sri Ramakrishna was oblivious of surrounding problems. He was busy solving his own personal problem—as to how he would attain perfection and how he could be face to face with Truth. Because he succeeded in doing that, he opened up the possibility for thousands of persons to do the same. That is a great thing. Therein lies our hope, faith and strength.

Sri Ramakrishna is the most recent of the galaxy of stars who have appeared from time to time in the firmament of India to guide the nation and direct the people. It is because of these saints and prophets that India has not lost sight of her ideal—in spite of many difficulties and sometimes sad failures too. If India can stick to her ideal, she can be an object-lesson to the whole world.

THE PROBLEM OF SELF IN BUDDHISM AND VEDANTA

By PROF. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

The most conspicuous point of difference between Buddhism and Vedanta is said to be the *anāttā-vāda* (no-soul theory) of the former and the *Atma-vāda* of the latter. The two philosophies are generally said to differ as radically as black and white. In support of the denial of a permanent and abiding self, it is generally pointed out that the Buddha held *Sakkaya-Ditthi* (the theory of a soul in the body) as principal amongst the Samyojanas or Fetters which keep man in bondage. Howsoever the point may be accentuated, I have always been persuaded to think that this divergence is only *seeming* and not real in the end. I shall attempt to vindicate this position in this short article with the hope of bringing about a rapprochement amongst the two of the greatest religious philosophies of the world. I have been prompted to pen these words by the perusal of a highly interesting and thought-provoking article, *Progress and Religion*, by Shri Anagarika Dharmapriya in the November '48 issue of this Journal. I crave the indulgence of making references to the said article, not with the desire of attacking the learned writer with the barbed arrows of hostile criticism, but with the sole objective of joining him in a collaborative discussion of an ancient controversy which we may endeavour to bring to a happy resolution.

At the outset I should like to express that I entirely and heartily agree with the observation of Shri Anagarika Dharmapriya that "Many think they believe in progress who believe in change. Change is a rearrangement of accidentals; progress a transformation in essentials." The author has essayed to show that change is not progress and that true progress means rising higher and higher in the scale of moral refinement and spiritual experiences. So far I quite agree with him. But when he comes to explain what the spiritual ideal is and incidentally calls for criticism the theory of the Atman, I do not feel convinced by that criticism and the denial of a permanent and abiding self as the subject of experience seems to me philosophically a wholly untenable position. The spiritual ideal according to him is a middle path between the "two temperamental and doctrinal extremes" of materialism and Atmanism, both of which are subjected to criticism. Shri Dharmapriya writes: "These two temperamental and doctrinal extremes have been described by the Buddha in the *Dhammacakkapavartana Sutta* which is the famous First Discourse delivered by the Lord after his enlightenment. The middle way in which Buddhist practical spirituality consists is a path between and yet above these two extremes. The same themes of thought are deeply woven into the texture of Sri Aurobindo's symphonic *magnum Opus, The Life Divine*, wherein they are characterised as 'the materialist denial' and 'the ascetic refusal' respectively." I wonder whether the middle path suggested by the Lord Buddha was a course of

priya that "Many think they believe in progress who believe in change. Change is a rearrangement of accidentals; progress a transformation in essentials." The author has essayed to show that change is not progress and that true progress means rising higher and higher in the scale of moral refinement and spiritual experiences. So far I quite agree with him. But when he comes to explain what the spiritual ideal is and incidentally calls for criticism the theory of the Atman, I do not feel convinced by that criticism and the denial of a permanent and abiding self as the subject of experience seems to me philosophically a wholly untenable position. The spiritual ideal according to him is a middle path between the "two temperamental and doctrinal extremes" of materialism and Atmanism, both of which are subjected to criticism. Shri Dharmapriya writes: "These two temperamental and doctrinal extremes have been described by the Buddha in the *Dhammacakkapavartana Sutta* which is the famous First Discourse delivered by the Lord after his enlightenment. The middle way in which Buddhist practical spirituality consists is a path between and yet above these two extremes. The same themes of thought are deeply woven into the texture of Sri Aurobindo's symphonic *magnum Opus, The Life Divine*, wherein they are characterised as 'the materialist denial' and 'the ascetic refusal' respectively." I wonder whether the middle path suggested by the Lord Buddha was a course of

'practical spirituality' between the extremes of excessive sensuous self-indulgence and rigorous self-mortification, or, a doctrinal question between the extremes of materialism and Atmanism. I equally wonder regarding the correctness of characterising Sri Aurobindo's philosophical position as a mean between the extremes of materialism and Atmanism. It does not seem to me to be exactly so. His philosophy is definitely on the Atmanist side; it is more inclined towards Atmanism, nay, is Atmanism in so far as it accepts Spirit as the One abiding source and stay of all the manifested universe. Sri Aurobindo maintains that the Divine Being exists as the unchangeable One and has also "gone forth" into the manifested universe. What he refers to as "the ascetic refusal" is the Mayavadin's denial of the reality of the external world as a real manifestation of the Spirit; but the Spirit is there in all its completeness. What he refers to as "the materialist denial" is precisely the denial by the materialist of the fundamental and primordial position of the Spirit as the originative and first principle of the universe.

Be that as it may, I shall here consider from a strictly philosophical point of view the writer's criticism of what he has called Atmanism and attempt to show that in a certain sense and from a certain point of view the ultimate reality of the self (not of the Atman) in the usual individualistic connotation of the term is denied by the Vedantin as much as by the Buddhist and that this common denial leaves the reality of the Atman in the Vedantic sense unimpaired. I shall further attempt to show that the Vedantic Atman and Buddhist Nibbana mean the same thing.

Let me now come to the treatment of the

problem of self by Shri Dharmapriya. "The unity of personality is to be understood" he tells us "to consist not in the persistence of an unchanging and identical locus of experience in the midst of a multiplicity of experiences, but in the continuity of series of experiences." Now, can any one deny that our experience is not merely 'a continuity of the series of experiences, but also a consciousness of the continuity of series of experiences, a connected and unified awareness of the series. The consciousness of a series *qua* series could not be possible unless there were a foundational consciring subject of *all* the successive links in the experienced series, which itself were not a link in the series. That which is conscious of a succession cannot itself be a link in the succession but must be an identically the same consciring principle to which each and all of the successive series have been equally present. Without 'a locus of experience', how could experience have a unity at all? The analogy of a flame which appears to be identical but is in fact a succession of flames is but an analogy and becomes positively misleading when pressed too far. The flame which is a succession of flames is *not itself conscious of this succession*; you are conscious of its being a succession of flames. Succession can only be true of that which is *objective* in our experience; it cannot be true of that which is the *subject* in our experience. A mere succession of discrete psychical states, without an identical subject comprehending them all, howsoever rapidly or closely following one another, could never give us the unity of our experience.

"A permanent locus of all our experiences" says Shri Dharmapriya "is no more to be found on the mental or even spiritual levels of experience than it was to be found

on the grossly physical." Yes, the subject of experience cannot be found on the mental level. It is trans-mental or trans-psychical. The mental processes or events are all realised in experience as comprehended by the comprehending subject-consciousness. The former are *objectively* presented to the latter. They are the conscita of consciring subject-consciousness. Let us decide the issue by a close scrutiny of experience itself. Is not the succession of our psychical states (which is what we really mean when we speak of experiences) *objectively* presented to us? Its objectivity is a patent and incontrovertible fact of our experience. This would not have been possible unless there were a subject-consciousness distinct from it to which it was objectively presented. And what is a 'spiritual level of experience'? Is it not different from the psychical? Could the word spiritual have any meaning other than the psychical, if there be no Spirit?

We cannot, therefore, deny the reality of the self as the subject of experience; and any denial of the self in *this sense of the term* stands self-condemned. But there seems to be a sense in which the Buddha denied the reality of the self and Vedantism could also agree with Buddhism in denying the reality of the self in *that sense*. As I have endeavoured to show elsewhere¹, the cleavage between Buddhist Anatma-vada and Vedantic Atma-vada becomes only apparent and not real if we bear in mind the Buddhist point of view of the denial of self and the Vedantic point of view of the affirmation of Self. It is advisable to remember always that the Buddha's approach to the problem was strictly empirical and positivist. His dominant interest being the practical transformation of the ethical life

which eventually leads to Nibbana, he, perhaps, did not deem it necessary to formulate the transcendental and *a priori* implications of experience. From this perspective, he was denying the reality of the self in the general acceptation of the term—according to which the self means an individual soul, a limited but enduring entity. Buddha denied the possibility of the self according to this conception. He showed that the limited individual is not an enduring entity but a passing aggregate of physical and psychical elements. Vedantism could have no quarrel with Buddhism in denying the self in this acceptation of the term and from this perspective. Like Buddhism Vedanta also holds that clinging to the empirical egoity is the root cause of our suffering and bondage. *Yada na ham tada moksho, yada ham bandhanas-tada*—'As long as there is the sense of I so long there is bondage, when the I-sense is gone, there is liberation', says the *Ashtavakra Samhita*. The Atman in Vedanta is emphatically not 'self' in the narrow, empirical, individualist sense. It is radically different from anything that is composed of what the Buddhist would call "the five khandhas". If the Buddha said that in Nibbana "there remains no trace whatsoever of the five khandhas of which everything in the universe is but a more or a less refined formulation"; the Vedantin also says that Atman is *jagad-vilakshana* or something different *sui generis* from the entire universe.

Shri Anagarika Dharmapriya concludes his interesting article with the sentence: "It is in the achievement of that which is beyond existence and non-existence that the goal of all progress is to be found." Is this not Atmanism, pure and simple?

1. Vide the writer's article on *Buddha's Gospel* in *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1946.

SIDDARAMA

By P. SAMA RAO

"And Life with Death
In obscure nuptials moveth
Commingle alien, yet affined breath."

—*Orient Ode*, Francis Thompson.

Among the Veerasaiva Sarana Vachanakaras, Allama Prabhu and Devara Dasimayya belong to the path of Vairagya, Basaveswara and Akka Mahadevi to the devotional, Chenna Basaveswara to the intellectual, and Siddarama to the karmic. There cannot be really a distinction in the case of such high souls like these for preference, for it is the synthesis of all these margas that secured them liberation. But to the normal unspiritualised mind such a demarcation exists and becomes necessary in order that it may choose initially the one path most congenial to its temperament. In their spiritual flights these top souls are not different from one another, although the expressions of their reactions to the intimations of the Divine, may differ. While Basaveswara and Akka Mahadevi are thus poetical, Allama Prabhu mystical, and Chenna Basaveswara factual, Siddarama combines in himself all these qualities of expression. There is nothing eccentric or unhuman in him. He symbolises the normal mentality whose nature is to act and react healthily to both the good and the bad equally well in creation. Through dispassionate action he secures the liberation he had aspired for. He makes no bones to confess to his faults; he has no qualms of ego or prestige to disown them. On the other hand, every act of

his is purer than its antecedent, for, with every step he takes towards the Truth he sheds his own limitations. In other words, he is a great Karma Yogi in the same degree as Basaveswara or Akka Mahadevi is a devotee, or Allama Prabhu an avadhuta. This is his portrait, a perfect one, as is disclosed in the colloquy between him and Allama on the tank-bund, which is reminiscent of Socrates' dialogues.

According to some creation is the outcome of Lord's grace. It is not therefore surprising that Raghavanka, the poetic historian of Siddarama, while canonizing him, ascribes his birth to the blessings of Revana Siddheswara on his aged parents, Moradiya Muddugonda and Suggavve. These were devotees of Dhulima Kalayya, the sectarian god of the Kurubas. So they named him Dhulima Kalayya alias Dhuliah in pursuance of their caste customs. As a boy he impressed himself as an idiot if not a lunatic. So he was nicknamed 'Jada Bharata'. His parents finding him useless for anything set him on the task of a cowherd. One day as he went out grazing the cattle he lighted upon a crude Linga (phalax symbol) at the foot of a tree. One is not sure of the nature of the communion that passed between the two, except of the change effected in him forthwith. Like an Ekalavya he got absorbed in it and at

once began to meditate on it ceaselessly. One fine morning the Lord Mallikarjuna of Srisaila manifested himself to him in the guise of a mendicant and begged of him half-boiled rice. He did not have any with him then. So he returned to the village with the promise to fetch them. He soon returned to find the mendicant had disappeared. He grew frantic in calling upon Him, "Mallayya, Mallayya". Just then a convoy of pilgrims bound for Srisaila passed him by; and they struck with pity for him and promising to show Him his 'Mallayya' took him there. For the first time in his life his faith in God was rudely shaken. So he cried his heart saying, "One cannot be sure of God. How could He be good who slips away having promised to wait for the rice? Is it fair for Him to bother us thus who are out to serve Him? O Lord, you alone can understand your sport."

He did not return home but accompanied the pilgrims to Srisaila, and invited the Lord Mallikarjuna to his village Sonnala-pura. The Lord promised to go over there as soon as he had built a dwelling for Him. Then he returned to the village and began persuading his parents to attorn to only Lord Mallikarjuna after giving up their worship to their sectarian god Dhulima Kalayya. Forthwith he began building a huge temple for the Lord after excavating a huge tank. As he advanced spiritually, with Lord's grace he began performing some miracles such as enlivening a dead cat, etc. He devoted himself to the service of the poor, and the country began to ring with his great charity and kindness. But the ego in him that the Lord was his, and

He would reside in his temple built so lavishly by him continued as a flaw in his spiritual constitution. Allama Prabhu understood this and desired to wipe it out of him. So he came to the village one fine morning. He gathered the Vadders on the tank-bund and sarcastically remarked, "What is the use of the mere shaving of the head without a shave in the mind and the emptiness thereof? Your master is only a Vaddarama (Ignoramus)". They at once flew to Siddarama and complained of the remark. He got wild and threatened to burn Allama alive, even if he were one of the Trinity, what with his curses and the Lord's grace. These threats proved futile for the beneficent smile of Allama disarmed him completely. Attorning then to him as his real Guru, Siddarama entered upon his second stage in spiritual unfoldment. Allama remained with him for some days, and having initiated him into the mysteries of the (Lord) Absolute, effaced all his ego, and transformed him into a real devotee of the Lord. Allama's sayings in this context are very illuminating: "There is heaven only for those who feed the hungry stomach, who speak kind words, who excavate tanks and build temples. They cannot know the Truth about the Lord. For, the unconditioned Lord cannot be cribbed and confined in any temple, and the very thought that it will be able to do it is vain and detracts from the liberation the mind aspires after. One could cross death only by such acts and attain Swarga, but one cannot know the Lord who is beyond, far beyond.....I am yet to know one whose tank is rivetted with the mind, is instepped with virtuous conduct, and is filled

with the waters of bliss." They are Vedic in complexion, and have a simple confirmation in the cryptic statement,

"Sivamūlmani pasyanti pratimāsu na yoginah,

Ajñānām bhāvanārthāya pratimāḥ parikalpitāḥ."

These remarks led to Siddarama's realisation of himself. After such an illumination and perfecting by Allama, he became Siddarama—one who had realised bliss—and he confessed,—

"Lord, Thou art the ion in the atom;
O Lord, Thou art the sublimity in the mind;

O Lord, is there anything in the universe where thou art not?

Having seen Thee in the eighty-four lakhs of temples of Siva which Thou thyself had built, I aspired to build one more out of my own vanity.

I did it because Thou impelled me into it and instal Thine image.

Why didst Thou manifest to me at all?

Is Thy manifestation then all false?

If Thou dost not desire me to do anything I shall not do it verily.

I little knew I had any freedom independent of Thine,

So act Thou Thyself through me if Thou willest it."

Thus he becomes Siddarameswara to his lingayet worshippers!

The wisest are often Jada-Bharatas to the commoners who have not developed the

sense to appreciate them. For, their ways of life and thought run in uncommon grooves. Centred as they are in the one Reality that is Absolute, their environs do not touch them; and if they impact them at all, it is to remind them sweetly of all their common Source and its beneficence. Sri Ramana would have been a veritable Jada-Bharata but for the wise sayings forced out of him now and then by his devotees. Thus in all attempts at the understanding of saints a substantial amount of spiritualization in the understander becomes necessary.

To Siddarama, the ONE is always a Void, as he beautifully sets out:

"It is Void in the beginning, Void at the end;

It gets spoilt in the middle knowingly, see!

It is its own testimony in the world, that it becomes so."

This is an exact parallel to Bhagavad-gita's lines,

"Avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamādhyāni Bhārata,

Avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridēvanā."—II, 28.

which sums up the inscrutable creation, its being and the end. But what is creation, how does that come about and whence does that proceed? All these come from Him out of His 'selfish' desire, if we may say so, not to be alone but to enjoy Himself. For, "*Ekāki Ekāki na ramate.*" Siddarama echoes the same thought when he says,

"The Lord desires to besport Himself;

The desire is the net spread for all life, although it forms the basis for the creation of worlds."

His apprehension of this fact has not made him purely intellectual and matter of fact. He retains with him the innocent, the wondering and the imaginative outlook of life of the child to whom an inchaote cloud is as precious as gold and the silvery wave is as good a companion as the doll it fondles on its breast. So he cries,

"Lo! It comes like the cloud in the sky.....

It comes like the wave in water.....

I know not how the body comes or goes,

I only know it is transient, O Lord"

To the Veerasaiva Saranas like Allama Prabhu and Siddarama, nothing is real excepting the Absolute. So all other things, their attributes and qualities, and even mind, intellect, desire, etc., of life are ephemeral, and unreal. They unqualifiedly believe that the monkey in man is the mind, and that unless it is completely effaced, there cannot be any *samarasa* or blending into the Lord. This is quite understandable, and logical. There are of course some who declare it is enough the mind is shorn of its 'mindness', thereby implying something characteristically vicious with it. There is yet another school who striving to compromise these two extremes, state that it is our own quality that invests the mind with quality and that it has no inherent quality of its own. Thus it follows it is in us alone to make proper or improper use of it to attain our ends. Siddarama seems to be unsettled in this respect for, in one place he denies its existence and in another place

admits it is created by volition and non-volition. Nothing that cannot exist can ever be created. This is no place to discuss these views of the mind. Thus we find both Akka and Siddarama correct when they paraphrase each other in the following: while Akka's expression in

"When my mind attains Thy form whom am I to remember?

When my consciousness has become Thine own, whom am I then to know?

Thou hast made me forget Thee, my Lord; for Thou hast become Thyself in me in Thine own"

is poetical, Siddarama's is logical. For he says,

"There's nothing like the mind;

Attain knowledge of the Lord;

The mind comes into vogue when you wear volition and non-volition."

Great wisdom consists in wiping out these two.

If one has this knowledge, he remembers the Lord."

The seeming contradiction, if any, in the first and the third lines could be explained if we venture 'reality' with respect to the mind. But there is a nice distinction between the two, however. While she would control the mind and divert it through proper desires to extinction by way of absorption in the Lord, Siddarama advises its complete effacement with the conviction that it being illusory should not be allowed to exist. While she exclaims,

"Like the glamorous silk-worm building its own cocoon and dying bound with the threads it has spun of itself,

My mind has been suffering bound by its own desires.

Lord, wipe out the wicked desires of my mind and take me into Thy breast,"

Siddarama asserts, on the otherhand, "the mind comes into vogue when you wear volition and non-volition"; which in other words mean we should not conjure it for anything.

There is really a communion among the created. Nothing exists disparate from others, for each draws life from others for its own existence; or in other words, the great 'Plastic Force' binds them all. Thus each could be both the liberating as well as the restraining feature of others. Thus earth and its illusions such as woman and gold, which usually serve as Delilahs could be turned into stepping stones for spiritual upliftment.

Of woman says Siddarama:

"She is but the Lord Himself!"

To make proper use of the earth and surmount its illusions true knowledge is essential. It is neither philosophy, nor science, nor poetry, nor ethics, nor any of the fine arts, nor the hieratic orthodoxy that is exclusively true knowledge. True knowledge is born out of self-realisation and through action, which according to Siddarama consists in apprehending the universe in one's own self. In an inimitable *Vachana* he exclaims,

"When one has the universe in him,

why should he covet the wealth of others?

When one is pure in oneself why should he covet the wealth of gold?

When one could yield like the cow, why should he covet the wealth of cows?"

He is one with Bhartrihari and Browning in regarding earth as the trial ground. Pure action which helps in the acquisition of true knowledge is detached like the drop of water on the lotus leaf. It ought to be sincere, spontaneous and unconscious. For, mere renunciation and

"Besmearing oneself with *bhasma* does not make a devotee of Thine;

For Thy devotee is one, O Lord, who has effaced his self, and whose tears are as sincere as Thine."

and

"An act done in purity is conducive to good;

It is a filip to higher wisdom, it secures the Lord."

He hates nescience and non-action in all quarters. He reasons out poetically, "Can the moon's stain be effaced if it remains on the Ganges?" He thereby means that through action alone one could perfect oneself. Knowledge true and helpful for any spiritual progress should not be cross-grained with any consciousness of itself. It must be free and non-egoistical: for, "the knowledge that knows not itself is the home of the highest wisdom and liberation; and that which shows not to know is the blissful Lord himself." It

must be consecrated too, for, "wisdom and detachment lie in deeming your acts and bestowals as not yours but the Lord's." What is perfect consecration then? According to Siddarama it consists in giving up only of excellent qualities to the Lord, and not the imperfect or the ephemeral ones like the body and the wealth which are illusions besides. So he says,

"I cannot countenance those who say they have given them all away ;

I cannot accept the words of one who says that by so doing he became a devotee ?

For Thy devotee true, O Lord, will not endorse these words."

This is substantially true because a true devotee has no existence apart from the Lord. His existence is entirely sunk in Him. This 'sea-change' as it were, is the fruit of noble growth into the stature of the Divine. No adoration of the Divine can be done with qualities undivine ; for, as our Scriptures have rightly stressed "*Devo bhutva devam yajet*" (Worship the Divine having become the Divine). This *samarasa* or the blending of only the like in the Like Siddarama explains in his own peculiar manner thus :

"This is the sign of the identity of the body with the Lord ;

The qualities of the body should be transformed into those of the Lord.

This is the blend : and the hell lies where there is no blend."

Siddarama is not a preacher ; he is not a prig. He has no intentions to resurrect the erring into any glory apart from his own ; for, he has realised the universe in himself. The volcanic fury that once went to engulf Allama Prabhu was transformed for all time into an indomitable placidity, that of the patient earth. He believed with all his heart and soul with D. Grenwell that,

"Heaven within the reed

Lists for the flute - note ; in the folded seed.

It sees the bud, and in the Will the deed."

He is a good instance of a medieval 'Jada Bharata' whom Browning unknowingly commemorated in the lines,

"Im-perfection means perfection hid,

Reserved in part, to grace the after time."

Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

LITERARY CRITICISM AND POLITICS*

By F. R. LEAVIS

Mr. Winkler's statement of position is so obviously reasonable that one can't help asking, as one reaches the close, why it should have needed to be made. Mr. Christopher Hill promptly supplies an answer. I am not thinking merely of the orthodox intention as such—though this emerges clearly enough from an argument that seems to me the reverse of lucid. For the Communist it is a simple issue. "Either you go into politics or you stay out"—we know sufficiently well what Mr. Hill means by this proposition: there are two sides to choose from, and to "go into politics" respectably is to commit oneself to the right one in the right way.

It is some years since the Marxist position in these matters seemed to me to be worth combating directly and formally. But Mr. Hill's presentment of his position has a representative significance that is wider than his orthodoxy. What I am thinking of is the state of innocence or unawareness he exhibits when he talks about "values." I myself, I confess, have gone to much painful labour from time to time in the effort to do without this term. In saying this, I am not presuming to imply a criticism of Mr. Winkler who uses it. He had to observe a certain economy, and he reasonably assumed that the current term would carry the necessary force for anyone worth addressing. It didn't, however, for Mr. Hill. But Mr. Winkler never defines what he means by "the most significant and most prominent of human values" which "find expression and embodiment" in literature and the arts—If you understood the nature of the preoccupation that Mr. Winkler's phrase portends you would see that it is silly to

ask for a definition. But the Marxist is saved from that kind of preoccupation by his orthodoxy, which pooh-poohs it and proscribes it: "But being sociologists involves adopting a historical attitude towards institutions—and to values." "To adopt a historical attitude" to "values" means that if Mr. J. B. Priestley becomes the great living English master for Moscow, and the regime favours corresponding Russian production, that's all right. It meant, in the nineteen-thirties (I have the cutting stowed away somewhere), that to show concern about the processes typified by the Book Society Limited, was to convict oneself of criminal irresponsibility. It meant, and means, that it is absurd to worry about any decline of standards, and that "values" can be left to look after themselves—that, in short, they don't matter. To Mr. Hill patently they don't matter.

His militant formulation merely brings to a sharp focus a general tendency of the modern world—a tendency described by Mr. Winkler. "There are today" says Mr. Hill, "a greater number of men and women potentially free to dispose of their own lives than ever before. The problem is to make them aware of the fact, to make them see that machines are not blind impersonal powers, that they (and their owners) can be controlled in the interests of society". Mr Hill is representatively modern in his inability to see that "society" has a dimension, a depth, in time, and that to talk, without reference to this depth, of controlling things in the interests of society is to use the word with confident blindness. There is no perception, no understanding and no

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real power to judge and choose, except out of experience. Those of us who are concerned to preserve the continuity of a higher cultural tradition are concerned to preserve for the race the ability to draw on its most significant experience, so that political action can be in the fullest sense intelligent, and there may be some point in men and women being "potentially free to dispose of their lives" since they won't be free of traditional skill, insight and wisdom.

These, of course, are common places, and Mr. Hill has the advantage that it sounds weak and unpractical to utter them in response to an incitement to political zeal. Nevertheless, we have to insist that a literary critic justifies his activity as politically valuable if he makes it more difficult for public spirited intellectuals to be complacent in exhibiting such unawareness and confusion and poverty of thought as Mr. Hill does when he talks about "values". That is, the critic's business is to be as good a critic as he can be, to promote critical intelligence, to do what he can to make good criticism influential. He is performing then his political function as a literary critic, and it is an essential one. He won't think of trying to create a Literary Critic's Party to "defend traditional values". In his concern for life here and now he will be making those challenging judgments which so infuriate the conservators (academic or other) of the accepted valuations.

To be seriously interested in literature is to be intensely and seriously interested in life. I myself am given to insisting that literary criticism is, or should be, a specific discipline of intelligence, but in so insisting, I don't imply any definition in terms of a boundary round a given class of interests. Literary criticism, conceived as a discipline, is to be defined rather in terms of a trained

and cultivated ability to be relevant—to see where a given kind of relevance is required and, in attending to interests and making judgments, to sustain it. Clearly, the more intelligent and well-informed about the contemporary world a critic is the better. And it is certainly desirable that persons actively interested in politics should be intelligent readers of creative literature.

I am asking myself, it will be seen, what function the editors of a journal called 'Politics and Letters' can define for themselves by way of justifying the name—it being postulated that they repudiate any simplification of the order of Mr. Hill's. They would reply, no doubt, that it is important that political thinking should be done by educated minds, and political decisions made in a cultural atmosphere that discourages the crudities and barbarisms of the raw specialist and expert, and that they aim at promoting these ends. It isn't, from Mr. Hill's point of view, an impressive answer (though he can talk of the need for "full investigation of all aspects of problems"); but, then, no sound answer will seem impressive to those who (whatever their politics) see things in that simplifying way. And I will add, no one who offers a simple remedy for our plight has anything to offer that should arouse our enthusiasm or confidence.

I sympathize with the aims I have associated with Politics and Letters. I only wonder, anxiously (having had some relevant experience), how long they can go on finding approaches to political and sociological questions that can profitably be made by persons of literary training, and how many persons of specialist qualifications they can find who will turn out to be worth the attention of educated non-specialists. What they must certainly not fail in is the task of keeping effectively present in each number of the review the

perception, the sensibility and the approach of the intelligent literary critic.

An influential educated public (such as knows what is meant by "the most significant and the most permanent of human values"—and sees, therefore, what Mr. Hill's "historical attitude" to "values" means) and educated specialists—these are what, if we really believe in "full investigation of all aspects of problems" and hope for prosperous political action, we must work for. And to run, and get a public for, an intelligent review is a way of working for them.

In my own mind this way is intimately associated with another way, so that I could offer a much stronger account of the literary critic's function. To make what seems to me an essential point I must be personal and I hope I shall be forgiven for bringing in here my own standing preoccupations. I speak as a literary critic whose job is the study and discussion of literature in a university school of 'English.' On the one hand I have made it my business to insist that the study of literature should be a discipline—a specific discipline of intelligence (and in consequence I have been charged with a narrow concern with the "words on the page"). On the other hand I have insisted that an English School should exploit to the utmost the ways in which serious literary studies lead into "extra-literary" fields (and in consequence I have been charged with being more concerned with history and sociology than with literature). In short, I think that "English" should be a liaison "subject." There would be no point in attempting even the briefest summary here, but some who read this will know I think, that I can, on demand, produce a detailed account of what I mean. I permit myself this reference because it seems to me in the strictest sense relevant.

"It is to be expected," says Mr. Winkler, "that in a society where specialisation and

division of function are characteristic symptoms of disintegration, some kind of assimilation of competences will be necessary before the disintegral tendencies can be reversed...I should make my attack on that problem from a university school of "English." Make literary criticism a real discipline of intelligence and the distinctive discipline of literary studies, and promote the entry of minds trained in this discipline, and fully aware of the disastrous wrongness of the "historical attitude" advocated by Mr. Hill, into other than literary fields. Then, we could hope to produce literary critics who had also some acquaintance with other disciplines and special studies, and to produce also some specialists—historians, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, students of politics, economists...who were also literary critics. Further, the serious and sustained attempt to establish and develop such an English School would tend to make the university less a mere collocation of specialisms—to make it truly (what it ought to be) a higher centre of co-ordination, a focus of knowledge, conscience, human awareness and political will, capable of real influence in the community at large.

If there were such an English School actually working—if universities were really universities—the editors of Politics and Letters would be finding it easier to recruit an adequate team of contributors. Perhaps this truism will be taken as clinching the relevance of my commentary. There can be no answer that is both simple and satisfactory to the question: What are the political bearings of a serious interest in literature? Politics and Letters will justify itself in so far as it promotes the process I have assigned to my English School and to my university. The more intelligent reviews there are to favour the formation of an educated public, and to combat the disintegrating effects of specialization, the better.

THE GITA DAY

by PROFESSOR D. S. SARMA

The Gita Day is to be celebrated, according to common agreement among scholars, on the Ekadasi day of the bright fortnight of the month of Margasirsha. This year it fell on Sunday the 12th December. It is a great pity that this sacred day is not being celebrated all over the country with the solemnity and the enthusiasm which a universal scripture like the Bhagavadgita demands. Nor is the great scripture as widely read as it ought to be. And yet, it is one of the most authoritative as well as the simplest of Hindu scriptures. Moreover it is a scripture on which all sects and schools are agreed.

Ignorance of Sanskrit is no excuse on the part of any religious Hindu for being ignorant of the teaching of the Gita. There are innumerable translations of the book in our own languages, not to speak of those in English and other foreign languages. We should remember that the whole of Christendom reads the Gospels—not in Aramaic in which Jesus spoke, nor in the original Greek in which His disciples recorded his teaching, but in translations.

Unfortunately, even those who read the Gita in the original depend too much on sectarian commentaries and guides rather than the simple text itself. There are seven hundred verses in the Gita, and out of these at least five hundred can be understood even by a child and require no extraneous help of any kind. The help of learned commentaries and philosophical disquisitions should therefore be postponed to a later stage. All that the common man has to do is to plunge into the text directly,

mark all the passages that appeal to his own experience, dwell on them constantly and try to order his life in their light. Living by the light of the Gita is far more important than mastering its metaphysical background. What the common man requires is the gracious light shed by such passages as the following:—

“Fixing thy mind on me thou shalt surmount every difficulty by my grace.”

“A man who does good, my dear Arjuna, will never come to grief.”

“Surrendering all rules of Dharma come to me alone for shelter. Do not grieve, I will relieve thee from all sins.”

“Proclaim it boldly, O Arjuna, that my devotee never perishes.”

“Fix thy mind on me alone. Let thy thoughts rest in me. And in me wilt thou live hereafter. Of this there is no doubt.”

The Gita is unique among our scriptures in that it insists that even the highest mystic and philosopher should worship God in all beings and do service to society. It says that not only God is our Father but also Nature is our Mother. It is Nature our Mother that determines our Svadharma, which is the starting point of our spiritual journey, and it is God our Father that inspires us with the love of Yoga, which is our goal. And it is society, consisting of our brothers and sisters, that imposes on us the duty of service. This is our path. In other words, we have to start with our natural endowments, develop them to the

fullest extent, pass through the world doing our duty to society in a spirit of detachment and reach our home in God. Thus we may say that the three words—*Svadharmā*, *Lokasangraha* and *Yoga*—sum up the whole teaching of the Gita. Some readers are apt to lose sight of the middle term. And some unsympathetic critics of Hinduism have said that social service forms no integral part of our religion, that our Sannyasa means mere quietism and that God, according to our notions, is indifferent to the sufferings of men. But it should be remembered that the maintenance of society in Dharma is the very end and aim of the Avatar, as defined in the Gita. And Iswara himself is described as an ideal Karma Yogin. And, in all its descriptions of the ideal Bakta and the ideal Jnani, the Gita includes the love of all creatures and service to them as an inalienable element in those characters. The fact is that service to Society is fundamental to the very concept of Hindu Dharma and that is why no separate mention of it is made by our writers on religion. The Hindu State, of which the King was only one of the limbs, had for its primary aim, the maintenance of Dharma, according to our writers on

political science. It had not absolute rights as in the theories of European political philosophy. The Hindu theory never recognised either the Divine right of Kings or the Divine right of States. Dharma was always above the Secular power of the State. Nor was there in India a Church with absolute powers claiming to embody Dharma and vying with the State in Jurisdiction. It was the great Rishis and Mahatmas that from time to time adjusted the Dharma of their age and brought it into a line with the goal of yoga, which is union with God. The Hindu Theory made it obligatory for the individual to discharge his duty to society and, while doing so, conserve and perfect all the spiritual values that belong to him as a child of God. Spiritual realisation is thus the goal of man and all political and social activities are only the means. This is what the Bhagavadgita teaches and this is what Mahatma Gandhi exemplified in his own life. The teaching is put in a nut-shell in the following verse:—

“He from whom all beings proceed and by whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duties does man attain perfection.”

Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust.
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

—To the Awakened India: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ASPECTS OF SCIENCE: BY SIR C. V. RAMAN, N. L. F. R. S.; INTRODUCTION BY KANTILAL H. PANDYA PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY, AGRA. NALANDA PUBLICATIONS, BOMBAY. 1. PAGES: 109. PRICE: RS. 2-4-0.

The readers of these Radio talks, as did their listeners before, are privileged to visit the wonderlands of Modern Science and enjoy the marvellous beauties therein with such a distinguished Scientist as Sir C. V. Raman for guide. Science is making such rapid strides today in manifold directions all over her varied branches that even experts in the line are unable to keep pace with the latest advances made in the numerous spheres. Under such circumstances, the difficulties of the lay man to acquaint himself with the main trends of progress and understand the implications of the new discoveries may well be imagined. The help of masters in the field like the present author are invaluable to students of modern Science. The Publishers deserve to be congratulated and most heartily thanked for bringing together in such a nice form the great Scientist's talks on a variety of subjects spread over the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy and other branches of Natural Science. The topics chosen as well as the method of treatment are such as to interest and benefit the lay man residing in the towns and villages. The easy flow of speech, the simplicity of style and occasional flashes of humour, enhance the brilliance of the performance and reveal Dr. Raman in the new roll of a popular speaker. M. R. R.

BIRTH-PANGS OF NEW KASHMIR: BY N. S. PHADKE. FOREWORD BY SHEIK ABDULLAH. HIND KITABS LTD. PAGES: 34. PRICE: 8 AS.

This facts-laden pamphlet, with its simple, unvarnished account of the events that led up to the present war in the Himalayan 'paradise', serves

eminently to give the reader a bird's-eye view of the problem and enable him to judge the wisdom of the Government of India's rushing to the rescue of the helpless, innocent people of that one-time happy, but now unhappy, ravaged, dishonoured and devastated valley.

The author seeks to show that the issues involved in the fight are of deep national significance. In spite of the smallness of space at his disposal, the author has rightly thought it worthwhile to describe the brilliant exploits of the heroes who saved Kashmir from falling into the hands of the advancing invaders at a time of grave crisis. Glowing examples of martyrdom reveal the matchless courage, devotion and self-sacrifice of the soldiers of New Kashmir. They have found her soul, and as Phadke aptly concludes, they are also sure to regain the seemingly 'lost' Paradise. M. R. R.

FREE INDIA: CONGRESS SPECIAL: 1948. MANAGING EDITOR, SRI. E. R. GOVINDAN. 53, GENERAL PATTERNS ROAD, MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS; PP-62; PRICE. AS. 6.

Free India was free even before India became free for she spoke freely of the coming FREE INDIA. Her faithfulness to national aspirations and loyalty to right leadership are well-known. It is in keeping with her own life-principle that *Free India* has issued forth as this Congress Special number.

With the picturesque get-up which displays the imaginative youth of the artist, the art gallery adorned by the busts of the forty six foregoing Presidents of the Congress, the full page portraits of the six leaders from the South—among whom Rajaji is not one—and articles on the present President, the structure, history and the rebel child—we mean Subhas—of the Congress, the present issue is one which you will like to pass on to your friend after you have finished reading and begun liking it.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, PURI

AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Math, Puri, started in 1932, is situated just on the seaside, not far away from the famous temple of Jagannatha. The main object of this branch centre of the Belur Math is to give shelter to those monks of the Order who want to take rest after strenuous work or to devote themselves to meditation and study in this congenial climate and holy environment. Besides, it ministers to the spiritual needs of the visitors through worship, discourses, etc.

The institution is maintained by voluntary gifts of devotees who occasionally come here on pilgrimage. But their contributions are too insufficient to meet its daily expenses in these days of high prices.

The charitable and religious-minded public is therefore requested to help this Ashrama to discharge its duty. All contributions will be thankfully acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI UTTAMANANDA,
President, Sri Ramakrishna Math,
Chakratirtha, Puri (Orissa).

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE OF SEATTLE

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

October 1947—September 1948

The year has been one of considerable progress with an appreciable increase in membership and attendance on Sundays, which is a clear indication of the growing interest of the people in the cause for which the Centre stands.

During the year under review a lot of improvements have been made on the house.

As usual, Swami Vividishananda gave a public lecture every Sunday morning, discussing the theory and practice of Vedanta and he conducted study-classes every Tuesday and Friday evening.

The usual celebrations were held throughout the year, the important ones being the worship of the Divine Mother Durga and the birthdays of Sri

Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Lord Buddha, as well as the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. On Sri Ramakrishna's birthday the basement recreation room was dedicated to Swami Brahmananda and a statue of the Swami was installed.

A group of boys and girls interested in the study of Comparative Religion and human relations attended our services. The following is a letter of appreciation from the Chairman of the group:

"Our visit to your church made the perfect finish for our study program on human relations, and on behalf of the group who made the trip I would like to thank you for your hospitality. We all need to be introduced to experiences which may be different from our own. I feel that the experience was quite valuable to us all, and that our horizons have been considerably broadened. Thank you again for your valuable contribution to our program."

REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN CEYLON FOR THE PERIOD

July 1947 to June 1948

English Schools: The most notable event of the year is the grading of English schools, in which our schools fared well. According to the old classification all our three English schools were in the third grade. But owing to the satisfactory progress maintained by them in recent years, Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa, was placed in grade I, and Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya, Jaffna, in grade II. The Trincomalee Hindu College satisfied all the requirements of a first grade institution except a laboratory for teaching a second science subject. The Mission has, however, now equipped a new Botany laboratory besides making substantial additions to the existing Chemistry laboratory, so that ample facilities are now available for the teaching of both Science and Arts up to the Higher School Certificate and the University Examinations. The Minister of Education is so impressed with the rapid progress

of the school that he has promised to raise it to a higher grade at the earliest possible opportunity.

The results produced by our English schools at public examinations were quite good. The staff of the English schools has been strengthened.

Owing to phenomenal increase in the number of students seeking admission to English schools, the Mission had to strain all its resources to provide sufficient and suitable accommodation for them. Thanks to the donation of Rs. 6,000/- made by Mrs. Sellathurai of Kalladi Uppodai, Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa was able to erect a block of two class rooms. Mr. L. H. L. Haridasa's donation Rs. 3,500/- enabled the Mission to build a spacious class room for the Hindu College, Trincomalie. In addition to this, the Mission has out of its own funds built a hall measuring 80' x 20', costing Rs. 3,000/- and a boundary wall costing Rs. 1,500/-. The staff of the Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya Jaffna, is to be congratulated for collecting more than Rs. 30,000/- and putting up a building to house three classes and science laboratories.

Friends and well-wishers of the Kokuvil School at Jaffna collected nearly Rs. 15,000/- for erecting a new block of class rooms. The building work is now in progress.

A plot of land, little less than a quarter of an acre in extent, adjoining Hindu College, Trincomalie, premises, was purchased recently for Rs. 5,250/- with a view to securing sufficient room for expansion.

Srimat Swami Vipulanandaji's personal collection of valuable books costing Rs. 1,000/- was placed at the disposal of the Hindu College reference library.

Bilingual Schools: The Bilingual schools for girls at Batticaloa made satisfactory progress in the year under review. As the Education Department proposes to abolish this type of schools, the Mission has applied to the Director of Education for permission to run it as an English school. We are glad to mention that the Director has granted our request and the school should be regraded as an English school with effect from 1-10-1948.

Vivekananda Hall, Batticaloa, which had been leased to the Education Department for running a

Training College for Women Teachers was released by the Director as from 1-9-1947. The new Girls' School is now housed in that building.

Tamil Schools: The attendance at most of the schools is on the decline, apparently owing to the glamour of free English education. Now that English is made a compulsory subject for the Tamil Senior Schools Certificate Examination, most of our Tamil Senior Secondary Schools will be compelled to give up their S. S. C. classes. Consequently a large majority of students of the post-primary classes of these schools are likely to seek admission to English schools. The future of our leading Tamil schools, does not, therefore, appear to be bright.

THE 96th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY MOTHER

AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MYLAPORE,
MADRAS.

The 96th birthday celebration of Sri Sarada Devi was observed with great eclat at the Math on Sunday, the 26th, December, 1948. There was representative gathering of ladies. Her Highness the Maharani of Bhavanagar presided over the function. The function began with a prayer by the students of Avvai Home. Srimati M. Lakshmi Ammal, Principal, Lady Willingdon Training College, Dr. (Mrs) Muthulakshmi Reddi, Srimatis Kothanayaki Ammal, Lakshmi Raghuramiah, Indrani spoke at length on the various aspects of the life and teachings of Sri Sarada Devi. The students of the Ramani School of Music entertained the audience with Vina. The President in her address said: "I have read with very keen interest the life and work of Sri Sarada Devi. She has been a perfect wife, mother, guru and a nun and has been rightly regarded as the Holy Mother. Her life and teachings are a great boon to the humanity at large and to women-folk in particular. They serve as a guide to the path of righteousness and salvation which is the ultimate aim of humanity." Srimati Ambujammal proposed a vote thanks and the meeting closed with *mangalam*, *arati*, and distribution of *prasadam*.

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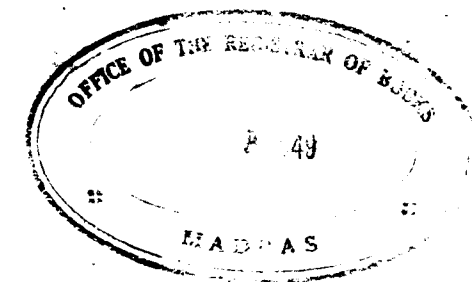
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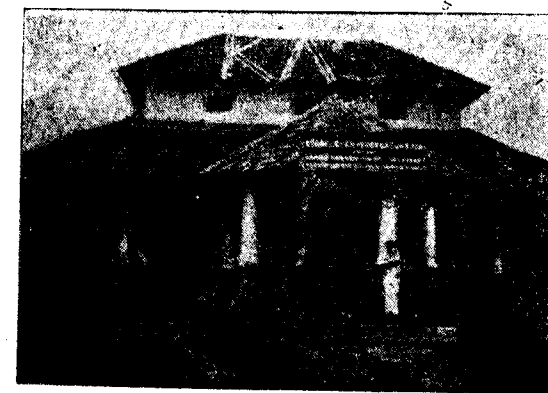
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Volume XIV

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One volume of the Journal is issued every year in the following quarterly instalments : May-July, August-October, November-January and February-April.

Annual subscription rates are : In India, Burma and Ceylon Rs. 8/- ; Foreign—14 shillings or 5 dollars, inclusive of postage. A single copy costs Rs. 2/8/- (foreign 4 s.) inclusive of postage. Subscribers who desire that their copies should be sent by registered post, should send Re. 1/- extra per year, to cover the extra postage.

The subscription is payable strictly *in advance* for the subscription year which commences from May and ends in April of the following year.

Remittances should be made by draft or crossed cheque, or by postal money order payable to the Manager, The Visva-Bharati Quarterly, Sanfiniketan P. O., West Bengal.

The Vedanta Kesari

VOLUME XXXV



NUMBER 10

FEBRUARY 1949

HYMN-FLOWERS

क्रमेण कर्मणा केन कया वा प्रज्ञया प्रभो ।

दृश्योऽसीत्युपदेशेन प्रसादः क्रियतां मम ॥

नमो निरुपकार्याय त्रैलोक्यैकोपकारिणे ।

सर्वस्य स्पृहणीयाय निःस्पृहाय कपर्दिने ॥

अहो क्षेत्रज्ञता सेयं कार्याय महते सताम् ।

ययानन्तफलां भक्तिं वपन्ति त्वय्यमी प्रभो ॥

दोषोऽपि देव को दोषः त्वामाप्नुं यस्समास्थितः ।

गुणोऽपि च गुणः को नु त्वां नाप्नुं यस्समास्थितः ॥

रागोऽप्यस्तु जगन्नाथ मम त्वय्येव यस्स्थितः ।

लोभायापि नमस्तस्मै त्वल्लाभालम्बनाय मे ॥

अहो महदिदं कर्म देव त्वद्भावनात्मकम् ।

आव्रह्मकिमि यस्मिन्नो मुक्तयेऽधिक्रियेत कः ॥

आरम्भः सर्वकार्याणां पर्यन्तः सर्वकर्मणाम् ।

तदन्तर्वृत्तयश्चित्रास्तवैवेश धियः पथि ॥

यावदुत्तरमास्वादसहस्रगुणविस्तरः ।

त्वद्भक्तिरसपीयूषाश्नाथ नान्यत्र दृश्यते ॥

By what process, by what act, or by what knowledge are you to be seen ; this, O Lord, bless me by teaching.

Obeisance to Him who needs no help but who is the one benefactor of all the three worlds ; obeisance to that Recluse of matted locks who has no desire, but who is desired by everybody.

Oh this knowledge of spirit (agricultural expertness) of the good souls, with which, O Lord, they sow in you the endlessly fructifying devotion (rows of crops that yield abounding harvest), which conduces to great purpose (*viz.*, Siva-realisation) !

What fault is it, O God, even if it be one, which has been resorted to for obtaining you ? And what merit is it, even if it be one, which has not been resorted to for obtaining you ?

Let me even have attachment, O Lord of the world, if the attachment is exclusively fixed on you ; and salutations even to that greed of mine which has you for its object !

Oh ! this grand rite which is of the form of your contemplation, O God ! From Brahma to the worm, who is not made in it eligible for release ?

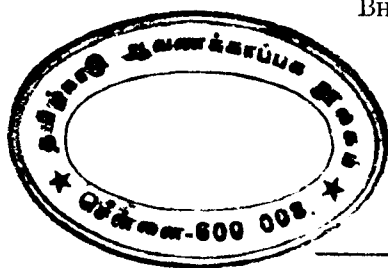
The beginning of all acts, the end of all works, and all the manifold interim stages, all this, O Lord, happens only within the range of your mind.

A mounting relish that expands a thousandfold, this, O Lord, is not seen anywhere else except in the ambrosial *rasa* of your devotion.

BHATTA NARAYANA, STAVA CHINTAMANI,

41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51.

—V. RAGHAVAN.



A GLIMPSE OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

"A Cow boy Thou wert

Now King become...."

"DO MEN GATHER GRAPES OF THORNS
OR FIGS OF THISTLES?"

People wondered: who might be this stately young man in saffron standing at the palace-gate with a garland in his hands? Presently there arose tumultuous uproar: 'Victory to Sri Ramakrishna!; Victory to Swami Vivekananda!' With green laurels on his forehead the victor had just returned to his home-city Calcutta. The seething crowd ran mad in trying to snatch a glimpse of that wonderful man, Vivekananda. The decorated coach stopped at the gate. Extricating himself somehow from the heap of flowers and garlands under which he was almost buried, Swami Vivekananda alighted from the coach. The first thing he did after being garlanded by the young man at the gate was to prostrate himself at his feet with the words: "Unto the son of the Guru as to the Guru!" In his turn the young man prostrated himself at the feet of Vivekananda with the words: "Unto the elder brother as to the Father!" People wondered the more: who could be this young man at whose feet great Swami Vivekananda, at whose feet millions bow wherever he goes, prostrates? This was Swami Brahmananda, popularly known as 'Maharaj' in the Ramakrishna Order.

We shall understand the profound significance of this piece of Swami Vivekananda's behaviour, as we go back to the idyllic days of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual

ministrations at Dakshineswar. '...no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.'

Sri Ramakrishna had finished the sadhana period of his life. The Divine Mother had asked him to remain in *Bhāva-mukha*, on the border-line of the Absolute and the Relative with free access to both, for the good of the world. But how was he to do that? The mind had become so vertical in its tendency! There was nothing on the earthy plane of this earth on which his mind, so rarefied that it had become, could rivet. He felt a tremendous loneliness, a loneliness which the Absolute alone perhaps feels! Not that people did not come to him. They came. They came in numbers. But mostly of the sort stinking in gross worldliness. In that state of his being so ethereal in texture, it was an acute suffering for him to bring himself to mix and talk with people, antipodal in disposition. So he supplicated to the Divine Mother: "Mother my tongue is burnt because of talking to worldly people." "Be not afraid, my child, devotees of pure heart and full of the spirit of renunciation will be soon coming", assured the Mother. But Sri Ramakrishna was impatient. He importuned again: "'Mother, get me a companion—like unto me.' 'Mother, I have not to have a son but I wish I had a pure-souled devoted boy always with me as a companion. Get me a son like this.'"

COMING OF THE SCION OF THE DIVINE

Shortly after this Sri Ramakrishna saw in a trance a little boy standing under the banyan tree. He wondered: what might be the significance of it? Again, to quote Sri Ramakrishna's own words, : "A few days before Rakhal came to me, Mother placed a little boy on my lap and said, 'This is your son.' At first I was startled. 'My son?' Mother smiled at this and made me understand that I was not to have a son in the ordinary sense, but that this boy would be *my spiritual son who would live up to the highest ideals of renunciation*. While eagerly awaiting the advent of his spiritual son, one day Sri Ramakrishna had another wonderful vision. Suddenly he saw a hundred-petalled lotus blossoming on the waters of the Ganga, each of the petals of the lotus shining in exquisite loveliness. On the lotus two boys were dancing with tinkling anklets tied to their feet. One of them was the ever young Sri Krishna himself; the other was the same boy *whom he has seen in his previous visions. This divine dance of theirs was indescribably beautiful; every movement they made seemed to splash foam, as it were, in the ocean of sweetness. As one can only expect, Sri Ramakrishna was lost in ecstasy. Just at that moment a boat anchored on the bank of the Ganga and from therein emerged Rakhal—Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual son. This was the coming of the Scion of the Divine by the currents of the Holy Waters to join the Father at the Divine play which he had convoked on the threshold of humanity.

With the coming of Rakhal one of the

sweetest chapters of Sri Ramakrishna's life opened. Rakhal did not come to Sri Ramakrishna as a disciple comes to his Guru, *समिप्यणिः*, but as a long-awaited only little child to its mother. Viewing Rakhal with eyes soaked with affection, Sri Ramakrishna would be transported into the disposition of Mother Yasoda. He would feed him, fondle him and play with him just as parents do to their children. Sometimes holding him on his shoulders Sri Ramakrishna would dance. Rakhal too reciprocated the exact feelings of a little baby. He would sometimes come running and jump into the lap of Sri Ramakrishna.

It is very difficult to explain what made Sri Ramakrishna who was established in the highest Advaitic realizations and would times without number pass into samadhi, become so motherly in his disposition to Rakhal, who again, in his turn would become so baby-like though by the time he came to Sri Ramakrishna he was a muscular young athlete and a married man withal. But the truth of this relationship made Rakhal one of the sweetest personalities that ever walked on the surface of this earth. He is the sweetest facet of Ramakrishna-incarnation. Through him Sri Ramakrishna touches the feverish forehead of humanity like the fragrance of a flower in benign gentleness, and soothing sweetness. This sweetness in its fullness found expression in his character in the form of deep silence and perfect calmness.

"The one characteristic of Indian thought" said Swami Vivekananda, "is its silence, its calmness. At the same time the tremendous power that is behind it is never expressed by violence. It is always

the silent mesmerism of Indian thought... And whoever had dared to touch our literature had felt the bondage, and is there bound for ever.

"Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionised the thought of the world, yet nobody knows when it did so."

Swami Brahmananda was the very personification of this characteristic of Indian thought, so much so, that he is very little known even in India, outside the orbit of the influence of Ramakrishna Mission. Perhaps his name will not be mentioned in the official annals of Indian History as one of the greatest men that India ever produced. But all the same the services of the 'gentle dew' is there, one knows it or not, behind the proud magnificence of 'the fairest of the roses.'

FLAMES THAT MADE HIM GOLDEN

As far as spiritual practices were concerned, Sri Ramakrishna was always the hardest possible task-master. It was but natural that the father should have been only anxious to hand down all the secrets of his pursuit and the techniques of his art to one who was destined to go forth in the world, largely written on his forehead—Spiritual Son of Sri Ramakrishna. The result was that Rakhal had to practise various modes of sadhana under the watching eyes of Sri Ramakrishna. The realizations that were to be achieved through spiritual practices cum God's grace all came to him

as naturally, providentially and lawfully as a patrimony descends to a son. But as a cautious son that he was and fully loyal son too, the severely austere sadhanas that he practised during the years 1886 to 1897 after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna in different parts of India staggers a listener. One of his brother disciples actually asked him: "Why do you live so strictly? You are the spiritual son of God Incarnate? He has already done everything for you. Through his grace you have attained samadhi. Then why do you still have to sit like a beggar, begging for Lord's grace?"

"What you say is true," Maharaj answered. "The Master did do everything for us. But still I find a lack within. This proves that we need repeated practice in order to make the state of samadhi natural and habitual to us. You know Uddhava was a devoted disciple and friend of Sri Krishna; through His grace he realized God. And yet Sri Krishna sent him to the Himalayas to live in solitude and contemplation."

Vijay Krishna Goswami, the well-known Saint, also asked Maharaj the same question. He replied simply: "I am only trying to become established in that vision of God which I received through my Master's grace." And he did become established in the vision of God so much so that in his after-life volleyed by the biting questions of a doubting disciple he could say: "I do not move or do anything until I know the will of the Lord...Yes, I wait until I know His will directly and He tells me what I should do...Yes, for everything I do have the direct guidance of God."

* This vision led the Master to identify Rakhal as one of those pure souls who had been incarnated as playmates of Sri Krishna.

"Raja is the greatest treasure-house of spirituality," said Swami Vivekananda. Once a European devotee came to visit him in the monastery, wishing to have his spiritual problems solved. Swamiji sent him to Maharaj, saying: "There you will find a dynamo working and we are all under him." This reveals Swamiji's own greatness but none the less it shows Maharaj also in true perspective.

Aunt Bhanu was a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and a highly advanced sadhika. Her's was the attitude of the Gopi. Once she sang a song regarding Sri Krishna before Maharaj which moved him so much that he went into ecstasy. Torrents of tears soaked his garments absolutely. At this the Holy Mother remarked, "Bhani, one must admit that you are not an ordinary being—you have been successful in ruffling even Rakhal, who is nothing if not a mighty ocean."

THE TRIPLE STRANDS

In the three visions which Sri Ramakrishna had seen concerning Rakhal before his coming are embedded the three main strands which formed the mystic texture of the sweet, lofty, vast and possessing personality that was Swami Brahmananda's. Even India, which is so prolific in producing sages, has rarely produced a sage of this type. As we explore deeper into the character of Maharaj, we shall find that it was mostly the sovereign blend of these three golden strands that gave the uniqueness of this magnificent personality.

The first was the childlikeness of his disposition. 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter

into the Kingdom of Heaven." The 'conversion' of Maharaj was absolute in this sense and so he was truly heavenly. This was the secret how he was able to enter the very sanctuary of Sri Ramakrishna's heart so playfully and could enthrone himself there as his beloved darling.

His naive simplicity was so surprisingly consequential that one day Sri Ramakrishna wept bitterly saying, "Ah me! you are so simple. Who will look after you when I am gone!" By allowing ourselves to be *en rapport* with the profound pathos of these tearful words of Sri Ramakrishna, we may aspire to have a glimpse of the nature of that simplicity which was the very breath of Rakhal's personality. Even when he grew grey, had disciples and devotees by the legion, was the venerated President of the Ramakrishna Order, he retained the same fresh elemental childlikeness in him. His body suffered change. But he did not change. For he was one of those who are not fashioned by the world but fashion the world. When he would be in the presence of the Holy Mother, he would even at the age of fifty sometimes dance innocently while clapping his hands just like any unreasonable little baby. It is however to be remembered that behind this simplicity was always awake that supreme intelligence about which Sri Ramakrishna remarked: "Rakhal possesses kingly intelligence and he can rule an empire."

The second and the most important strand of Rakhal's personality was his Sonship of the Divine. The Divine Mother had told Sri Ramakrishna that Rakhal was *his spiritual son who would live upto the*

highest ideals of renunciation. Sri Ramakrishna himself not only accepted Rakhal as his spiritual son but also gave him to the world with the same designation appended to him. We do not pretend to say that we understand all what this Sonship of the Divine means. There is perhaps only another example in the religious history of the world where Sonship of the Divine is presented before man. Jesus claimed Sonship of God-head and assured that, 'I and my Father are one'. Whatever may be the metaphysical explanations and implications of this, for all practical purposes we find that through the instrument of this Sonship the Divine descends to man in large sweetness and effective intimacy and becomes a connecting link, as it were, with all that is furthest removed from the Divine. Jesus asserted that he was the representative of the Most High and so had the power-of-attorney to administer His Father's wishes unto humanity and to mediate and supplicate before the Father on behalf of humanity. The son is only the modification of the Father, a projection of the same entity.

This Sonship of the Divine gave Swami Brahmananda a unique prestige and privilege among his brother disciples. In this one respect he stands always on a higher level (not to be confused with any misunderstood hierarchy) than all his brother-disciples not excluding even Swami Vivekananda. All of them cherished the profoundest reverence for him. Everyone of them knew that Sonship of the Divine, unlike

earthly sonship, is always more and greater than the discipleship of the Divine. 'I and my Father are one' but not the disciple and his Guru.

How his brother-disciples used to look upon their Raja is patent in the following incidents. "I am astonished seeing the work of Raja", said Swamiji* once to Girish Ghosh. "How beautifully he is guiding the work of the Math and Mission! One has to admire the royal intelligence of Raja. The Master used to say: 'Rakhal possesses kingly intelligence and he can rule an empire.' Exactly so." "Why not? The Son that he is of His!", replied Girish. Hearing this, almost melting in joy, said Swamiji, "Immeasurable is Raja's spirituality. Could anyone be comparable to him whom the Master used to take on his lap as his son, used to feed in great fondness and lull him to sleep on his own bed.' He is incomparable. Raja is the very life of our Math—he is our King!"

After the consecration of the Belur Math on 2nd January, 1899, one day Swamiji ceremonially fed Maharaj with *sodasopachara* (sixteen items) and then standing before him with folded hands said: "Raja! it is only he (meaning the Master) who knew your value—what do we know that we could value you?"

When Swami Prabhavananda, one of the disciples of Maharaj was about to leave India for taking up his duty in U. S. A., Swami Shivananda blessed him with the words: "Never forget that you have seen the Son of God. You have seen God."

* "Swamiji" always refers to Swami Vivekananda in the pale of the Ramakrishna Order.

The Holy Mother once presented clothes to her renouncing children (the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna). Every one was presented with a cotton-cloth whereas Maharaj was given a silken one. One, whose sense of democracy was perhaps a little disturbed by this discrimination of the Holy Mother, ventured the question: "Mother, every one is your child, then why this silken cloth to Rakhal Maharaj?" Replied the Mother instantly: "Don't you know, Rakhal is the Son?" The Holy Mother was the affectionate mother of all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Yet this little discrimination she kept up regarding the 'spiritual son'.

With this Sonship of the Divine was associated the idea 'who would live up to the highest ideals of renunciation' as we have seen in the second vision of Sri Ramakrishna regarding Rakhal. In point of renunciation Maharaj very naturally reminds one of the Prince of Kapilavastu. Like the latter the former too was to be the inheritor of the vast properties of his father, had a youthful wife and a child. When the call of the Divine came he renounced them as easily as the Sakya Prince did. When Sri Ramakrishna said, "Rakhal was born with very intense love for God.", he revealed the depth of Rakhal's spirit of renunciation, for, such love for God could be only the resultant of such a spirit.

About the sweetness of his deportment, as deduced from the third vision which forms the third strand of his personality, we have referred to previously. This made of him a centre of tremendous attraction. Wherever he went he brought with him peace, music, joy, solace and silent inspiration. In his

presence life received a fresh cadence, God became the only reality of life and the daily problems most unreal phantoms. One of his disciples vouches that even his hands and feet had a peculiar charm and attraction about them, perhaps because one who would fall at those feet was sure to be saved, and one who was to be touched by those hands was sure to conquer. It is perhaps not even a half-truth to say that 'Our sweetest songs are those that tell us of saddest thoughts.' Why, there was no sadness about Maharaja's sweetness. It was only joy become humble, *anandam* become inoffensive and mellow. It was the life-expression of the Incomprehensible. God is nothing if not also sweet—"रसो वै सः" True, we have also our God, the terrible, Kali, the Mother. But have we not at another point our Krishna, the sweet, the beautiful? Maharaj's sweetness gave all a profound sense of security in life and death. It is impossible to remember Maharaj and to be afraid of anything.

These three main strands of character as seen above nourished under the ever-watchful care of Sri Ramakrishna, formed the basis of Maharaj's lofty personality. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, specially during the time when Swami Vivekananda was delivering his message in the West, Maharaj was constantly engaged in very severe sadhanas in various parts of India. Burnt in the flames of these tremendous austerities, rich with the highest treasures of spirituality, Swami Brahmananda had emerged like the Golden Purusha at the threshold of humanity by the time Swami Vivekananda returned from the West. Before he came to take up

active work as the Head of the Ramakrishna Order at the behest of Swami Vivekananda, he could say: "The spiritual life begins after the attainment of Nirvikalpa Samadhi."

SO WIDELY UNLIKE : SO INTENSELY AKIN

The personality of Brahmananda is best revealed when seen against the personality of Vivekananda. The natures of the two brother-disciples were widely dissimilar, and yet, in a sense, complementary. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "Naren dwells in the realm of the absolute, the impersonal. He is like a sharp drawn sword of discrimination. Rakhal dwells in the realm of God, the Sweet One, the repository of all blessed qualities. He is like a child on the lap of his mother, completely surrendering himself to her in every way."

Swamiji was inflamed like an animated lion, boundless and fathomless like an ocean, a vast reservoir of jnana, vairagya, vidya and buddhi, ever-wavy with stormy upsurge of deluging youth-force. Maharaj was like the immeasurable sky, serene, tranquil, imperturbable, infinitely ecstatic, mellow and sweet with childlike softness. One was the burning mid-day sun of terrific spiritual energy, the other was the limpid and cool effulgence, of the light within. The message of one is but galvanizing electricity, of the other a subterranean flow of ambrosial Mandakini. One was 'an Orator by Divine right'; the other was a man of supreme silence by Divine right. Vivekananda almost cruelly tears you away from the moorings of your degrading complacency and giving you a portion of

his own dynamism sets you alone on the rough road of perpetual quest to find the truth all by your *own* toil; whereas Brahmananda weans you out for almost a pleasant walk, himself eager to walk with you the entire path tirelessly, sometimes giving you a joke to cope with and at other times pointing out a pitfall on the way and always inspiring you to go ahead. One was to work-out the world-mission from many to one, the other the same mission from one to many. The one was, so to say, the centripetal force, the other was the centrifugal force, as it were. So the path of the one, one might say, lay across the path of the other on which they met at every immediate point throughout the whole distance and revealed each other against themselves—for while the circumference is the consummation of the life-principle of the centre, the centre is the self-realisation of the circumference.

These two vast men so different outwardly were at heart but one. They were like two flowers of different hue and odour on the same petiole. They used to hold each other in invulnerable faith, boundless love and fathomless sraddha. Sri Ramakrishna and his mission were their life and soul and all.

UTTARA-SADHAKA : THE DIVINE MASON

Swami Brahmananda is the first among those who understood Vivekananda with all his revolutionary ideas through and through and never for a moment doubted or questioned his mission. He could very easily traverse the vast sweep of Vivekananda's epic imagination and was always at

home with any of his new ideas. The points of stresses and the programme of work which Vivekananda brought with him recieved unanimous assent and support from Brahmananda. He could at once see the infallibility of Swamiji's approach and always stood behind him as a silent Himalayas of strength.

Just after his return to Calcutta Swamiji placed in Maharaj's hand all the money which the American devotees had subscribed towards the Indian Mission. "All this time," he said, "I have been acting as a trustee. It is a relief to give this back to its real owner—our Raja." After delivering his message and handing over the funds Vivekananda felt himself free, for he knew that it was now Raja's part to play. The plan once given, this divine mason began his work silently and with unerring precision, and even before the passing away of Vivekananda in 1902 gave him the supreme and perfect satisfaction of understanding that his work had fallen on the shoulders of an equal *uttara-sādhaka*.

Brahmananda did his great work in profound silence and with perfect ease. He made gold out of dust and angels out of

worms. He did not deliver lectures. He simply lived 'gazing in the Infinite', as a conduit of the Divine. When tempests of work, cyclones of service stormed the seats of meditation with silent power he held all fast to the feet of the Lord. The destination was always before his open eyes. He held the helm always firmly and was never daunted by any bad weather. Forsooth, during the fiercest of storms he sang most sweetly for on that plea the Lord came the nearest to him even though He was always nearer than the nearest.

As the Head of the Order he impressed indelibly upon the minds of the inmates the truth: "The success of a religious body depends, not on its external achievements, its efficient organisation, its buildings, the size of its membership or its philanthropic activities—but upon the inner life of each of its members and measure of their progress towards devotion and knowledge of God."

The portrait we have essayed to reveal here is of the very heart of the Ramakrishna Order. The heart can never be fully revealed, for it is the very seat of the Inscrutable. Therefore, we could have but given an imperfect glimpse alone.

"Practice, practice, practice. Find out for yourself whether there is really a God...I am telling you, my child, God is. Know for certain that He is."

—SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

THE BELUR MATH

By ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

It was one cool, breezy evening in early December, 1948, that the present writer, along with three friends, hired a boat from Dakshineswar temple ghat and rowed down to the Belur Math. The refreshing rays of the setting sun were bidding us good-bye; the gently flowing waters of Mother Ganga were sparkling with the last kiss of the downgoing round fiery ball; the sea planes were dancing with the swelling waves, the cruising motor launches and steam boats were causing; the sky up above was serene; all the environs of the Math were lit with the radiant rays of that eternal omnipresence of Truth-Beauty-Bliss, that one was urged to exclaim from the depths of heart that Vedic prayer:

यो देवोऽग्नौ योऽस्यु यो विश्वं भुवनमाविवेश ।

यो ओषधीषु यो वनस्पतिषु तस्मै देवाय नमो नमः ॥

The God who is living presence in fire, water, interpenetrating the entire universe; He who is in medicinal herbs and the forest woods, to Him we bow down, unto Him our salutation!

The majestic temple, the math, the marble shrines along the riverside were gracefully reflected in water as the boat approached the Belur bank. Just on the opposite side on to the right where Wellington Bridge begins, is seen the row of shrines and temples with the Bhavatarini Kali temple towering at the centre. There did the prophet of the modern age live, preach his gospel, and accomplish his great mission. On the other side, at Belur, is the Headquarters of that great renaissance and spiritual-awakening movement which heralds the advent of new India, with her cultural heritage and spiritual bedrock

reinterpreted and resurrected to suit the modern needs, to build India's Humanity, this planet's Humanity, on the unshakable rock of Self-realisation, or God-realised dynamics. Perhaps, when the Belur Math was established in January 1899, few could have then realised that it was just the beginning of a movement which had the potential power and missionary zeal to awaken the entire Indian subcontinent from slumber to life, to the recognition and realisation of her divine birth-right. That potential power is now slowly being materialised in India and also abroad.

While the majority of the people who go to the Belur Math find it a romantic and poetic place to spend some time, those who can go beyond the exoteric and get into the esoteric realms of the significance of the monastery see there the symbol and substance of a movement, still fresh and cradled, still tender and delicate, which can be the regenerative force in India to rediscover her own immortal soul, to re-assert India's cultural heritage, to leaven and deify the masses of the subcontinent with the beatific vision of Vedanta, with the necessary inner poise and power of Yoga, to give an integrated, harmonised and all-embracing catholic outlook to India's teeming millions, to seekers and searchers of Truth and Reality, of profound humanistic psychology and psychological humanism, to men and women everywhere, under all skies, of all races and for all times. Here is the meaning of *Sanatana Dharma*, the real catholicity which is *quod semper, quod ab omnibus, quod ubique*—that which is always, by all and with all, anywhere and

every-where—of the Christian theologians, the basis of perennial philosophy.

Although the rise of the order of monks and sadhus is a very common phenomenon in India, the monastic organisation symbolised by the Belur Math is unique in the history of Indian civilisation. The Order of Bhikkus which grew around Buddha, and the subsequent history of Buddhist monasticism, are not as near to the present monastic revival in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement as the founding of monasteries by Sri Sankaracharya. Swami Vivekananda, the Sankara of the twentieth century, founded an Order that will suit to the changed conditions of modern life where world-unity ideal, based on a world-culture and world-citizenship, is nearer realisation than it was at the time of the greatest Advaita Vedantist, Sankara. Fighting against odds, the Ideal of a unified and deified humanity is looming brighter today than ever before. Atom bombs cannot kill ideas and ideals. Ideas thrive on persecution and sufferings; the blood of martyrs is always the seed of the church. At this juncture when the mankind is entering the very threshold of one world ideal, one Divinised and Unified Humanity Ideal, there emerged the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement as a mighty force to help India and mankind to realise this grand goal, the immortal ideal, of unity amidst diversity of all-sided integration, catholicity.

The Belur Math is both a symbol and substance; it is symbolic of the spirit of modern India; it shows the potential power; the Math is also the substance of what has already been achieved, a pledge of all that still remains to be achieved. The

task is never finished; it can never finish as the mighty movements centering around prophets. The work of Jesus continues; the work of Buddha continues; of Ramakrishna continues. This redemptive work begins in history, but it never ends; perhaps it can never end; for these movements are organised efforts for individuals and nations to realise the Infinite; Infinite made real and vital through the service of God, the wretched, the sinner, the saint, the beautiful and ugly, God, the poor and the rich; God living and suffering in the living and suffering humanity. Buddhism, not only in its Mahayana or Greater Vehicle form, but also in its most pure, original and Hinayana forms, has this much in common with the modern Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement that both stress upon the psychological and human realities and facts of life. Both movements, within the lap of India, with nearly twenty-five centuries interlapping, sprang from the deep understanding of the profoundly human truths, of exploring the psychological depths of human consciousness. But primitive Buddhism, as a reform movement, sounded just a monochord, as often it happens with all reform movements which cut themselves off from the roots which they thought of reforming; but the present movement is not a reform movement, but a renaissance movement, implying thereby also a healthy reform that will be needed for the renaissance of India's rich heritage.

The majestic temple at Belur is to be the new St. Peters of Hinduism. By Hinduism I mean, the Mother of all religions; that vital and psychological catholicity which

India gives to the world. But Belur will be neither St. Peters nor Vatican in the Roman sense of the terms; it will be the St. Peters where the arching colonnades will embrace and enfold not only Roman Catholics who owe allegiance to Pope, but also the Protestants and Greek and Russian orthodox Churches, the Buddhists and Shintoists, the Parsees and Sikhs, the Hindus and Muslims. This is the traditional Indian catholicism, what Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan calls 'the hospitality of Hindu mind'. But now this catholicity is not going to be out of weakness, but it is going to be born out of inner strength; this catholicity is not going to be an enforced uniformity of certain dogmas—believing and canons-observing, as often it happens with the churches, but it is going to be a searching and finding of inner unity, spiritual fellowship, through fathoming deep into human consciousness. For Truth cannot be but one, although names vary—

एकं सत् विद्वा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

Sister Nivedita has portrayed the unique character and vital significance of the founding of the Belur Math, of the new Order of Monks, in the life of the new Indian Nation. It is a recognised fact among historians that the mission of divine prophets cannot be kept for long without setting up an efficient machinery, a vehicle to preserve and defend and propagate their gospel. For this the regularly constituted religious orders, with legal status, is necessary, a band of enthusiastic, receptive, open-minded, iron-willed workers, who out of their inner experience and conviction, shall be able to help the society in their spiritual pilgrimage, in matters both spiri-

tual and material, in things both temporal and eternal, in solving the riddle of their personal and domestic life, in untying the knots of the metaphysics of the One and the Many, of Substance and Shadaow, of the Absolute and the Relative. In preserving the spiritual message of prophets monastic orders play a significant and indispensable part. Dr. Adolf Harnack, the greatest of Protestant critics and historians of our century, has proved conclusively that the spiritual religion in Christianity was preserved mainly, if not wholly, through the religious orders, which beginning from the anchorites of St. Anthony and Pachomius in Egypt, running right through the Benedictine monastic movement and the great Mendicant Orders, specially the Dominicans and Franciscans, the military orders down to the days of the Jesuits and the modern congregations for both men and women, was a mighty bulwark for and strength of the spiritual Christianity.

Even born genius goes wasted when one-pointedness of mind is lacking. Without resoluteness, *nishta*, spiritual perfection cannot be attained. The more concentrated the stronger becomes the torchlight. But dissipation is superficiality. Hence it was within the compass of prophets and apostles to create a band of spiritually awakened souls to organise themselves and do the divine job, the redemptive work, the work of spiritual awakening, the noble task of bringing the second birth to the first-borns. Our first birth is from flesh and blood; the second birth is from mind and consciousness; it is psychological as the former is physical; it is spiritual as the former is

material. The real Man is neither body nor flesh, much less his family and belongings, but consciousness. In the "I AM" consciousness are all problems solved, is assured our divine birth, is won the goal of existence. "I AM" is knowledge, what Sankara calls *jñāna* and Thomas Aquinas calls "Beatific vision". Then the "I AM" accepts the challenge of life, and in its life-affirming aspect, God or "I AM" manifests itself in loving service. God then is Love; He is universal Love. The last word in practical life was said by religion when they defined God as Love. St. John said: "God is universal Love." It is God's manifestation that we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, touch with our hands and feet. All this vast universe is, as it were, the self-imprisoning, self-emptying, self-sacrifice of *Brahman*. When maya-veil is removed, still, the new order of Monks have to work and struggle in life, the path of *karma yoga* begins.

God-realised activity means service of deified Humanity. Man is of divine birth. He, in his ignorance, thinks he is flesh and blood; is purely food, clothing and shelter. He is more than all these. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these will be added unto you", was said by Jesus. While to the hungry man his real God is bread and butter, to the houseless wanderer his God is a shelter, what is urged here is to raise mankind higher and higher to the highest possible level. The goal is infinite; it may never be reached; but it draws us, fascinates us to soar to the ideal, to reach the Goal.

The esoteric of symbolism, mythology and rituals are seen in this *New Mandir*,

the symbol of India's rebirth, her all-sided growth, her all-embracing catholicity. The iconoclastic zeal of the early Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj defeated its own purpose when what is just a monochord they called musical harmony. The old Vedic and Tantric fire-worshipping and sacrifices are revived; images, statues, icons and symbols are there. The great human and psychological truths enshrined in Indian mythology, in the myths of Durga, Kali, Saraswati, Parvati, Siva, Brahma, the quintessentials of our great epics, the crystal-clear teachings of the Upanishads, the crest-jewel of Vedanta, the spiritual sunshine of Yoga, the various contributions of other religions and civilisations to the great World Fair of Culture, are all duly symbolised. Music, incense, flowers, rivers, planets, the entire cosmic energy are made real and vital through a little bit of brooding on the river side of the Belur Math.

Hinduism that survived many a crisis and vicissitude in history is today more receptive, responsive, assimilative, absorbing the ever before. That comes out of inner strength, born out of self-confidence. While other faiths are good for others, "The path of the ancient Aryan Rishis" is the best for India, but that Aryan Path which is a living force, ever-renewing and re-adjusting to respond to the vital needs of human hearts and minds of the changing phases of civilisations of both the East and the West. The Belur Math, then, is the symbol of the new catholicity that has dawned upon India and the world; the catholicity wherein all scriptures and prophets are accepted, none excluded, none

rejected, on the fundamental unity of all in that Supreme Reality that is One without a second. The new catholicity will recognise God with and without forms, with and without qualities, both personal and impersonal, both Absolute and Relative, both Prakriti and Purusha, both the Father who is in Heaven and the Divine Mother, the Divine womb of this universe. This catholicity will recognise Bibles and Korans as but chapters in the universal revelation of God. Buddhas, Christs and other God-men are but mighty waves on the surface of the great ocean of consciousness, the mighty "I AM", at whose bidding the sun rises and sets, fire burns, death and birth do their duty. When my tiny little ego is either destroyed through self-effacement, or is extended on to Infinity, then is the vision gained, our life-mission fulfilled in the knowledge of Unity and Identity of all and in the loving service of Mankind.

At the Belur Math will one find that the God of the Christians, the Allah of the Muslims, the Jahova of the Jews, the Iswara of the Hindus, the Tao of the Chinese are but one at the same personal relation of the individual soul with the Supreme Reality, even as the *pani* of the Punjabis, the *thanni* of the Tamilians, the water of the Britisher, the *lō* of the French, the *aqua* of the Italian, means one and the same substance, water. God is both the substance and the shadow of the universe. God is both the Absolute and the Relative; he is the Self-realised saint, the agonising sinner, the arrogant rich and the humble poor. He is all-in-all. He is the great Unknown of the agnostics, the *neti* of the negatives,

the "I AM" of the positives; He is the life-breath of the living, the dynamic and the quiescent, that supreme That in which everything moves, lives and has its essence and existence. He is the Soul of the souls, the Life of the lives, the supreme Man, *Purusha*, impregnating *Prakriti*, whence are all beings born, grow and die. The deathless amidst the dying the Permanent amidst the flux of things, men and events, the Real behind the apparent, the Substance behind the shadow. He is both She and It as the thinker or devotee views it.

The seeds of perennial philosophy, of sempiternal theology, are again sown over the green meadows of the Belur Math. That life-giving cosmogony, that monistic cosmology, idealistic ontology, rich mythology, are all embedded on the shores of Mother Ganga, now enriched by the Dakshineswar temple on the one side and the Belur Math on the other. The Math is to be the nursery, the spiritual power-house, for the gradual universal awakening of the children of Mother India, besmeared by Catherine Mayos, relabelled by prosylitising foreign missionaries, politically dominated by foreign imperialists and domestic capitalists, weakened, and emasculated in manifold ways by foes internal and external. The Belur is both a math, a monastery and a missionary centre, the Headquarters whence the three Ps, the future prophets, philosophers and poets, the three Ms, the monks, missionaries and masters of free India, of new and spiritually awakened India, of *Prabuddha Bharata*, are to emerge.

It is the organisational efficiency that strikes even a casual visitor to Belur Math,

Vivekananda in his talks and correspondence insisted on the need of organisational machinery, but an organisation as a vital and living factor to develop the potential divinity in men and nations. Organisation is a social necessity, it is the affirmation of corporate existence, the salvation of the individual in the Universal. But unto this day that elasticity, that creative spontaneity, that is so needed for any organisation to work for spiritual ends, are still fresh at Belur. Institutions survive through continuous growth and renewal from within. The old accretions, the degrading and degenerating factors in Indian society will automatically drop off when the basic foundations are laid solid, when the quintessentials of Indian civilisation are held all right, when the bright sides are considered and well attended to. It is a living, flexible organisation that, far from crippling the spontaneity and creativity of the individuals associated with the work, help to grow and reach the highest spiritual summits of adventurous living and creative enterprise that is seen at Belur. If the Headquarters remain creative, the branches elsewhere in India and abroad also will stick to that creative ideal that is the corol-

lary of the creative cosmic evolution of which we form a part.

Belur is thus a symbol, substance and sacrament. The sacramental character of life, of human pilgrimage, of the entire *leela* that is creation, is stressed. As Belur is to be an epitome of what is best, lasting and creative in Indian civilisation, so India that was and India that is to be is sacramentally, sacrificially and symbolically represented in the incipient art, literature and life of the Mission. The spiritual mission of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement is just beginning, a leavening force, a light-house, power-house, for the rejuvenation, resuscitation, rekindling of the old fire in the heart of new India. That is the rock on which our nation-building task must rest. That is the spiritual nucleus, the Lion of Divinity asleep in every human breast, the foundation stone on which India's and world's humanity must be raised, of which the Belur Math is and will be a signpost, a promise and a pledge. But for that we cannot afford to sleep. We need spiritual awakening and eternal vigilance. As Swamiji puts it: 'Arise, awake, stop not till the Goal is reached.'

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

"Just as Sri Ramakrishna held highly liberal views, this Math too will be a centre for propagating similar ideas. The blazing light of universal harmony that will emanate from here will flood the whole world."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

RELIGION AND WORLD FELLOWSHIP

By SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

(Reprinted from *The Journal of Religious Thought*)

Peace through world fellowship has been a cherished dream of rational human beings. From an early period of the world's history men have made efforts to achieve that end. These efforts have covered fields: the political, military, economic, scientific, and religious.

Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon embarked on their military conquests with a view to bringing the whole earth under one rule so that all men could live peacefully like brothers. The British Empire and the Commonwealth of Nations is a continuation of the same ideal with a different administrative technique. The dream of the military despots ended with their lives. The British experiment is far from a success.

Europe wanted to eliminate war through the device of the balance of power. For several centuries England's political relationship with the different states of Europe was determined by it. The same policy was followed by strong European states in Africa and Asia. But the very effort to preserve such a balance has often upset the balance and precipitated war. The cooperation of several states to check the bellicose attitude of others creates a kind of armed neutrality which breaks down under the stress of circumstances. The modern device of blocs and spheres, a counterpart of the balance of power, does not seem to hold a better prospect for world peace.

Since the Napoleonic wars the statesmen of Europe have thought of settling their national disputes through arbitration rather than force of arms. The Concert of Europe and the Hague Arbitration Court were

established. Later on a similar experiment was made to outlaw war through the League of Nations. But not any of these could prevent a strong nation from attacking a weaker one. The tiger was permitted to devour the lamb; only the table manners were criticized. The present United Nations deliberations have not yet inspired us with the prospect of peace.

It has often been thought that wars were the outcome of the greed and lust for power of kings and potentates. With their abolition and with the growth of democracy, wars would be discarded. According to this view the people hate war. It is they who suffer most from its consequences. Further, the common people are endowed with sound common sense. They do not have the ambition of the leaders. The masses of the different countries do not bear any grudge against one another. When they meet in normal times, they act like the best of friends. Through their unsophisticated nature they soon realize that what is good for one man must be good for all, no matter where they live. They are vaguely aware of a unity that binds humanity. So it was thought that the growth of democracy—government of the people, by the people—would put an end to all wars and usher in an age of universal peace. But unfortunately two world wars have shattered any such pleasant illusion. When a war breaks out, whatever may be its cause, the *demos*, the people, keep it going. They find in it an outlet for their suppressed emotions, a release from the boredom of a humdrum life, a fertile field for

adventure and excitement. Through clever propaganda they are taught to hate people whom they have never seen. They lose their fine sensitivity and become cynical about moral and spiritual values. During the past war men have been heard to describe with total callousness, and sometimes with a ghoulish joy, how, from a high altitude, they wiped out at night, with the help of precision instruments, a populous area or a whole town with its hundreds of men and women, fellow beings with hearts and souls like their own. For many people war may not be a biological necessity, but it is still a psychological necessity. Even today two great countries, both claiming to be ruled by the people, are fast transforming themselves into huge barrels of inflammable powder which, if ignited by the diabolical fingers of a maniac, may very well reduce to ashes many cherished features of our civilization. No, democracy has not yet been proved to be the solution of the problem of war and peace.

Other panaceas have been suggested, such as the growth of trade and commerce and the development of armaments through science and engineering. It is often said that as the different countries are linked together by trade, the chances of war are minimized for the sheer fear of dislocating the economic equilibrium of the world and thus bringing about universal hardship and suffering; and as the trade barriers are removed, roads to peace open up. But how ironical has been the laughter of God at this fond hope! The great wars of our time have been fought mainly for economic reasons. Some of the vital misunderstandings of today smell suspiciously of oil. Mineral deposits, raw materials, and a ready market for the dumping of cheap

products of an industrialized country upon another which is less developed are some of the potential causes of modern wars.

One hears, now and then, powerful voices asking for the increase of armaments—especially weapons of the most destructive kind—as an antidote for war and a guarantee of peace. We are told that this is an effective means of scaring a potential aggressor. The assumption is that the heavily armed nation will never start a war nor will it participate in one except in self-protection or in support of a weak and helpless country. And yet all wars in history have been fought on the specious plea of righteousness, claimed by victors and vanquished alike. Again, if all the great nations are armed *cap-a-pie*, so the argument runs, it will all the more guarantee the peace of the world. The knowledge of the havoc and holocaust that can be produced by modern weapons will act as a deterrent. This argument, too, is weak. In both world wars the belligerents knew of the dangerous weapons possessed by one another. They also knew the price of victory and the penalty of defeat. But that did not stop the mass slaughter.

A war, we are inclined to believe, is caused by men who are in a temporarily demented condition. Otherwise, how can they—who are generally kind, unselfish, considerate, and endowed with many ethical virtues—plan with absolute coldness the annihilation of their fellow men, whom they loved and honoured before and will again love and honour after the war is over? Perhaps psychoanalysts will some day make a thorough investigation into the causes of war, from the standpoint of their particular science. But it can be said with a certain amount of definiteness that when a war breaks out, all common sense and reason

go with the winds, and men and their leaders rush down the precipice to self-destruction like the Gergasene swine, possessed with the devils of hatred.

Today, in the parade of peacemakers, the leaders of religion, who in olden times generally formed the vanguard, bring up the rear. With lofty condescension toward mundane things, they proclaim that through religion alone can one establish peace on earth and goodwill among men. Selfishness, greed, and lust for power, they say, are the basic causes of war. These animal instincts can be suppressed or sublimated by such virtues as love of God, kindness, friendship, and unselfishness, which can be cultivated only through the disciplines of religion. The ideal of religion is not the kingdom of earth but the Kingdom of Heaven. The goal of religion is peace. It preaches that spiritual ideals alone are worthwhile, and sometimes denies the world altogether. The brotherhood of men and the fatherhood of God, it says, are the surest foundation of peace.

Cynics, however, are not convinced. The fatherhood of God or human brotherhood are matters of faith and not demonstrable truths. Further, brotherhood is a fragile bond. Even blood brothers sometimes stab one another in the back. In these days of scientific method and rationalism, the whole phenomenon of religion, with its supernatural God, intangible heaven, and problematic hereafter, has become suspect. The past history of religion does not inspire one's faith regarding its future role as a peacemaker. Very often the world has been deluged by bloodshed in religious wars. One would like to know whether any secular cause has been responsible for more hatred, passion, and cruelty. In the world today there are enough religions to

help men hate one another; but where is enough religious spirit among them to help men love one another? The past two wars have undermined the claim of religion to be the promoter of peace. The major belligerents professed the Christian faith. Japan owes allegiance to Buddha, the Prince of Compassion. The Jews are shedding blood in Palestine in the name of religion. Religious strife among the Hindus and Moslems in India has made that unfortunate country a butt of ridicule to the outside world and has been inflicting untold suffering upon the Indians themselves. And all these religions preach peace and brotherhood. While the statesmen, economists, and scientists are realizing the interdependence of men and becoming vaguely aware of one world and one humanity, religious organizations have hardly changed their parochial outlook. They often allow themselves to be used as tools by unscrupulous politicians and businessmen to serve the latter's selfish purposes. During the last war, ministers of religion sometimes blessed submarines and bombers. Churches sold war bonds. It is no wonder that people are becoming opposed to religious institutions and, what is worse, indifferent to them. Official peace parleys do not open with the blessings of the church. Religion today is not playing any vital part in creating or promoting human fellowship.

Yet the cause of the present world malady is a spiritual one and its remedy also is spiritual. Political, economic, social, and moral tensions are the symptoms of a deep-rooted disease created by man's spiritual ignorance and maladjustment. Man is not at peace with his soul and is not intimate with the Soul of the universe. The true causes of war are lust for power, greed, vanity, selfishness, and the desire to

dominate. These cannot be removed by moral suasion, military power, political slogans, or economic adjustment. Man's evil tendencies can be removed only by educating him about the true nature of his soul and its destiny, his relationship with the universe and its Creator. If a man is at peace with himself, then he is at peace with the world; for his outer activities are determined by his inner thoughts. Now all this belongs entirely to the domain of spiritual experience. Nothing else can fundamentally change human nature.

But before human nature can be changed, a reorientation of religion is necessary. Religion should not be based upon mere belief in a set of dogmas or creeds. It is not merely "ethics tinged with emotion." The foundation of true religion is experience. It does not contradict reason. It prescribes disciplines which enable the individual soul to commune with the Universal Soul and regard all beings as part and parcel of it. Through religious experience men resolve the contradictions of the outer life and see the whole universe as the manifestation of the indivisible Spirit. Thus alone can religion promote human fellowship.

Hinduism gives a spiritual interpretation of the universe and man, as opposed to the mechanistic. The universe is a projection of the Godhead. The Spirit of the Lord permeates the world. All objects are filled with the Divine Spirit and are essentially not different from it. It is like the ocean, the waves, and the foam; the essence of these is the same stuff—water. The notion of nature as "red in tooth and claw" is based on a partial truth. Competition may be the method of evolution at a lower stage; but the law of cooperation and consecration functions at a higher level. A purely quantitative explanation of the

universe deprives life of richness and real joy. In the experience of the mystics, the universe without a spiritual foundation is illusory, transitory, and "the abode of suffering."

Like the universe, man also is a spiritual entity. The soul of man, the Atman of Hindu philosophy, is totally different from the body, the senses, and the mind. It is Spirit—eternally free, illumined, and pure. Unlimited by time and space, and unaffected by causality, it is infinite, all-pervading, and immortal. Birth, growth, old age, and death refer to the body alone and not to the soul. Man's actions and thoughts do not really affect the soul. The Upanishad says that the soul does not expand by virtuous action nor does it contract by its opposite. By wicked action a man stains his mind and so does not see the glories of his true self. Righteous action removes the impurities. On account of the inscrutable cosmic ignorance—called *māyā* by the Hindu philosophers—the infinite soul identifies itself with body, mind, and senses and becomes finite and individualized. Thus we have a Hindu or a Christian or a Jew or a white man or a black man. The finite soul becomes a victim of the pairs of opposites, such as life and death, good and evil, pain and pleasure. Then it engages in various activities to shun the evil and enjoy the good. Good action produces happiness, and evil action, unhappiness. In order to reap the fruit of its action, the individualized soul reincarnates itself again and again in the relative universe. Though identified with the material life and happiness, it feels now and then a nostalgic yearning to regain its transcendental and immortal nature. Disillusioned by the experiences of the world, and instructed about truth by an

illumined teacher, the individualized soul practises spiritual disciplines and in the end attains to freedom through Self-Knowledge. A free soul sees himself in all and all in himself. Thus he establishes fellowship with all. This is the basis of the Golden Rule of religion. A Hindu proverb says: "Only a small-minded man thinks that this person is his friend and that person is his enemy; but to the truly wise all beings are his kith and kin." Further, a free soul sees God in all and all in God. The outer forms are only masks through which the inner Spirit shines. Everyone, therefore, is entitled to our respect. This is the real basis of freedom and democracy.

The Godhead is One without a second. It is Spirit and Consciousness and the unchanging Reality behind all names and forms. It has neither beginning nor end. It alone exists. The wise man sees the Godhead, the universe, and living beings as identical with one another. Devoid of all attributes, it cannot be described by words or comprehended by the mind. It is the unrelated Ground of the universe. As the mirage cannot exist without the desert, so also the universe cannot exist without the Godhead. Things appear to be real because the Godhead forms their inmost essence. The same Godhead manifests itself in time and space as the Personal God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe. The Gods of the different faiths—Allāh, Jehovah, the Father in Heaven, Siva, or Vishnu—are but different names of the Personal God. He alone is worshipped by the devotees of all faiths and regarded by them as their Redeemer and Savior. According to Hinduism, God incarnates himself as a man whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails in the world. For the protection of the virtuous, the chastisement of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness, he was born in the world as Moses, Christ, Buddha,

Krishna, and other divine Incarnations. And there will be similar Incarnations in the future. God becomes man so that man may become God.

According to Hinduism, religious disciplines cannot be standardized. They should fit a man's inner evolution. The discipline of unselfish action is prescribed for the active person; the discipline of love that seeks no return, for the emotional; that of discrimination, for the philosophical; and the discipline of self-control and concentration, for the psychic and the introspective. All paths lead to the same goal of God-consciousness. The purpose of discipline is to purify the heart. The pure-hearted at once see the self-luminous truth. Through the vision of the Godhead a man becomes free from the bondage of the world. He dedicates his life to the service of all.

Fanaticism, exclusiveness, and the spirit of intolerance are the drawbacks of organized religions. These are noticed particularly in those faiths which hold the Personal God to be the highest spiritual experience. Directly and indirectly they preach salvation through a particular discipline. Thus an historical religion is liable to encourage bigotry. The mystics, on the contrary, speak of the Godhead as transcending time and space, and as indescribable by any name, form, or attribute. From the standpoint of ultimate experience, there is no such thing as a national religion. All faiths are but diverse manifestations of one true religion, which is God himself. Faiths differ only in non-essential matters due to external conditions, varying because of climate, soil, people, and tradition. But they all agree on essential matters, such as unselfishness, love, purity, goodness, inner life, and contemplation. Alas! Because we emphasize the non-essential features of religions, we create friction and strife and thus undermine human fellowship. The aspirants of

all faiths should find a common ground in their aspiration and sincerity, and overlook the rites and rituals which are disciplines for individual seekers. Religious leaders should not exhort their followers to follow blindly; they should urge them to make an individual effort to realize the goal, which is not confined within the narrow limits of any church. A great Hindu mystic once said that a man should be born in a church but he should not die in it.

Nothing wonderful would happen to the world if all the people were converted to Hinduism or Buddhism or Christianity or Judaism, because the followers of these various faiths have not proved themselves to be very wonderful. But something definitely wonderful would happen if only a few people set themselves heart and soul to realize truth. Like goodness, beauty, and love, truth is not the monopoly of any sect or cult. Truth-seekers are found both inside and outside the church. Art, science, religion, and philosophy are all paths leading to truth. "It is a mistake," wrote Dr. William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, "to suppose that God is only or even chiefly concerned with religion." Dr. Leconte du Noüy writes in *Human Destiny*: "Independent of any rite, of any church, there has always existed in the world a religious spirit, a desire to believe, a desire to adore without restriction, a desire to humiliate oneself in total veneration, a desire to elevate oneself by approaching a conceivable but inaccessible ideal. It is this desire which is of divine origin, because it is universal and identical in all men." Let us deepen the desire and aspiration for truth and not waste our energy fighting about dogmas and creeds.

Nevertheless we need organized religions. Without them the average person cannot set his feet on the path leading to God. Suppose a dictator like Kemal Pasha or Lenin destroyed all churches, temples,

mosques, synagogues, and other places of worship; suppose he burned the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, and all other sacred scriptures—very soon civilization would disappear and human beings would lapse into the state of beasts. Churches are necessary. Even dogmas and rites are helpful to those who cannot appreciate the abstruse philosophy of religion. If properly used, these disciplines open a devotee's vision to the Infinite; but if improperly used they can keep him down on the earth. In order to serve a fruitful purpose the organized faiths must emphasize universal spiritual experiences and broaden men's outlook.

Here are a few concrete suggestions as to how organized religions can promote human fellowship. First, in the theological seminaries the principal religions of the world should be taught and discussed. It is important that a religion should be taught by one who belongs to it or at least by one who has a warm affection for it. Religion cannot be treated with cold, critical objectivity. A living faith which is professed by a large number of people and regarded by them as a means of salvation is entitled to everyone's respect. Second, a minister should frequently quote from scriptures other than his own to explain the reality of God and spiritual values. Deep spiritual experiences are universal and have been shared by all faiths. In this way alone does religion assume a universal character. Otherwise a religion with an exclusive claim to spiritual experiences may be regarded as an abnormal phenomenon. Private truth is always suspect. Third, a church should celebrate the holy days and sacred occasions of other churches. This broadens our perspective and promotes human fellowship. Toleration is not enough; we must develop positive respect. A genuine devotee is loyal to his own ideal and at the same time respectful of the ideals of others. The cause of religion will not be promoted

by our fighting with one another, but by our presenting a united front against the mounting tide of disbelief. It can never be overemphasized that different faiths are necessary to suit different tastes and temperaments.

All religions are based on ethical foundations. If they should disregard ethics they would become tools of cruelty and oppression. Though a mystic often transcends ethics, yet by no means is he unethical. As he sees God in all beings and all beings in God, he can never injure anybody. The basis of ethical disciplines such as love, sacrifice, and self-control is the unity of existence, which is a spiritual experience.

Like ethical disciplines, social service is also a means to the ultimate end of God-consciousness. Unless a social worker sees God in those whom he serves, his activity may become mechanical or merely a means to kill the boredom of life or to earn name, fame, and power. Three conditions must be fulfilled before a man may aspire to become a genuine social servant. First, he must truly feel the suffering of others. It must be the thought of his day and the dream of his sleep. It must make him forget his food and drink. Second, he must find out the right means to alleviate human suffering. He must have faith in this remedy in spite of the indifference or opposition of the whole world. Third, he must be totally unselfish. There should not be any motive of personal gain or power behind his desire to serve society. To him work must be the same as worship.

True religious experience does not contradict science, technology, politics, economics, or other branches of human knowledge. All forms of knowledge are uplifting. The laws of science are also manifestations of the Divine Law. A scientist in his research is impelled by a mystic urge. In the building of a well-integrated and enduring culture, spiritual

knowledge and material science can work hand in hand, as testified to by the great achievements of the Buddhist and Hindu civilizations. In the development of Western culture and American democracy, religion made a vital contribution. Only for the past fifty years have the intellectual leaders of the Western world come under the spell of science and technology and become indifferent to religion and morality. And at what cost! Ruthless competition, intense selfishness, unbridled greed, and unquenchable lust for power have produced two wars in one generation, and other evils accompanying them, which have well nigh destroyed the foundation of Western society. The very safety of the world demands a reorientation of man's outlook. As the future religion of the world must not contradict the scientific method, science also, to be the benefactor of society, must be imbued with the religious spirit. Science gives men power which, if used by those who are emotionally at the level of primitive savages and intellectually at the level of children, cannot but create havoc. To feed a cobra with milk without extracting its fangs is to increase its poison. The power of science, used by the evil-minded, brings calamity upon society.

The essential problem of today is that of changing human nature. When the leaders of society are endowed with righteousness and nobility, then science, technology, politics, art, law, and all other branches of knowledge can promote human fellowship. All these tools are needed to bring men together and make them realize that they are members of a common family. This righteousness becomes natural and spontaneous with those who have the exalted vision of the reality of God, the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence, and the harmony of religions. Genuine human fellowship is a spiritual experience.

AN UNKNOWN IMMORTAL DAY

By SWAMI RITAJANANDA

In the southern extremity of India is the important place of pilgrimage, Cape Comorin. The beautiful spot washed on the three sides by the sea and the charming image of the Divine Mother in the temple attract large numbers of visitors throughout the year. Since the place does not afford many of the city-comforts and conveniences, the population is limited and the visitors rarely extend their stay beyond a couple of days. Although most of the towns with famous shrines have now expanded into big cities, this ancient quiet spot is able to maintain its simple grandeur unaffected by the changing times.

There, one day when the sun was fast setting in the western horizon and soft darkness was enveloping the surrounding country, a strange pilgrim arrived there. The visitors had finished their worship of the Divine Mother and were slowly leaving the place. But the stranger felt no desire to move. He had visited many important temples and he had at last come to the extreme point of India. He had come there with an aching heart and a restless mind. Although he had moved throughout India, he had not found the solution for the problem that was worrying him. Worldly life had no charm for him even while he was young, and he sought the help of the saint of Dakshineswar for spiritual enlightenment. Sadhanas he practised and poured over all the religious literature. But the restlessness of his mind found no peace by them or in the secluded life of a monastery and so one day he left all his brother disciples in the quest of the Unknown. His wanderings over the length

and breadth of India made him see the real India in her good and bad sides. Every moment of his life brought him into closer contact with the masses and the sight of their wretchedness and misery pained his aching heart all the more. Besides the company of the princes and the pandits he had also the company of the poor and the illiterate and saw the gulf that separated them. He was shocked to see in the country with superb religious principles only the abuse of them, superstition and mimicry alone prevailing. The more he wandered, the more did he see the seething misery with no way out.

So, at last he arrived there at the temple of Kumari with a tired body and low spirits. The approaching night and the desolation of the place could not frighten him in any way. He slowly walked out of the temple seeking a place of meditation. Not far from the shrine he noticed a rock in the sea, the last bit of the Indian soil. He crossed the water and climbed the rock. While the waves dashed against it on all sides he sat there and was soon lost in deep meditation. There stretched before him the vast continent of India, of glorious past, the India of the Vedas and the Upanishads, the land of the sages and seers. Scene after scene of all her achievements in arts and sciences rushed past through his mind and he was surprised to see that the nation had a strange vitality, which could make it stand the shocks of numerous foreign invasions. There he beheld India not as a conglomeration of different linguistic countries but as one nation intrinsically united with a

distinct culture of its own and with a religion which was the flesh and blood of the people. Then the scenes changed and he saw the present-day India with its pitiable degradation. But suddenly he felt a new experience, something of far-reaching importance. A new light dawned upon him and a thoroughly changed man he became. At last Mother had revealed to him Her plan—his mission in life. The fever that was raging within him for years had left him and the dreadful phantom of the misery of India that was chasing him had taken to its heels. He was no more, only a cultured monk with an attractive personality, but a dynamic one who could shake the world to its roots. Long ago did his Master foretell, "One day when Naren comes in contact with suffering and misery, his pride of character will melt into a mood of infinite compassion. The strong faith in himself will be the instrument to re-establish confidence and faith lost by discouraged souls; and his free conduct founded on a powerful mastery over himself will shine brightly in the eyes of others like the manifestation of the true liberty of the Ego". Now did he understand the meaning of the Master's words, who rebuked him for seeking personal salvation and who pointed out the great work he had to do in the future. He clearly saw the great destiny of his mother-country and his contribution in the task, as the Messenger of the New Dawn. At last he had found the plan for the regeneration of India as we see him mention this in one of his letters:

"My brother, here is one thing for you to understand fully. I have travelled all over India and seen the country too. Can there be an effect without a cause? Can there be a punishment without sin?

सर्वशास्त्रपुराणेषु व्यासस्य वचनं ध्रुवं ।
परोपकारस्तु पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ॥

Amidst all scriptures and Puranas, know that the statement of Vyasa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit and doing harm leads to sin.

My brother, in view of all this, specially of the poverty and ignorance, I had no sleep. At Cape Comorin, in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting upon the last bit of Indian rock, I hit upon a plan.... We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*."

He felt that India shall rise only through a renewal and the restoration of the highest spiritual consciousness, which has made India at all times the cradle of the of the nations and the cradle of the faiths. He found them replete with ideas which may be fully utilised for the raising of the masses and the rejuvenation of the land. To take up this mighty task he found a great power taking possession of him, which would make him accomplish great things in a short period of time. He felt the power of a mighty force rising within him and it seemed as if he could revolutionize the world.

He slowly opened his eyes and tears trickled down his cheeks. The storm that was raging within him had calmed down and peace reigned. His mind ran back to the feet of his beloved Master and sought His blessings for carrying on the Herculean task. From that moment onwards his life was dedicated to the services of his country, the services of the oppressed millions, the soul of India. He realised the truth in the words of Sri Krishna and beheld the Supreme Narayana in the hearts of all the

rich and the poor alike, and saw that religion embraced not only the great visions of the Rishis but also the problems of everyday life.

Thus on that day the unknown sanyasin came out as the illustrious Swami Vivekananda who carried the spiritual message of India to the West and awakened India to build up her future. To the Western world he appeared as a cyclonic Hindu Monk, enlightening them with the great culture, while India saw in him the master-architect, who had studied the soil and gave his plans. He was a real exponent of the Hindu religion in America and Europe, but India saw in him the harbinger of a New Era.

Before cultured audiences and crowded halls of the Western countries he spoke about the spiritual heritage of the world, the proper understanding of which alone is capable of establishing peace. He placed before them not a sectarian religion or the superiority of one religion over the other but the fundamental truths as expounded by all the great prophets of the world, illustrating them copiously from the sacred literature of India. Regarding his lectures, Sister Nivedita says, "He had come to us as a missionary of Hindu belief in the Immanent God and he called upon us to realise the truth of his gospel for ourselves. Neither then nor at any other time did I hear him advocate to his audience any specialised form of religion. He would refer freely enough to the Indian sects, or as I would like to call them "Churches" by way of illustration of what he had to say. But he never preached anything but that philosophy, which to Indian thinking underlies all creeds. He never quoted anything but the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita. And he never in public mentioned his own Master. With

a deep conviction that the rationalised form of religions is the need of the day he was able to present the scriptures free from the hair-splitting arguments inapplicable to the modern times." We find in his lectures a synthetic approach to all the yogic systems showing that they are all different roads leading to the same goal. "In a word, he taught people not to look for Heaven but for Mukti, enlightenment instead of Salvation, the realisation of immanent unity, Brahman, instead of God, the truth of all faiths instead of the binding force of anyone".

His tremendous success in the West and the grand expositions of the scriptures made India receive him with the highest honours and he returned to India triumphantly. His stay in the West had provided him opportunities to study their wonderful material advancement and it gave him the plans for India. His lectures from Colombo to Almora present us a patriot, who was ready with rejuvenating schemes for the future India. We see in them how with a masterly ability he could show the contrast between the ancient glory and modern degradation. Fearlessly he criticised and pointed out where we erred. Those eloquent words full of fire were helpful in rousing the dormant patriotic feelings of many a young man and it will not be far from the truth if we say that the freedom we are now enjoying is the fruit of the labours of many such noble youths. He gave a new interpretation to the ideas of the Upanishads and his lectures on practical Vedanta shows how even the doctrines which were left in the hands of a learned few could become life-giving principles for the whole country. He wanted that we should have a religion which will give us faith in ourselves, respect for the nation, the power to

nourish the starving, to conquer misery and to raise the masses. He found a new light in the scriptures—the spirit of manliness, which the weak country was badly in need of. As an apostle of Strength he repeatedly spoke about this, "You will understand the Upanishads better and the glories of the Atman, when your body stands firm upon your feet and you feel yourselves as men." He traced all our miseries to weakness, the weakness of the body and the weakness of the mind.

Like his Master he came to fulfil and not to destroy. He showed how the very Hindu religion with all its defects had in it a fund of soul-stirring ideas that could make India emerge out as an individual country with a distinct culture and a special message. All the methods of life and all the experiments that Indian society carried on for adjustment in the walks of life, he found them sufficiently instructive for the present needs of the land. As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has put it "Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Swami Vivekananda was yet modern and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and the present". The bulk of his lectures, letters and conversations are a rich heritage—a legacy for the nation. He had tackled all the social, educational and religious questions and gave us his scheme for our regeneration. With ap rophetic foresight he could see the glorious future of India. He had long ago foretold how India's spiritual gift had a world-wide appreciation. "Know the world is athirst for a sip of the nectar, which our forefathers have preserved in

this land of India". He felt that India should contribute this special feature to the world. Already we find that the eternal truths he preached have gained wide circulation throughout the world. Many a child of the West found, in his speeches, words of solace and enlightenment and many are there who are attracted to the Universal principle of religion embedded in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Now, in India when young minds are wild with the enthusiasm for the regeneration of the mother-country, the message of the illustrious Swami will be of great help to guide them on the right lines. They make us keep our individuality as a nation and at the same time help us to contribute much to world peace.

Centuries ago, a young Sakya Prince left his hearth and home desirous of alleviating the misery of the world. He wandered about and at last sitting under the Bo-tree at Gaya on a memorable day, came out as the Enlightened One with a two-fold mission—one for the outer world, the spreading of his message and the other for his native land to widen the scope of the teachings of the Upanishads and build the future India. About fifty-five years ago, we find a similar incident had taken place at Cape Comorin in South India, when a young Hindu monk discovered his mission of far-reaching importance both to his Motherland and the West. It was on an unknown day when the Swami Vivekananda sat on the rock at Cape Comorin but verily it was a day of great importance in the annals of Indian history, when she sent forth another saviour, patriot, prophet in one.

REASON AND MYSTICISM

By ARLAND USSHER

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The demiurge Urizen (a playful cryptogram for "Your Reason") created the illusion of Matter in the system of Blake; and the human Reason was indeed the master-of-ceremonies of his century—that Reason, which, like the British Constitution, was thought to have banished for ever the splendours and terrors of the chaotic past. The reasonable 18th Century was, as it were, an interval of placid sleep between two nightmares—the nightmare of predestination in the 17th Century and the nightmare of scientific determinism in the 19th; a sleep which to the highest religious and artistic genius seemed, nevertheless, to be a sleep of death. For it is not without significance that this most "robust" of centuries was also an age of mad poets, and that "Swift's Hospital" is in some respects its temple; those adventurous souls who looked over the edge of that flat rational powdered wig the constricted imaginations sometimes rioted. The age, however, may best be remembered, not indeed as the harmonisation of the Self and the Cosmos—the Subject and the Object—but as their perfect *mariage à la mode*: as contrasted with the ages preceding it, in which the Object hovered excitingly and frighteningly around the Subject like a wooer, and that which followed, when the Subject entered on its stern process of self-discovery through the realities of domestic economy and maternity. The character of the century as of a nuptial celebration is well typified

in that most admirable of gossips, Alexander Pope, whose *Essay on Man* only misses truth and profundity by the pleasant ease and speed of its patter—as it were, the dove of the Spirit cast in sugar on a wedding-cake:

All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's
spite,
One truth is clear: whatever is, is right.

These lines are a perfectly exact statement of the mystic's position, in contradistinction both to the nescience of the Calvinist (to whom God's will, as well as his "way", is incomprehensible) and the agnosticism of the Darwinian (to whom the "way" is more comprehensible than the will, if will there be); to express this world-feeling is the true aim of all philosophy which can—in the words of Johnson—"help us to enjoy life or to endure it" but it is not here felt or phrased as it would be by a mystic, and Pope's optimism rings hollow enough in our ears to-day. Yet at the moment it announced a liberation—the repellent oyster of the Cosmos had been opened and was found to contain pearls; the modern humanitarian-vitalist temper which interests itself in the obscure feeling of the bivalve was yet to be born. God had been stripped of all irrational and therefore in reality of all personal, attributes; he was a functionary who had only to administer the law, and who could not

be bribed. In the transcendental theism of the Middle Ages the deity was conceived (it is true) as a rational, but much more a *personal* being; like the human person, he reserved the freedom to make departures from his arrangements—miracles were the crude symbol for the incalculability which is personality's essence; he allowed freedom to the human subject, but it was the freedom of a courtier who, if he overstepped the mark ever so slightly, would be consigned to "the Tower", and the situation of those lower orders of the creation, the animals—without soul or will—was in some ways to be preferred. The logic of the Scholastics, grandiosely impressive in detail, always assumed the main things it sought to prove—such as a non-created Creator; the medieval Churchmen loved Truth in their fashion, but the love was as platonic as the Truth was Aristotelian. The little "neo-Tomtits," who to-day try to nestle in those ruined choirs of thought, are seeking a refuge from the storms of the new Dark Age; but this Dark Age has discovered a "Dark God", the *Zeitgeist* who is stronger than the most massive of single human constructions. With Reformation and Counter-Reformation, reason has, as in the adolescent, developed at the expense of life; the working compromise of discipline and impulse breaks down; and the immediate effect is to diminish, not God's freedom, but Man's. The Protestant theologians dispute freewill and the efficacy of prayers for the dead; the Jesuits reject the *synteresis*—the divine spark still glimmering in Man after the Fall; the philosophers (of whom the most aesthetically complete is the Fleming Geulincx) tend to deny any interaction between the Self and Matter—for Geulincx the world is a puppet-show in which the director holds all the strings at

every instant, manipulating with one hand the limbs of the actor, and with the other, synchronously, his brain. In such a conceit the tragedy of human helplessness reaches its *reductio ad absurdum* and turns to comedy; it is the great era of the stage—Racine is balanced with Moliere, Webster with Congreve, (Later, on the twilight ebb of that rationalist tide, the scientific automaton-world will produce the drama of Tchekhov and Shaw). With the century of the "Enlightenment," human Reason has gained its Magna Carta; the *Grand Monarque* of the universe becomes a constitutional monarch to the philosophers, a rather vapidly "benevolent" *roi faineant* to the theologians. The Mind, in the system of Berkeley, creates its estate like an English landed squire, instead of living among the shadows and cast-off fripperies of the Court: in the system of the Scottish Voltaire, Hume, it is recommended—like a sensible bourgeois—to cultivate its garden and mind its business, neglecting the wholly dubious genealogies of Cause-and-Effect, and the conjuring-shows of the metaphysical mountebanks. By the 19th Century, however, the liberated intellect has produced its own nemesis; the place of the new effete God Reason is usurped by the hard-faced Goddess Nature, into the house left vacant by supernaturalism and swept and garnished by rationalism enter the seven and seventy devils of the secular and political—Messianic religions. Darwin and Marx find in the here-and-now the Hell which deism had banished from the next world or at least the Purgatory; and after 1914 the hope that that Purgatory is leading to a Heaven on earth fades away. But biology and genetic science begin to detect the inter-coordination of a universe of Motion; do we approach a new Olympus, a new

Genesis? Paley's Clock-maker is gone with all his Cartesian scrap-metal, but still an Artist and an Actor blooms in Mendel's sweet-pea. Shall we dare the last lap and complete the circuit—from transcendental mysticism to rationalism, from rationalism to immanent mysticism? Will the *mauvais menage* of the Self and the Not-Self attain the adult and realistic Love that is a recognition and balancing of contradictions—the Love for the Object in its very objectionableness? Shall we end by discovering the Unknown God, Who is not, but Who is the "significant form" of everything that is—the "harmony not understood", which is hinted in the discords of the Surrealists? The scientist, like an aged Moses, sees the Promised Land afar off—will the philosopher-artist, a young Joshua, enter and possess it?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PEACE-CHANTS

By PROF. V. A. TYAGARAJAN

The seven peace-chants which are prefaced to the various Upanishads form by themselves a liberal education. Taken in the context of the Upanishads, they give to us the aim of education, as the ancients understood it to be. Text-books on education divide this aim into the distant and the immediate—the one the ultimate goal of all intellectual effort, and the other the goal of the day's lesson. Although the peace-chants are in the form of prayers and are to be regarded as a kind of saying 'grace' both before and after an intellectual repast, they are still worth examining from the point of view of the two-fold aims of education. They are in the nature of a co-operative effort in which the teacher and the taught participate in a clarification of the goal of study, and a reiteration of the goal of life.

When these peace-chants are examined from the point of view of a modern educationist, we find that they deal in the main with the health of body, mind and soul.

Although they have their starting point in the individual, they have also their social implication in as much as the good life demands, in a Platonic sense, a community of spirits in and through whom it is to be realised. As in all sound schemes of education, the individual good leads to the better life of society, and this in turn to a perception of the best in life—the awareness of Brahman. These peace-chants thus reconcile the immediate and the distant aims of life, co-ordinate life's activities, and direct them towards the highest good.

One of the peace-chants says, "May my limbs, speech, breath, eye, ear, strength and all senses become perfected." Physical well-being is prayed for, because it is the raw material of personality and the foundation of all intellectual effort. Physical well-being is not regarded as an end in itself. It is desired for its functional value in the perception of truth. That is why another passage in one of the peace-chants says, "O my mind and speech!

may ye be fit to reveal unto me the highest knowledge. May I not forget what I have heard. Without forgetting what I have learnt, may I be able to study day and night." There is thus a co-ordination established between the activities of the body and of the mind. This co-ordinated effort is directed to the pursuit of the good and the beneficent. One of the peace-chants says, "O Gods! May we hear with our ears what is auspicious. May we see with our eyes what is auspicious!" Strength of limbs, as well as length of life, is sought for, as a means for the advancement of the highest good.

The pursuit of truth becomes the aim of all co-ordinated effort. One of the peace-chants expresses this in the form of a pledge:—"The right will I speak. The truth will I speak." It is this blending of the intellectual and the ethical which forms what is auspicious. Another peace-chant brings to the fore-ground the importance of sincerity in the pursuit of truth. It says, "May my speech be fixed in the mind. May my mind be fixed in speech." It carries with it by its reversal of its logical subject and predicate the means of its own verification.

The familiar interpretation of the term 'the true' as that which never denies itself at any time or in any place is itself sufficient to indicate the relationship between the transient and time-less, between the immediate and the ultimate aims of education. The aim of education as the Upanishads see it is the perception of Brahman, as life's 'Everlasting Yea'. And this 'Everlasting Yea' lies beyond the doubter and the doubt, for as Emerson says, when we flee from Him, He is still our wings. That is why one of the peace-chants proclaims in the form of an axiom, "Every-

thing is the Brahman proclaimed in the Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman. May Brahman never reject me. May there be no denial at all. May there be no denial at least from me." The reality of Brahman is taken for granted in other portions of the peace-chants which seek the protection of Brahman for both the teacher and the taught. This inseparable link that exists between life and Brahman regarded as the highest value of life is brought out in another peace-chant which almost looks like a mathematical formula; but which sums up in a brief compass the significance of the seven peace-chants put together. It says, "All that is invisible is verily the infinite Brahman. All that is visible is also the infinite Brahman. The whole universe has come out of the infinite Brahman. Brahman is infinite although the whole universe has come out of it."

The traditional interpretation of these peace-chants is that they are meant to remove the obstacles that lie in the way of the perception of truth. From the fact that the term 'Peace' is repeated thrice, it is said that these obstacles are those relating to the material world around us, those relating to the nature of the enquiring self, and those relating to the super-sensuous world of the Gods. But the value of the peace-chants does not necessarily depend upon the traditional interpretation of the nature of the obstacles in the pursuit of truth. They have an intrinsic value apart from their relationship to the fiduciary currency of ancient thought. It is with this intrinsic value in the context of the present-day education of humanity that we are concerned.

The *Ādhibhautika* obstacle to the pursuit of truth such as poverty might be eliminated by a Marxian approach to the

problem of society. But the materialistic Marxian outlook while it eliminates one obstacle to the pursuit of truth creates two other obstacles. Marxism, in its exclusive pursuit of economic well-being, rejects religion as the opium of the people, and in this respect it follows the Freudian point of view which also rejects religion as an illusion without a future. Rousseau set right the poverty of the Marxian sentiment, by preaching the brotherhood of man as a remedy for social ills. He set right in a sense the *adhyātma* obstacle, using the expression, not in its original sense, but in a secondary sense of good sentiment. But he did not solve the other two problems. Similarly again the Buddha taught the noble eight-fold path, the way to overcome all spiritual obstacles to the pursuit of truth. What we have in the Upanishads is a co-ordination of these three points of view. In philosophy, as in mathematics, we must get a co-ordination of three points in order to get a plane. The peace-chants thus give to us a synthesis of life's experience.

The value of these peace-chants is seen when humanity faces the cross roads of life. Following the familiar Indian point of view regarding the four-fold nature of life, we may say that broadly speaking wealth and the pursuit of pleasure pull humanity in one direction, while ethics and the desire for salvation pull men the other way. They are thus in a sense typical of the conflict between the immediate and the distant aims

of life. The distant goal of life is like the magnetic North, a cosmic reality. The immediate aim is like the geographic North. And this slight tilt creates both discord and concord. The peace-chants recognise this distinction, but they also point a way of reconciliation.

It is when we put these peace-chants in their proper setting against the general body of Upanishadic thought that we see how they act as a healing force in life. The Upanishads do not preach the philosophy of poverty. The prayers for wealth and for cattle, the injunction to acquire food and to dispense hospitality militate against such a point of view. But they do not preach a poverty of philosophy either. They assert with even greater conviction the desire to acquire fame; fame, eminent as a tree top and firmly based as a mountain. This is not however sought after as a mark of social recognition, but as a direct consequence of the perception of the Eternal in life. The contemplation of the Eternal becomes the highest reward of life. The peace-chants are thus inseparably linked with the body of the Upanishads which tell us, "Lord-permeated all this is, whatever moving thing there is in the moving world."

The peace-chants thus form the key to a progressive realisation of life's possibilities in a wisely co-ordinated scheme of values. They are really the 'Peace-chants' for they resolve all conflict and lead us to the house beautiful.

BOOK - KNOWLEDGE IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

By JIBENDRA

Knowledge of the Shastra is one of the four indispensable aids to success in spiritual life. The other three are personal effort, Guru and Kālā respectively. Book-knowledge by itself is ineffective; it cannot without the aid of others give us realisation. It must therefore be supplemented by intense personal effort. Then comes the help of the living Guide, the Teacher and lastly, Time, to complete the Cycle of the divine fulfilment.

We speak of Shastra. But what is Shastra? It means the principles, powers and processes which govern the realisation. One must be well-equipped with the knowledge of these things before or simultaneously with proceeding on the spiritual path. They give us direction of the road and the clue to the hidden dangers and difficulties, the trials, temptations and pitfalls on the way and serve as light-posts to guide us through the many vicissitudes of the Spiritual journey. Fortified with this knowledge we can save ourselves from many a detour, ambush and error. One may also start without it, but in that case the chances are there he will wander on as through a maze without being able to find the true way out.

But the Shastra is not one. They are many and being the outcome of different personal experiences on different degrees, levels and gradations of spiritual existence, often come in conflict with and contradict one another. Beyond certain most elementary principles such as the stress on purity and continence, peace, silence and equanimity in the consciousness, and the ultimate goal which is the realisation of

Truth, the Shastras do not often agree. This divergence of the Shastras has been well stressed in the famous answer of Yudhisthira which we all know. The Srutis vary, one part not agreeing with another; there are no two sages who do not differ in opinion; the secret of spirituality lies in caves. We should therefore go the way the great have gone. Here then is a clear indication that books and opinions are not often a safe or reliable guide for the novice because they are often found to conflict with one another, nay even to be self-contradictory. It required a superhuman genius like Sri Krishna to produce out of the varied and conflicting texts of the Upanishads the unique and magnificent synthesis of the Gita. The safest guide, then, is the Guru, the teacher who has himself trod the way and realised the Truth. Sri Ramakrishna has defined Shastra to be the words of the Guru. And he has exhorted us to begin spiritual discipline, nay, to be immersed in it after hearing the Shastra from the mouth of the Guru. No more of book-knowledge as soon as the essence of it has been acquired. He has indeed warned against the danger of going too much after books. Study of too many scriptures, in his opinion, confuses the understanding and is productive of more harm than good. Follow the words of the Guru and light will come. He, however, drew a distinction between the class of ordinary practitioners and the Acharyas and said that only he who is destined to be an Acharya is called upon to know many things. So he alone of all the

practitioners could freely range in the wide, tangled and interminable tract of the Shastras where others are sure to be lost. The Acharya has not only to know and realise the Truth for himself but convince others and the world at large. Therefore his case was exceptional. He likened Acharya to a combatant who has many opponents to kill. For him it is necessary to be provided with a shield and a spear. But Acharyas are rare, exceptional and they appear once or twice in a century.

"Experience" says Swami Vivekananda, "is the only teacher we have. We may talk and reason all our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth, until we experience it for ourselves. You cannot hope to make a man a surgeon by simply giving him a few books. You cannot satisfy my curiosity to see a country by showing me a map; I must have actual experience. Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge. Beyond that, they have no value whatever. Clinging to books only degrades the human mind. Was there ever a more horrible blasphemy than the statement that all the knowledge of God is confined to this or that book? How dare men call God infinite, and yet try to compress Him within the covers of a little book!" Therefore he has urged us, "Give up all argumentation and other distractions. Is there anything in dry intellectual jargon? It only throws the mind off its balance and disturbs it. Things of subtler planes have to be realised. Will talking do that? So give up all vain talk." This reminds us of the oft-quoted lines of the Upanishad: नयमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन । etc. "Take up one idea," exhorts he, "make that your life, think of it; dream of it, live that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves,

every part of your body be full of that ideal and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking machines." Would it not be enough preoccupation for a whole life to work out and realise in practice any of the great ideas thrown out by the Upanishads as for instance, "I am He," "Thou art That," "All this is Brahman; this self is Brahman?"

Why then is so much emphasis laid upon practice? Because that is the secret of success, the *Open Sesame*, in spiritual life. It is not enough to acquire intellectual knowledge which is easily done. That knowledge, to be effective, must be realised in life. "Ancient Indian thought" observes Sri Aurobindo, "meant by knowledge a consciousness which possesses the highest Truth in a direct experience; to become, to be the Highest that we know is the sign that we really have the knowledge". Book-knowledge is evidently not this knowledge.

Books have become an unhealthy obsession with us. We waste time in reading and discussing them while the hour for spiritual practice goes by. Constant pre-occupation of the mind with one's own thoughts or those of others embodied in books hermetically seals it against the descent and reception of truth, light, knowledge, power from above—a descent which can only take place in a quiet, peaceful and silent mind and not in a mind which is ever active, restless and pre-occupied. It has, therefore, been urged that the turmoil of intellectual activity has to be silenced like the vital activity of desire, for it is only in a quiet mind that the true consciousness can be built up. How many of the learned men, scholars and philosophers

give practical proof of their scriptural knowledge and live up to their professions of equality and brotherhood of man? Are not those who are most loud and clamorous in professing our being all one and the same self, the very people who make the most invidious distinction between men and men, men and women, and between themselves and others? How many of them rise above the body-consciousness and do not confound the Self with body and mind? If books made men better, changed their lives or widened their hearts, the world would be an altogether different place to live in from what it is today. The fact that it is not so is proof positive of the inadequacy of mere book learning for the purpose of spiritual life. Books may act as an incentive to higher life by stimulating the intellect a little. They have therefore an intellectual but not a spiritual value.

In spiritual life the object is to realise the spirit, the Atman, as the fundamental truth of our existence—not merely know or apprehend intellectually—and this can only be done by a spiritual living. This distinction between spirituality and intellectuality which has caused so much error, confusion and misunderstanding in human mind, has been clearly brought out by Sri Aurobindo in a passage in his *Life Divine*. "Spirituality is not high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things..... Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being." He also exhorts: "One may practise Yoga and get illumination in the mind and reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital; one may even establish surprising physical siddhis; but if the true soul power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come to the front, then nothing genuine is done." This is tantamount to Sri Ramakrishna's "If Sachchidananda is not attained, my child, then nothing is gained."

"Read only the sacred books. Those books which donot evoke love and faith in God are useless. They only make a man vain of his learning. My Child, if you wish to make your life blessed, if you desire your own good, then dive deep in meditation. Do not float on the surface but repeat the name of the Lord and dive deep."

—SWAMI BRAHMANANDA,

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

EYES OF LIGHT—POEMS: BY DILIP
KUMAR ROY, NALANDA PUBLICATIONS,
POST BOX 1353, BOMBAY. PP 144. RS. 4.

It is Sri. Roy's complaint that "till now life's lyre has thrilled to artists, but rarely to seers and dreamers." This volume of poetry is an attempt by a dreamer to make good this deficiency. Sri. Roy is even, let us say, more than a mere dreamer, for he confronts the universe not with inchoate longings, but with the certitude of faith, a faith that has attained almost to the precision of a doctrine. The elements of this doctrine can be put together even from the fragmentary utterances of the poems. The poet seeks to "bask in the sun of Knowledge—outsoar the body's bars" and he feels that the vividness of his longing carries with it the assurance of its own fulfilment. "No Bird of Fire sings of the blue without an answering flame of sky." The transcendent manifests itself both as the "Glean beyond the Empyrean's topless height" and as the urge already present within us to realise it. It is at once a haunting presence and an unrealised verity. "Beloved, yet unglimped," "alien yet intimate" are the terms that the poet employs to describe it. All the poet's efforts are "to tear the veil and all that separates our homesick heart from the Home elusive, near yet far, which, beckoning, waits!" The "mystic void" is also the very soul-breath that fills Life's sails. Therefore, the Eternal is not apart from the temporal, the Absolute from the particular. The poet is able to "glimpse in dew-drops heavens of the sea and feel in a heart-beat Eternity." Pain, privations and ignorance are themselves the vehicles of that which is Bliss, Freedom and Light:

Even shadows live on alms of Light,
Our chains are anklets in disguise,
The abyss is but inverted height,
In Night's blind sea the dawn-skiff plies.

The poet, therefore, may call himself a pantheist, but he knows also that the Reality of the Universe

is not the sum-total of all the objects it contains, but what transcends them while comprehending them. "No true rose is a total of petals and perfumes that perish."

The system of metaphysics is complete; "the fundamental brain work" is quite evident. But should the intellection be so much in evidence in poetry? Professor K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar in his Foreword deprecates the raising of such questions. What a poet chooses to deal with is his own business, declares the Professor; we have only to judge the product by its effect on us. But criticism is not a mere recording of the critic's reactions, it is also seeking in reason the basis of one's reactions. If such reasoning out of things raises these same questions, what then?

Milton described good poetry as what is simple, sensuous and passionate. But one may have a passion for *thought* and this mode of passion too is a legitimate urge to poetic creation. Did not Wordsworth declare poetry to be 'the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science,' including the metaphysical science? But this passion, if it is authentic for purposes of poetry, must express itself "sensuously," where by Milton meant that it must embody itself in concrete imagery, not being content to remain a welter of abstract verbiage. So must it also attain to simplicity, which is quite other than the naivete of the unskilled, mere slovenly casualness of workmanship. Milton's simplicity is the unity of the pattern, which subduces to its own single regnant purpose the multifarious vassal ingredients of a poem, its diction, rhythm, imagery or story.

Sri. Roy's poetry has not yet attained to such simplicity and sensuousness. Turgidity is the fault to which it is most liable.

.....He is omniprevalent,
Outgleams in springs he hatches in the rocks
Transmuting sandy sepulchres to verdant
Valleys aflower with laughter and dance of life.

May not the fault be traced to the cause that the poetic aspirant is not true to his own philosophy? The seer's eyes, he declares, "see deeps in droplets and galaxies in glimmers." But, by preference, he dwells on the deeps and the galaxies, not on the droplets and the glimmers. Another poet who declared that heaven and home are kindred points, often dwelt on the "home," the Pet Lamb, the Cuckoo and the Small Celandine. But Sri. Roy scarcely ever turns aside from the high mystic path, the Soul's quest of the ineffable Absolute and Ultimate. Individual human beings and their particular experiences do not figure in his poetry, though it declares that these also can be pregnant with Eternity. The Muse may sometimes soar into "the intense inane," but she can dwell with comfort only among the warm human affections and the sights, sounds and smells of this very solid earth. Nor is she forgetful of her highest calling when she does so and practises the humbler disciplines of verse composition.

Prof. K. SUBRAHMANYAM.

AN OUTLINE OF INDIAN ART: BY
P. RAJESWARA RAO, ADVOCATE, ELLORE,
ANDHRA: PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR,
PRICE: 1-8-0.

The essays in this small but well got-up volume cover a wide field of Indian Art. They deal separately with Music, Dancing, Drama, Painting, Architecture and Sculpture. The author though not an artist, is a genuine lover of art. The treatment shows an earnest attempt to study the subjects touched on and a sincere desire that Indian Art should recover its proper place in our national life.

M. R. R.

ASPECTS OF THE VEDANTA: (SIXTH
EDITION). G. A. NATESAN & CO. MADRAS.
PAGES: 231. PRICE: RS. 2/-.

Students of Vedanta are indebted to this enterprising firm of publishers for providing them at a comparatively cheap price, such a rich and varied intellectual and spiritual fare. The book consists mostly of addresses delivered in India and outside by distinguished Swamis and Savants dealing with the problems of perennial philosophy from different angles of view. Noteworthy among the contributors are the Swamis Vivekananda, Abhedananda and Saradananda as well as Paul Denssen, Maxmuller, Prof. Rangachari and Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan.

M. R. R.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA
PATNA
AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna, was started in the year 1922 and since then it has been functioning as a centre of charitable, educational and religious activities in this capital city of Bihar. Through the hearty co-operation of the public and the devoted services of a valiant band of selfless monastic and lay workers, the Ashrama has developed from humble beginnings into a very useful institution. This centre runs at present a free Upper Primary School for boys of poor backward communities, an outdoor Charitable Dispensary,

a Public Library and Reading Room and a Students' Home. It organises also relief works according as occasions arise. Moreover, scripture-classes, periodical lectures and discourses on the lives and gospels of great prophets and incarnations are held in and outside the Ashrama to stimulate spiritual culture and develop in all a catholic outlook in the light of the lofty teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

We need hardly point out that we are to depend entirely on public donations and subscriptions for the upkeep of the Ashrama and the management and expansion of its varied activities. Unfortunately, the humanitarian services of this philanthropic

institution are being greatly hampered at present for want of adequate funds. Liberal help in the shape of donations is urgently needed to meet the pressing demands of this centre of the Mission. We therefore appeal to our generous countrymen to extend their financial support to our noble cause and thus help forward the man-making and nation-building activities we have been carrying on for the benefit of all. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI TEJASANANDA
Secretary.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
SEVASRAM, SILCHAR, CACHAR
REPORT FOR 1944-1947

Against tremendous odds which the war and successive natural calamities like flood etc. brought, this Institution maintained its steady progress during the years under review. Though, flood having been the annual visitor in the district of Cachar, the programme of constructive work could not be much pushed forward, the Sevasrama carried on its famine and flood relief work bringing much needed succour in diverse ways to many miserable.

To mention the least the Sevasram during the years under review popularised the ideas of the Great Master towards establishing everlasting peace and harmony between different faiths. Educational services were carried on by the maintenance of a Students' Home, a Library and by running of night schools for the backward and the poor.

The floods of July 1946 and June 1947 did much damage to all the houses of the Ashrama. Consequently they need thorough overhauling, for which, according to the plan of different branches of the work, an amount of Rs. 10,000 is an immediate and minimum necessity.

So the appeal to the generous public is for liberal donations which may be sent to Swami Purushatmananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevasram, Silchar, Dt. Cachar, Assam.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITASRAMA,
KALADY

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1945-47

Kalady, having been immortalised by the birth of Jagadguru Acharya Sri Sankara, the Ramakrishna Mission thought it their duty to revive its sacred traditions by making it the centre of Vedantic culture and learning. With this idea in mind this Ashrama was opened on the Sankara Jayanti Day in April, 1936.

Work have been undertaken to propagate spirituality and culture among the masses along with secular education according to the old Gurukula System, of course modified to suit the needs of modern times.

The main features of work during the period were: I. Inauguration of the English High School. II. Starting of Separate Religious Library; III. Starting of a monthly in Malayalam by the name *Anantavani*.

Funds required for immediate needs are as follows: For-(a) Completion of the High School Building—Rs. 3,500. (b) Construction of a Hostel Building—Rs. 10,000 (c) Construction of a ghat in the river Rs. 20,000; (d) Expansion of the laboratory Rs. 5000. It is believed that from the kind public will proceed all the necessary help.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS'
HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

THE FOURTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT (1948).

During the year under review the Home functioned in all its branches of activities with increasing efficiency and greater usefulness.

The Home has three main distinct sections, the Collegiate, the Technical and Secondary. So far as the first is concerned, the Home provides only boarding and lodging, while in the case of the other two it provides instructional facilities also. The number of the boarders in the different sections during the end of the year was respectively 38, 74 and 143.

In the Collegiate section the students maintained a high standard of proficiency. Among the 28

students who appeared in the different University examinations 27 passed and most of them with brilliant results.

In the *Technical section*, The Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute prepares students for L. A. E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering) Diploma issued by the Technological Diploma Examination Board constituted by the Government. The course extends over a period of three years, at the end of which public examination is held. After successful apprenticeship in a recognised workshop for one year, the student is granted the Diploma. Out of the 13 students who were sent up for public examination 6 came out successful.

In the *Secondary section*. The Residential High School (Athur Camp) continued to work there satisfactorily during the year. The strength of the school is limited by the number for whom free boarding and lodging can be found in the institution. On the date of the report (which is 1st January '49) the strength was 143 boarders and 10 day scholars (children of the members of the staff). For the last S. S. L. C. public examination, 26 appeared and all were declared eligible. The night school started last year on the Independence Day in the neighbouring Harijan Colony continued to be run by a band of senior pupils of the school.

In the *elementary section*, The Centenary Elementary School, Mylapore, which was taken over by the Home committee in 1945, has been functioning well, and has been growing in strength year by year, supplying a real want of the locality. At the end of the year under review the school had a strength of 304.

The Ramakrishna Mission Higher Elementary School and Harijan Hostel, Mallankaranai (Uttaramerur), during the year under review became a full-fledged Higher Elementary School with a strength of 151 boys and 36 girls. Both the school and the hostel are progressing satisfactorily and doing their mite to bring light and life to a place where it is much needed.

In conclusion, it is to be said that the Institution, which has been functioning in as many diverse useful ways as shown above, is but a monument to

public generosity and an affirmation of the faith that the springs of charity can never be dried up in this ancient land, however hard and parched up the conditions of life may be. In the deepest sense of humility the management acknowledge their gratitude to numerous kind donors to the Institution, who have been imperceptibly working out a vital national cause, by constantly keeping the finance fed.

But still the fact remains that eversoaring prices of food stuffs have completely unhinged the economy of the Institution. Though the increasing public response to the Cause has enabled the Institution, which has been running in deficit since 1942, to stand a few big blows, yet it cannot be said that the Institution stands on secure financial stability.

Therefore, in the name of the future generation of India, the appeal to the philanthropically bent and constructively minded generous public is, that the finance of this Institution may be in their mind whenever they are charitably disposed.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
VIDYALAYA, COIMBATORE DISTRICT,
MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1947-48.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya has, by the grace of God, just completed the eighteenth year of its useful existence. The Vidyalaya, which is run on the lines of the ancient Gurukula has, for its ideals, those preached and practised by the great men of India. The strength of the school during the year was 169 and all the twelve students that were sent up for the public examination came out successful.

Except the High school, the Vidyalaya has many other aspects of its work, of which T. A. T. Kalanilayam of the higher elementary school serves to give the benefit of education to the children of Perianaickenpalayam and the neighbouring villages. The strength of the school during the year was 198.

In the Vidyalaya training is given to the pupils in carpentry, tailoring and spinning. The

management aspire to develop the present workshop into a full-fledged Industrial Section.

In the Arts competition which has been an annual feature of the Vidyalaya for the past seven years, 99 pupils belonging to 17 high schools of Coimbatore, Salem and the Nilgiris districts participated.

Rural service forms an important item in the activities of the Vidyalaya. A night school is being run in the Harijan Colony of Perianaickenpalayam by one of the Vidyalaya workers and 25 persons are receiving instructions in this school every night.

Out of 160 boys of the Vidyalaya 32 received completely free boarding, lodging and education. 29 received free boarding and lodging, and 49 received free education.

The immediate and deeply felt needs of the Institution are a beautiful temple, dormitories to accommodate the boys, the quarters for workers and a well-equipped Industrial section.

Therefore, the management appeal to charitable public for kind and continued financial help, so that the Institution may find itself of greater use to greater numbers in the immediate future.

THE 87th BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The 87th birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on Sunday, the 23rd January, 1949, at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. A large gathering attended the function. Dr. J. H. Cousins presided. A tastefully decorated photo of the Swamiji was placed on the dais.

The function began with *Harikathakalakshepam* by Sri K. S. Ganesa Iyer on *Vibhishana Saranagati*. Mr. Justice P. Satyanarayana Rao in the course of his speech in Telugu said that there was a tendency nowadays to bring down every one to

the Sudra level. Swami Vivekananda emphasised the need by raising up everyone to Brahmana level which will culminate in one spiritual community. Vidwan Sri. B. Chokkalingam in his Tamil lecture stressing upon the gospel of service to Man as worship of God, and pointing out that Swami Vivekananda was the embodiment of that ideal, exhorted the audience to follow that ideal, so that India might become truly great. Dr. K. C. Vardachari in his address in English said that Swami Vivekananda did not preach either Advaita or Visishadvaita but contacted the Divine and manifested the divine consciousness. The speaker emphasised Swami Vivekananda's gospel of 'Strength', which if understood and followed would open a new era.

Dr. Cousins then distributed the prizes to the students who were successful in elocution competition in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and English. A recitation by the first prize winners in the competition was conducted.

In his Presidential address Dr. Cousins said that he was not new to the ideas, ideals, and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, for forty seven years ago, once while confined to bed, he had read some books by Vivekananda, which opened to him a new realm of thought giving him such a conception of the universe as he never knew before. Continuing the President said: the message of Vedanta affords the proper solution for all the ills of modern times. He emphasised that the modern problems can be solved only when we follow, rightly the teachings of Vedanta. Concluding, he paid a tribute to the various centres of the Order of Ramakrishna for their work in India and abroad, particularly in America, for faithfully disseminating the message of Vedanta as inculcated by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

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

The Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on Tuesday, the 1st March, 1949.

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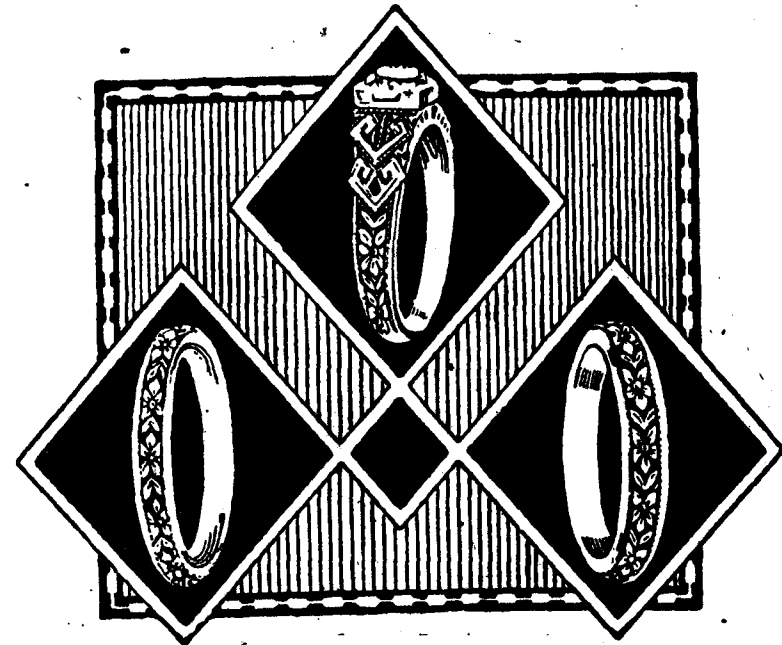
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Editor: Swami Kailashananda. Published by: Swami Adidevananda
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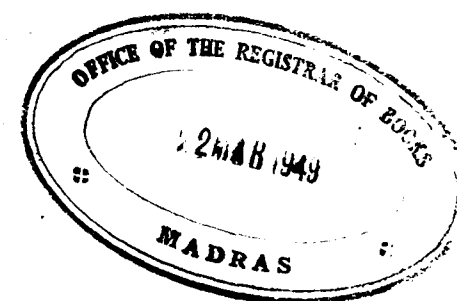
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MARCH 1949



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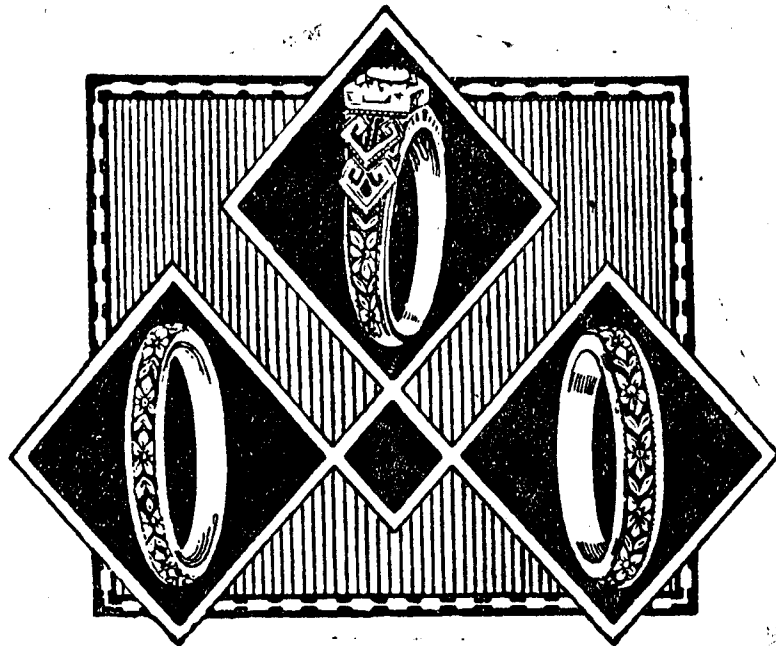


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NUMBER II

MARCH 1949

THE ONE GOAL OF LIFE AND A WAY

(FROM THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA)

“To realise God is the one goal of life. While aiming his arrow at the mark, Arjuna said, ‘I see only the eye of the bird and nothing else—not the kings, not the trees, not even the bird itself.’

“The thing is some how to unite the mind with God. You must not forget Him, not even once. Your thought on Him should be like the flow of oil without any interruption. If you worship with love even a brick or stone as God, then through His grace you will see Him.

“It is God Himself who plays about as human beings. If God can be worshipped through a clay image, then why not through a man?

“Once a merchant was shipwrecked. He floated to the shore of Ceylon, where Vibhishana was the king of monsters. Vibhishana ordered his servants to bring the merchant to him. At the sight of him Vibhishana was overwhelmed with joy and said: ‘Ah! He looks like my Rama. The same human form!’ He adorned the merchant with robes and jewels and worshipped him. When I first heard the story I felt such joy that I cannot describe it.”

* * *

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AS REVEALED BY HIS DIVINE CONSORT

Nobody knew Sri Ramakrishna more intimately than Sri Saradamani Devi, his Divine Consort. Neither any-body ever understood him better than her. Therefore her guidance in the matter of understanding Sri Ramakrishna is of the highest value.

It may be said that, but for Sri Saradamani Devi, who interpreted Sri Ramakrishna in her own original, homely and inimitable way, for four and thirty years after his passing away, the world could not have understood the Master to the extent it has done.

AS THE HUSBAND

Saradamani must have had toyed long with dreams in her childhood even after she had outgrown the attractions of dolls and the fascinations of their wonderland. The darling of her parents, she was nonetheless a symbol of subdued and lingering pain in their eyes. The green environs of her rural life often sparkled with dews of pathos. A gush of suppressed sigh often swirled about her in intense sympathy. Sarada did not know all these. She was too young and happy—as young and happy as anyone who does not know. But her parents knew what it was to have a son-in-law, the balance of whose mind was doubted. They had all reasons to feel deeply concerned about the future of their dear daughter. They all heard that their son-in-law had gone mad after the devastating Goddess, Kali.

Neither Sarada was allowed long to remain uninformed. Bits of bitter sarcasm and strains of strange analogies often invaded her nascent consciousness and left an import on her child mind of something that was not alright for her in future.

Perhaps within the reach of her ears, people compared her fate with that of legendary Uma, who was married to a mad husband of unsalutary habits, who would frequent cremation grounds, clad in tiger skin, decorating himself with dangerous ornaments of hissing snakes, and keeping a questionable company with a world of hob-goblins and all uncouth creatures, which all sensible people are reasonably afraid of. Under the impact of this forceful dubiousness about her future, Sarada must have sought refuge in her own mind as an effect of which the faculties of her imagination should have received a tremendous impetus. She had heard, her husband lived in a place called Dakshineswar, somewhere near Calcutta. She did not know any geography beyond the green horizon of her village guarded by the tall sentinels—the palmyra and date trees, which could sometime at best extend upto Kamarpukur, the village of her husband which she had visited.

When she was thirteen, to her great confusion, one day came to Sarada, an intimation, that her husband had come to

Kamarpukur and she must go there. She went, she saw and she lost all her imaginations. An instant's seeing with her own eyes, dispelled a universe of phantoms conjured up by reported halftruths, untruths and wishful representations of a longstanding. She found that he was all a human being with the only distinction that he was wonderfully beautiful, kind and considerate, the like of which she had never seen before; but, to tell the truth, not without a tinge of uncommonness, which unsympathetic people might call, madness. One cannot blame the people all the while for calling him, 'the mad son-in-law', as they, of Jayarambati, used to call him. For, what Sri Ramakrishna would sometimes do during his visit to his father-in-law's place was to all on a sudden jump up and shout, "This time I shall not leave any one, the *javanas* and the *chandalas* or any one for that". "Ah! gone mad totally; gone mad!" people would say.

This first real contact which Saradamani had at the age of thirteen left with her an ambrosial impression to which she gave expression in the following words: "I then used to feel as if a pitcherful of bliss was kept in my heart. It is impossible to express how my heart would remain suffused with serene, tranquil and divine bliss." Contrary to many fears, Sri Ramakrishna not only made her his own by his great love, but keeping the burning example of his own unsullied purity before her, also busied himself in training his wife from the details of household affairs to the ends of human life. He not only trained her as to where a wick of a lamp was to be placed, how one was to behave properly with different people in the house, what cares were to be taken when one was to travel by a steamer or a train; he also made her

understand that God-realisation was the only end of human life. Immaculate Saradamani had no occasion to feel that her husband's God-intoxication was in any way contrary to her interests. What she felt was a deep feeling of love for him which could not be characterised as a mere wife's love for her husband. The following incident will give a glimpse of the character of Sri Sarada's love for her husband. At this time, one day Hriday put a very absurd question to Saradamani. He asked: "Aunti, can you call my uncle as your father?" Saradamani smiled and said, "Why not? He is my father, he is my mother, he is my brother, friend, he is my all". Hriday was very much amused and began to make capital out of it by announcing this with loud laughter and clapping of hands: "Ah! see, you all see, my aunti has called my uncle her father!" On hearing of this, Sri Ramakrishna came and told Saradamani, "What is that, my dear! Have you to talk like that? what people will say?"

At this first instance of their contact Sri Ramakrishna seems to have been eager to impress upon her mind more of the social aspect of their relation which was but an expression of the real spiritual unity.

In later years Sri Ramakrishna not only addressed her as his Mother, but literally worshipped her with the rituals prescribed in the Tantrik texts, as the Divine Mother Herself, consecrating at her feet not only all the fruits and accessories of his life-long *sadhana* but even himself. But this did not come about before a strenuous period of *sadhana* had passed in Sri Saradamani's life. In her old age when an inquisitive disciple one day suddenly asked the Holy Mother, as to how she looked upon the Master, she gathered herself

up for a moment and then very calmly replied, "I look upon him like my child."

Long five years passed away after this meeting at the age of thirteen, when worse reports about Sri Ramakrishna's madness after God were in the air of her village. People said, this time he was lost beyond redemption. Now Saradamani decided to face facts and of her own initiative went to Dakshineswar and presented herself before her husband. Once again she discovered that things were perfectly alright with her husband, only, as she said long afterwards with soulful sympathy, 'nobody understood his *bhava* at that time.' Though Sri Ramakrishna had all these years remained almost oblivious of her existence, yet when she came to Dakshineswar, Saradamani found in him the same anxious husband ever solicitous for her comforts and welfare. She was ill, due to exhaustion of the arduous journey when she reached Dakshineswar. The first thing that Sri Ramakrishna did was to arrange for her proper treatment under his personal care. Though he was by this time a regularly initiated Sannyasin, Sri Ramakrishna allowed her to share the same bed remembering the instructions of his Guru, Totapuri, who wanted his disciple to know whether he was really grounded in the conquest of the senses, without which one could not be sure of the Advaitic realizations. Saradamani shared the same bed with her husband for eight months, when in the effulgence of the immaculate purity of Sri Ramakrishna she discovered that she too had conquered her self. The world knows how rare a fact it is.

At this time she had occasions to know that her husband was not an ordinary man, not even the same man as he was seen to be during the day, but an extraordinary man withal! During nights of these eight

months Saradamani could hardly sleep, for she would find the strange phenomenon of samadhi possessing her husband almost every night. With fearful anxiety she would watch him all the time and would sometimes find gossiping with invisible gods. "I would sit frigid in fear all the time, waiting for the dawn," she said. One night she got very much alarmed, for the samadhi lasted too long a time and had to send for Hriday, who knew the technique of bringing his consciousness down from the transcendental plane. When after eight months Sri Ramakrishna became aware of the fact that because of him Saradamani could not sleep properly at night, he made separate arrangements for her at the Nahabat.

Even during ordinary moods, the idea 'I am masculine' did hardly arise in Sri Ramakrishna's mind. He used to impute upon himself the idea that both he himself and his wife were the two female attendants to the Divine Mother. He would often get himself dressed like a woman by the Holy Mother, and filled with divine fervour attend to the Mother with the *chamara* for a long time.

One should not think that Sri Ramakrishna ever superimposed his own ideas on his wife who did not know how to protest. It was contrary to Sri Ramakrishna's very nature to impose any of his ideas on any one. In fact like a heroic husband, true to Dharma, he acknowledged the right of Sri Saradamani to draw him by the path of *samsara* by reason of lawful marriage. But it was to the eternal glory of Sri Saradamani, as the first disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, that she had chosen the path of *nivritti* once for all. She said that she had not come to drag him down the path of *samsara* but to help him in his chosen path.

This was how the last problem of Sri Ramakrishna's *vis-a-vis* Saradamani's life was solved. New vistas now opened up. There was no obstacle now in the way of realizing the Divine Mother in the wife and the God-head in the husband. The consummation came about in the *Sodashi puja*. This was a self-discovery and a discovery of each other. They realized each other as a seeming bifurcation of the Divine for the manifestation of Itself.

But all these took place in the deeper stratum of their existence as it were. On the social plane of their day to day life, Sri Ramakrishna took great care to see that she did not suffer from wordly inconveniences or that no obstacle could stand in the path of her spiritual advancement.

Though he himself was the greatest of the renunciators, that the world ever saw, he understood that Saradamani as a woman might have fascination for ornaments and at his wish Hriday presented her with some ornaments which after a time she did not like to put on. In how many diverse ways Sri Ramakrishna paid his precious attention to her, will be patent from her own words spoken at different stages of her life. His behaviour with her used to be invariably sweet. "O, how wonderfully he used to behave with me", said Sri Saradamani. "There was not even a single instance when he spoke in such a way as might wound my feelings.No, he did not cause in me even as slight pain as the stroke a flower might have done. His was the concern for my welfare. He would say: 'One has to work. A woman should never sit idle; idleness is

the seed-bed of all worthless and wicked thoughts. One day he brought me some jutes and told me, "Make a sling out of these, I shall keep suspended on this *sandesh* and *luchi* for the children, (meaning his disciples)."[†] "An old woman used to come there; previously she was of questionable morals. Now she became old and chanted the name of Hari. As I was all alone and she would come, I used to talk with her. One day Sri Ramakrishna saw this and accosted me 'Why does that woman come here?' 'She now talks all good things about Hari. What's the harm?', I said. 'One does not always harbour previous attitudes all the life.' 'Fie! Fie! What talk with a prostitute even though she may chant, Rama! Rama!' Lest they should give me evil counsel, he used to forbid me even to exchange a single word with such people. With so much of pains and care he used to protect me..... "Lakshmi (a niece of Sri Ramakrishna) used to enact imitating the *Kirtanias* before the Master with movements of her hands while singing and dancing. But he told me (in private) "That is her (Lakshmi's) attitude. But see that you do not discard your modesty imitating her..... "Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'If you have to enquire of a lame man as to how he became lame, you have to put it like this: how, pray, could the leg of yours become lame?... "The Master was such a great renouncer, yet he had great concern for me. One day he asked me 'How much money do you require for your pocket expenses?' 'Five or six

[†] One has only to see what was the thought behind this simple act. Firstly, his concern for the spiritual welfare of Sri Saradamani; Secondly, concern for the physical necessity, which was the prerequisite for the spiritual endeavours of his disciples.

[‡] The professional singers of Kirtanas.

rupees', I said. "How many *chapatis* do you take at night?', he then asked. I felt very much shy—how could I say this! But he was asking again and again and so I had to tell." "My husband was a naked Sanyasin.", she would say in supreme joy.

There were such numerous instances through which Saradamani felt the wonderful love of her husband, which moulded her destiny in a way that with the passing away of the Master in the full glory of God on earth, she found herself in a position which should have been strangling for any one who was other than Sakti Herself. Not even for a split second in her fairly long life Saradamani ever had any occasion to feel that in the setting of the great life of her husband her place was insignificant. Contrariwise she knew she was the indispensable element of her husband's life as her husband was in her life. They were the fulfilment of each other.

How much Sri Ramakrishna depended on Sri Saradamani is evident from her following words: "Ramlal was appointed the (permanent) priest at the Kali temple. After becoming the priest he thought, 'What more do I care, now I am the priest of the Mother Kali!' He would not take any more care of the Master, who would be lying here and there in the sway of ecstasies. The *prasadam* which used to be sent for him from the Kali temple would get dried. Thus the Master began to suffer inconveniences regarding food etc.'

"Then he sent repeated intimations asking me to go to Dakshineswar. Whenever he could catch anyone coming that side, he would send me a word along with him. Lakshmi Pan of Kamarpukur brought me the message: 'I am in difficulties here. After becoming the priest at the Kali temple

Ramlal has joined in the group of the priests. He does not take any care of me. You must come, by whatever conveyance available, however may be the expense.' Receiving all such intimations from the Master ultimately, I went."

As the husband, Sri Ramakrishna proved himself to be the *sahadharmi* to his wife in the truest sense of the word.

AS THE GURU

The sadhana period of Sri Ramakrishna's life culminated with the performance of the *Sodashi Puja*. The rest twelve years of his life were spent in constant divine communion on the one hand, and ceaseless spiritual ministrations on the other. As, during these twelve years, except for short intervals, Sri Saradamani was his constant companion, she had many occasions to observe Sri Ramakrishna's unique ways of imparting spirituality, the illuminating accounts of which lie strewn in her various reminiscent talks. To collect them together is to find an exquisite picture of Sri Ramakrishna as the Guru.

"The Master had no other concern but God", She said. "When I asked him what I was to do with the conch-bangles and the *sari* with which he had worshipped me during the *Sodashi Puja*, he advised me after a thought, 'You can give those things to your mother, who has given birth to you (my mother was alive at that time), but mind you, do not give her those things with the idea that she was a human being but give with the faith that She was the Jagadamba (the mother of the universe) Herself.' I did so. Such was the way of his teaching....."

"The Master used to speak on spiritual matters alone and on nothing else. He used to tell me, 'You have seen this human

body—now it is, now it is not; and then there is so much misery in the world. Why then assume this body again? To assume the body is to suffer.'

"In this Kali yuga one can realize God if one is firm in truth. The Master used to say, 'He who holds firmly to truth, is just lying on the lap of God. The Master was once suffering from illness at Dakshineswar. It was my practise to condense the milk by long boiling before I served him that as his diet. If it was one measure, I used to say it was half a measure, thus always quoting less than what it was. One day when I was found out, the Master told me in amazement, 'I wonder why you should do like this. You must hold fast to truth'.

"He could not even touch money in the least. If he did touch, his hands would get twisted. He used to say, 'This world is verily unreal. O Ramlal, if I knew that the world was real, I should have left your Kamarpukur cemented with gold. I know all else is trash, God alone is real...' "There was some trouble regarding his salary. He was paid less than what was due. When I requested him to have a talk with the *khajanchi* (cashier) he replied, 'Fie! Fie! To meddle with accounts!'... Renunciation alone was his wealth. Ah! I remember, one day, he went to the Nahabat for some spices. I gave a little of spices in his hand and a little more I gave in a packet of paper and said, 'Please take this with you.' He was to return from the Nahabat to his room. But what happened was that he went straight southward to the bund over the river, at the foot of the southern concert room. He could not find his way. He had lost all consciousness. 'Mother shall I get drowned!, Mother shall I get drowned!', he exclaimed. I was alarmed—the Ganga

was then in spate. Hriday picked him up just when he was about to fall in the Ganga. Why, do you think, he went southward? Because I had given a few grains of spices in his hand, he could not find his way. A holy man has not to save. His was the very absolute renunciation."

Thus Sri Ramakrishna often taught involuntarily, not even knowing that he was playing the roll of the Guru. He became the Truth itself and the radiance that beamed from him interpenetrated the surroundings and brought about a secret transmutation in all who were near him. If he had taught humility it is by becoming a blade of grass. He detested being called the Guru or the like; this dislike was not the outcome of a process of intellectualising. It was elemental with him. But yet this difficult roll of the Guru he played with as much naturalness, ease and unconsciousness as he did in the work of breathing. He did not bring any demeanour of a teacher with him. He was content to sing and dance and talk about his beloved, his only concern, God, the effect of this being that no body in the history of the world brought the tidings of *Reality* to humanity in a more effective way, all without knowing that he had done so.

Sri Saradamani says that she never saw the Master without joy. Wherever he went, he used to be the centre of a veritable fare of *ananda*. This strange tiller of the soil of the humanity while fertilising the bleak ground with the manure of *ananda* sowed the seeds of truth in the abundance of God, out of which waves of rich harvests are but natural expectations. Sri Saradamani transmits a glimpse of that joy. "Ah! what sylvan days were those at Dakshineswar. It was a veritable fare of *ananda*. Streams of people would come

and go through night and day and talks on God went on endlessly. There was no end to dancing, singing, kirtan and samadhi. I used to stand looking at him through the apertures in the bamboo fence hour after hour and would salute him with folded hands." Though Sri Saradamani's room was just a few yards from the Master's there would be months when she won't find a moment for a personal interview. This man with 'no work', as we understand it, in the three worlds used to be so busy with men, women and children, whom by the power of his love he attracted to him, just to take away from them the thousand miseries they suffered from and in the process fill them unknowingly with that joy and intelligence of which he was the embodiment.

A considerable portion of the brunt of the special care which Sri Ramakrishna used to take for those who were to become his intimate disciples, Sri Saradamani herself had to bear. She had to cook different sorts of dishes at different odd hours of the day or night, at the bidding of the Master, to suit the varying temperaments of the disciples. They who came to the Master to practise spiritual disciplines under his direct guidance, would very often pass their nights at the temple garden, and Sri Ramakrishna had to look after procuring them adequate and proper food and other incidental necessities. He had to think a lot and suffer more to make his disciples' ways of coming to him smooth and unobstructed. How much of insults he suffered to reach those who yearned for God! At times his life itself was attempted. But it never occurred to him that he was doing something extraordinary. He simply could not help but rushing through all dangers to a place where he knew there

was a single heart-beat for God. What all things he had to do! One day while listening to the reading of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, the Holy Mother commented, "As is mentioned here, 'As the yam so the sprout', exactly like this he used to talk with Rakhal's father so that he might please his mind. Whenever Rakhal's father would come, he showed him round this and that, fed him sumptuously and talked with him long hours. Do you know why? His secret fear was lest Rakhal, the darling, should be snatched away from him.

One has just to pause and think—what impelled him to live such a strenuous life even after attaining all what millions had aspired after through legion of centuries. It was the agony of the accumulated wealth, a wealth which increases in the process of giving away. It was the urge to hand down to the last bit the wealth which he had earned for the good of the world. And for that he had to fashion worthy recipients, out of whatever material was available to him, which in itself came to be his post-realisation sadhana, a sadhana of seeking and moulding seekers after God, indeed a unique phenomenon, so rare in the spiritual history of the world. This was Sri Ramakrishna as the Guru.

Sometimes it so happened that many nights Sri Saradamani would have to sit long hours at night waiting for the Master with his food. The Master used to go to Calcutta either on invitation to some religious gathering or of his own accord to see some of the young devotees who loved to think of God, but did not dare or could not manage to come to him because of the fear of their parents. Many a day, when everybody had slept, he returned to the temple garden late at night and with much

difficulty and a lavish use of lovely words to the gate keeper procured an entrance.

With what great alertness he used to keep watch over the spiritual aspirants is patent in the following incidents which the Holy Mother narrates: "Once I had given Baburam a little sugarcandy-water for drinking. He was then suffering from stomach trouble. The Master had seen it. One day he asked me, 'What did you give Baburam to take?' 'Sugarcandy water', I replied. On hearing this he said, 'They will have to become Sadhus. Why are you making them imbibe these bad habits?' One can see here the penetration of his eyes—how far he used to see and in what way he saw.

"Baburam used to tell, his mother," the Holy Mother narrates, "How much at best you do love me! How tremendously the Master loves us; you simply do not know how to love like that.' His mother would reply, 'What do you mean my child? I am your Mother and I do not know how to love?' That is the secret of Sri Ramakrishna's success as a teacher.

But on his part this loving was no less than a slow crucifixion. The Holy Mother said, "He suffered from illness because he had taken others' sins on his own body. He said, 'Girish had accumulated so much of sin. But he will not be able to suffer miseries.' It was within his power to die at will. He could have given up his body in samadhi. He said, 'Could I only have achieved tying them (meaning his intimate disciples, who were to form the Ramakrishna Order afterwards) together in one Unity!' Uptil now one used to address the other, 'How are you Naren Babu?' 'Are you doing well Rakhal Babu?', the other would reply. This was why he did not leave the body, notwithstanding all

suffering.' The Jagatguru that Sri Ramakrishna is, he had to work for all the millions and for the millenniums to come and so the necessity for establishing a brotherhood based on unity of souls.

Being importuned by a devotee for spiritual instructions Holy Mother once told, "My child what more precepts should I have to give? The precepts of the Master have already been published in the book form. If you can comprehend and assimilate any single saying of his, then, I tell you, every-thing will have been achieved."

AS GOD ETERNAL AND ABSOLUTE

It was the erudite sannyasin Bhairavi Brahmani who in an assembly of renowned scholars of the day gathered from the various parts of the country first declared on the testimony and the authority of the Sastras, and the proofs positive manifested in his life, that Sri Ramakrishna was God Incarnate on earth. In the face of facts her decisions were accepted by the scholars, and there was no one who came to accept the open challenge which the Brahmani gave on the point. Though generally speaking Sri Ramakrishna passed in the world as the child or the devotee of the Divine Mother, in some rare occasions he himself revealed his divinity to some of his most intimate disciples. Redoubtable Narendranath was one who fought with this revelation almost up to the last moment of Sri Ramakrishna's life. But before his passing away Narendranath was convinced that, 'He who appeared as Rama, He who appeared as Krishna, was now Ramakrishna in this body. In the hymn which Swami Vivekananda composed to Sri Ramakrishna, he addressed Him as, अवतारवरिष्ठ. It will be illuminating and interesting to know how

the Holy Mother used to look upon the Master in this respect. We quote the report of a conversation to the point between the Holy Mother and a disciple below :

"Disciple: Mother, people say that the Master is God Eternal and Absolute. What do you say ?

Mother: Yes, He is God Eternal and Absolute to me.

As she said 'to me,' I went on, 'It is true that to every woman her husband is God Eternal and Absolute. I am not asking the question in that sense.'

Mother: Yes, he is God Eternal and Absolute to me as my husband and in a general way as well."

A devotee (Suren Babu) once asked the Holy Mother: "Mother, when I perform the worship of the Master, I find a doubt within me. Say, for instance, I may have the general idea that my *Ishtadevi* and the Master are the same entity. But after performing the puja of my *Ishtadevi* in the image of the Master when I have to do the *visarjanam*, (dedication) of the japam with the words, 'स्वत्प्रसादात्महेश्वरी' I find a sort of doubt in me. The Holy Mother replied, smiling, "My child, He is Maheswara, He is Maheswari too. He is verily *Sarvadevamaya*, He is again *Sarvajivamaya*. In Him the worship of all the Devas and the Devis can be performed. It will do to address Him as Maheswara, it will also do to address him as Maheswari."

The Holy Mother mentions in her reminiscences instances when the Master himself told her that in future he will be worshipped from house to house. "Once when Sri Ramakrishna was lying ill at Cossipore, a few devotees brought some offering for the Mother Kali at Dakshineswar temple. On hearing that the Master

was at Cossipore they offered all the things before the picture of the Master and then partook of the prasada. On hearing about this Sri Ramakrishna remarked, "All these things were brought for the Divine Mother and they have offered them all here (meaning himself)!" I was very much frightened and thought, 'He is suffering from this dangerous disease. Who knows what might happen. What a calamity! Why did they do like this?' The Master too was referring to this incident again and again. Afterwards at a late hour in the night he said to me, "You will see how in course of time I will be worshipped in every house. You will see everyone accepting this (meaning himself)." This was the only day I heard him using the first personal pronoun with reference to himself. Usually he would speak of himself not as 'I', or 'me', but as 'case' or as 'belonging to this', pointing to his body." The holy mother also mentions several instances of how the disciples of the Master found tangible proofs of the Master's divinity in their moments of supreme resignation or extreme misery. Resurrection, literally understood, was almost a daily affair with Sri Ramakrishna as far as Sri Saradamani Devi was concerned.

When people of all sorts would come and torment her for the vision of the Master, she would say: "'Show me the Father, Show me the Father', they come and importune me. He is not so much any one's father. He used to feel thorn pricks if anyone addressed him as, 'Guru, Lord or Father'. How many ascetics and saints could not attain him through austerities of ages and now people without any sadhana or penance appear here to see him just now! I cannot do all so much."

Commenting upon the cleverness of the people of the modern age the Holy Mother once said: "You see people are very clever now-a-days. They have even taken up his photo. This Master-Mahashaya (popularly known as 'M.', the chronicler of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*)—do you think he is an ordinary man? He has taken down all his words. Show me another Avatara whose photograph is there and whose conversations have been taken down in such a meticulous wayHis word are the *Vedavakyas*."

The Holy Mother's convictions about the special message of the Ramakrishna-incarnation are revealed in the following conversation. "Keder Maharaj asked: 'Mother, did the Master come this time to give a new thing and was it because of this that he propounded the harmony of religions?' 'But you see, my child,' the Mother replied, 'it never occurred to me that the Master practised the different modes of sadhana with any (pre-conceived) plan to propagate the idea of the harmony of religions. He used to remain ever absorbed in God-intoxication. He used to relish the different *leelas* by worshipping Him in different ways—the different modes of sadhana through which the Christians, the Musalmans, the Vaishnavas and others

worship Him and achieve the Object. He would be hardly in the least awareness as to how days went and nights passed by. One thing, my child, you must know, in this incarnation *renunciation* is his speciality. Has any one ever seen such spontaneous renunciation? The harmony of religion, what you are speaking of, is also a point. On other occasions, because the stresses used to be laid on one idea, the other ideas fell suppressed."

Sri Saradamani realised the divinity of her husband by intuition, and not by rationalisation or scientific analysis. She knew that the fragrance of the rose was as much a fact as the fire in the flint.

Strange though it may seem to unprepared minds, when Sri Ramakrishna breathed his last, the Holy Mother¹ was heard sobbing the words: "O Mother Kali, where have you gone leaving me!"

During the thirty-four years she lived after the Master's passing away, the Holy Mother constantly gave the impression that by virtue of his physical disappearance Sri Ramakrishna had only become with her, an object subjectified, a communion, inseparable, consummated, nay incommunicable.

When the Reality asserts itself, can phantoms stand in the way?

"That nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and the other gods have poured their Strength, which is charged with the life-essence of the Avatars—Gods (Incarnate on earth)—Sri Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in its fullest measure."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

IN THE SHINE OF VIVEKANANDA

By DR. K. C. VARADACHARI

Swami Vivekananda's life work has been before us for more than half a century and who indeed is there who has not been touched by his message, influenced however subconsciously by his personality, who is there indeed who has not been made conscious of the spiritual? When he swept like a tornado over the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and America and Europe who was left unstimulated or indifferent? We know that lay men and women, religious men and savants alike were moved towards some subterranean sympathy with him and his message and they beheld in him the bringer of the New tidings.

Some he appeared as a great Patriot, a lover of India and Hinduism, a great bhakta and a great yogi and jnani. His intellect was massive but it was not certainly by his intellect alone that he was measured. It was the fundamental pattern of his personality that had some deep foundation in spirit that was pouring itself out of him that impressed all and gave his utterances elemental character and authentic note, that compelled attention, subdued the contrary emotions and commanded obedience and received overflowing measure of admiration and awe and willing surrender.

Though brought up in the atmosphere of rationalism the impact of the sensitive mind of Vivekananda with Sri Ramakrishna made him an instrument of the spiritual. It is one of those events in the lives of seers and saints that conversion happens suddenly; it is compared to the lightning-stroke that upturns one's whole make-up and sets the seal of a new

direction on the individual: *Vidyuto Vyadyutada itinnamimishada*—says the Upanishad—having beheld this supreme spiritual which is like lightning-flash one's whole vision becomes in-turned, deep-seeing and thus it happened to Vivekananda and in turn it had happened to all those who had even by veriest chance come across him—through personal contact, through his inspired writings or even through a reading of the story of his life.

He was a volcanic personality. There was a vein of romanticism which burst forth with such energy on the rationalism of his predecessors in Bengal like the founders of the Brahmo Samaj that they could not cope with his genius for conversion. His attractiveness was superb. It is said in the Upanishad that those who love the Divine as the garden of perfections become supremely attractive to all creatures. This may be stated of Swami Vivekananda. The authentic perfume of the eternal can only spread from one who had attained the divine and the eternal. It is not to the intellect that the Swami appealed nor to the emotion—though in both these directions there was exuberance in him—but to the deep core of spiritual unity—the underlying universal consciousness—the Brahman. Intuition he had in immense measure but he even went deeper to inspire men. It is this power of the superconscious and the universal that was capable of holding captive and converting the diverse types of men he came across. True education is of the depths—it is the capacity to call out or draw out the immense potentialities of the Sachchidananda from

the depths of individual being. In this he was a superb master, knowingly or unknowingly. This was his method—so has it been the method of the masters of spiritual Wisdom, the Teachers who knew that behind every individual covered over with several layers of physical, vital, and mental there remains the ocean of universal consciousness—the substratum of Universal Consciousness—and uncovered it by means of their own released and uncovered and welling-up universal consciousness.

Thus we know that Swami Vivekananda captivated every one and knew that one is loved not indeed for his attainments as an individual but for the Divine in him, incarnate in him as Master. Thus his love for the Master Ramakrishna Paramahansa was most enduring and we can say that even like Plato who never spoke out anything except in the name of his Master Socrates, whom he regarded as his own inner self and soul, Swami Vivekananda never for a moment lived apart from the consciousness of his Master and indeed did as that Master within, directed him in his work.

Having found the seat of his power and personality to lie in this universal Self or Brahman there was no wonder he splendidly counselled all to be bold and to act. "Be bold I say to the West; Be bolder I say to the East". It is the failure to be bold and to act that results in stagnation and portends failure. Even if materialistic, if the pursuit to knowledge is sustained, there can be gain. Indeed the western pursuit of material knowledge and understanding has resulted in the churning of poison out of matter. But that is necessary knowledge. It has entailed a deeper understanding of the forces of nature and now it is necessary to yoke it to the purposes of spiritual

being. To India he addressed the words 'be bolder', for it is not more of spirituality and religion that had led to her degradation and slavery but less of it. The richness of spirituality did not penetrate the deep universal core of personal being. Advaita consciousness was necessary. Renunciation of all else was imperative. Great would indeed be the gain to India and the West and the world as a whole if India and West turned inward to the universal core of Being.

This clarion call uttered from the eminence of spiritual realisation of oneness of the Divine in all roused the energies. Some roused themselves from their slumber. Some were awakened to the sense of the spiritual imperative and moved towards the light. Vivekananda represented to them the star of hope and focus of spiritual well-being. Other men who came after him looked upon him as a god on earth. Such deep universality and compassion combined in him.

Above all he was a man of Beauty in action, for that action flowed out of his realisation of oneness with the Divine and All, the Absolute. It is only when action flows out of that source within, that it bears the stamp of true art. Yoga is skill in action; *yogah karmasu kausalam*, said the Lord. The efficiency in reaching the end is not at all what is meant, but the gracefulness and beauty of execution. Swami Vivekananda was a beautiful soul and every thing that he did was of the nature of beauty.

Renunciation is power itself. This mantra did he chant and men like Gandhiji knew that this mantra was true. Swami Vivekananda pleaded for *kshatra-virya* and *brahma-tejas* but essentially he was conscious of what Visvamitra knew to be the truth—brahmatejas is immeasurably greater

than and included kshatra-virya and that it implied the sixfold sovereignty of self. Ksatra-virya must be renounced before brahma-tejas could begin to act. This is the poise of the infinite consciousness of Vasishtha.

Thus in a world that was steering towards disaster and soullessness he was born to show most superbly the path of the transcendent. He was in a sense a 'trans-valuer of values' even like Nietzsche. He had contempt for inaction and ignorance and he could not stand misery and squalor and pettiness. His artistic consciousness revolted against these. He loved the west for its artistic nature and admired its ways. But he also knew that all these could become soulless—bereft of the consciousness of the expression of the Absolute in every thing howbeit small.

As Dr. Cousins said many years ago, every great revelation demands a philosophical standpoint or statement and necessarily this entails the expression of that philosophy in act or ritual. Sri Ramakrishna gave the authentic teaching, Swami Vivekananda his most eminent disciple (with whom and to whom Sri Ramakrishna gave the advaita teaching) gave it both a philosophy—a universal philosophy that admitted all religions and philosophies as

true versions of the Absolute—and an institution—the Ramakrishna Mission and Math. It is to be the expression of the Absolute consciousness that had accepted to express itself in and through each individual member of the Mission and Math. But it was not merely a mission of mercy to the poor and an instrument towards knowledge for the ignorant. It was to liquidate the unbeautiful. The aesthetic, moral and religious conscience of India had to be roused, in fact in many cases to be created for creating a beautiful India, a beautiful world.

Swami Vivekananda was in more senses than one the maker of our Modern India and the giver of the mantra of One World. Not by any other has humanity been stirred so deeply. It was with this 'open' religion of spirit that Gandhiji was able to gather strength. He showed the way to the occult ground of all being—the secret strength of the spiritual over the minds of all men.

Rarely indeed have such men incarnated on earth; rarely have they succeeded so much as Vivekananda. The spiritual force of unity was released from the depths of being and is now moving forward towards the realisation of a Universal Religion based on catholicity and spiritual *anubhava* and faith in the Divine in man.

"Whether a Vedantist goes by the one way or the other, anyway he will no longer look upon the world from any selfish motive whatsoever. He rises above all envy, overness, jealousy and the like. He can then do good to the world from the very real sense of duty. He can then really sacrifice his earthly and mortal life even for an earthworm. Because he has realized that the very Self that is within him is immortal and present everywhere. He is no longer a body, nor senses, nor the mind and so forth, nor their combination. He and the Self—One. He and the world—One."

—SWAMI TRIGUNATITANANDA.

THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA TO THE COMMON MAN

By SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

The Gita is one of the most popular religious books of the world. Perhaps the Bible is the most widely circulated scripture in the world. But, then, the English language is spoken by the largest number of people in the world, and there is much propaganda and organised attempt to popularise the Bible all over the globe. There has been no such effort in the case of the Gita. The Gita stands on its own merit, and it spreads simply by virtue of its utility.

The Gita embodies the essence of Hinduism. The Upanishads are the cream of the Vedas, and the Gita contains the gist of the Upanishads. It is said that if one can master the Teachings of the Gita, one does not need read any other scripture. So it is that many Hindus, all over India, make it a point to read some portion of the Gita as a daily religious observance. Innumerable are the lives which have been transformed by the Teachings of the Gita. From times immemorial the Gita has been looked upon as the gift of God to the afflicted humanity. Many have taken the fullest advantage of this gift and have found a solution of the mystery of life and death, which is the most baffling problem to humanity.

The Gita has a universal appeal. Though it is a Hindu Scripture, people belonging to any religion in any part of the world will find help and inspiration, guidance and strength from it. The Gita was taught by Sri Krishna, who is believed by generality of the Hindus to be

an Incarnation of the Divinity on earth. Substitute the word 'God' in place of the word 'Sri Krishna' in the book, and the Gita will completely cease to be the scripture of any particular religion and it will become the religious book of the entire humanity. It is in this respect that many non-Hindus are enamoured of this book. It has been translated into many languages—Indian and European. Lord Warren Hastings, the first English Governor-General of India, wrote in his introduction to the first English translation of the Gita, that long after the British rule had ceased to exist in India, the English people would feel proud that the immortal scripture of India was translated into English language.

The reason why the Gita is so popular is that it is intensely a human document. It does not deal so much with high metaphysics—though that also it does sufficiently—as with the daily and immediate problems of one's spiritual life. As a matter of fact, even while dealing with high philosophy, the Gita has always an eye to the actual struggles and sufferings of a man's life, and gives a practical solution to them. The Gita does not talk of airy metaphysics from a high pedestal without any feeling of sympathy for human weakness and affliction, but it takes man where he is and gives him a lift till he feels himself safe and secure in the guidance of God.

To view from this point, it is not surprising that the scene of the Gita is laid on the

great battle-field of *Kurukshetra*—the arena of the biggest battle that was fought in ancient India, wiping out the entire army on both sides except seven survivors. The battle was between the two rival dynasties of India—between the hundred brothers of the Kaurava race, of whom Duryodhana was the eldest, on the one side, and the five Pandava brothers—Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna and two others on the other side. Duryodhana was wily, crafty, greedy and ambitious, wishing to be the supreme lord of the land and ready to wipe out anybody that stood in his way. Yudhisthira was the eldest of the Pandava brothers. He represented meekness, humility, and was, in fact, the embodiment of the highest virtue. The very virtuousness of the Pandava brothers was the cause of great heart-burning to Duryodhana who represented abject villainy on earth.

He wanted to crush them completely and his acts of oppression and wickedness reached the last limit when even Yudhisthira, so well known for his meekness, was obliged to stand in battle array against Duryodhana. Arjuna, the second brother of Yudhisthira was a brilliant warrior almost more than a match for anybody that stood in that battlefield on either side. And he was fortunate in having Sri Krishna, who happened to be a great friend of his, as his Charioteer. Naturally, Arjuna came to the field with great enthusiasm and confident of success. Trumpets sounded, conches blew from both sides, signifying the coming events. Just before it was time to strike, Arjuna drove his chariot to the middle of the arena, in order to have a glimpse of the arrayed armies on both sides. As he cast his glance over that sea of human heads, and found amongst them his friends, relations and kinsmen, his heart at once

sank at the thought of what would be their fate in the immediate future. His nerves failed, his mighty bow Gandiva fell from his hands, his tongue became parched, his head began to reel and he began to quake in fear. He began to think what was the use of a battle in which he was going to lose so many of his dear relations. As it happens always with man, when he fails in a critical moment, he tries to cover up his weakness with high-sounding philosophy. Arjuna also declared that it would be sheer madness and extremely sinful to fight the battle which awaited them; rather than winning such a battle and getting possession of the whole world it was better to live on alms like an ascetic or a recluse. A long train of such thoughts flashed into his mind and he decided not to fight. But his charioteer, Sri Krishna, was shrewd enough to probe through the high philosophical words of Arjuna and began to ridicule him at his cowardice at the most critical juncture. Sri Krishna said, "It is scandalous that you should be seized with fear at this trying moment. By such attitude you will stand condemned before the whole world. People will only laugh at you for your cowardice. Do not yield to unmanliness. It does not befit thee, who has got the far-famed reputation of being a mighty warrior. Just shake off this feeling of timidity and stand erect ready to fight". As it happens often in life, when a friend comes to console and sympathise with us in our moments of distress, our feelings well forth and we become all the more conscious of our pitiful condition, Arjuna's case was exactly the same. The more Sri Krishna began to console and encourage him, the more Arjuna began to dilate upon the opposite views. And the conversation that followed between them is the Gita we have got—the divine

nectar and a great healing-balm to the afflicted humanity for all time.

There has been much controversy as to whether the Gita advocates militarism, and being the word of God how could it support bloodshed and inhuman cruelties that are the concomitant effects of a war? Some even try to explain away the hard fact of the battle of Kurukshetra by saying that it is only an allegory—it is not a fight between the Kaurava and the Pandava armies, but a conflict between the evil and good forces of the world, and which are also existent in every human heart. Those who find satisfaction by such explanation, let them have it by all means. But the message of this immortal book will be lost to the common man, if we were to shroud the real background of the Gita in mystifying words. The Gita is all the more beautiful, nay it is all the more useful, because it encourages us to face facts, face life and to fight out the problems that are inevitable to our material existence in this earthly sojourn of ours. Nevertheless, we cannot say that the Gita supports and encourages militarism and the fighting instinct in man. It does not talk of fight nor does it talk of non-fight. It only speaks in terms of one's duty. Whatever be the station of one's life, one must stick to one's duty and discharge it honestly, firmly, and conscientiously, fearless of consequences. Being a Kshatriya, it was Arjuna's duty to fight, and, circumstances placed him in the midst of an ensuing battle. Thus it did not befit Arjuna to say that he would not discharge his legitimate duties. That did not become any man with any grain of self-respect, far less Arjuna who was best amongst men. So Sri Krishna said, "Yield not to unmanliness. That does not befit thee." Swami

Vivekananda, a great warrior in another field—the warrior-monk of India—used to say that in these words are contained the gist of the whole of the Gita. If you know it, and can master it, you have known the whole Gita. If you can practise it in life, if you can translate this message into action at every moment of your life—wherever and who ever you may be—you get the blessings of the Gita. Religion is not cowardice, it is not a compromise with one's weakness, it is not faint-heartedness, but it is manliness, it is strength, it is the courage to face life, it is the determination to discharge one's duty God has placed before one. Had India practised this message of the Gita, the face of the country would have been entirely different. Unfortunately people talk of the Gita, they spend their time in endless discussion over the philosophical implications of the Gita, but don't put its teaching into action, and the whole of the country is steeped in *tamas*, in inertia, in inaction or wrong action.

In life, how often do we not find ourselves in the predicament with which Arjuna was faced! We have often to choose between what is right and what is advantageous. The bolder amongst us will choose what is right irrespective of all material losses that are involved. But the wordly-wise will choose what gives him material advantages and try to intellectualise away his moral weakness. How often does it not occur in life that if you have to speak out the truth—the truth and nothing but the truth—you risk your prestige, you risk a great financial loss which you can easily avoid, if you twist the truth only to a slight degree! Which of the two will you choose? The choice you make will indicate the strength of your moral fibre. Real strength means to take courage in both

hands, and, break life, if need be, to pieces. And he that loseth life shall find it, and he that findeth life shall lose it. Only he who can face death at any time will attain to immortality.

And why is it that a man is found wanting, in the hours of trial? It is because he thinks himself to be a material body—to be matter, and not the spirit or soul. Matter lives and dies, but soul is immortal, spirit never dies. You think yourself in terms of matter, as such you run after material things which are evanescent and which cannot give you any real or lasting peace. If you can realise that you are soul and not matter you can look the world in the face and you will have no reason to stoop down and compromise with truth. So Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "Why do you grieve over the coming events? The soul never dies. When the body dies, the soul takes to another body. A "Body" is bound to perish sooner or later. The soul had the infinite past, it will have the infinite future. Between the two, the soul was clothed in a material body, for which you are anxious. It is a thousand pity that for the sake of this perishable body, you are afraid to face truth, you are afraid to do what it is your duty to perform. If you die in the discharge of your duties, you will attain to Immortality; if you succeed in the performance of your duties you will win victory in the War. In either case you are a gainer. So stand up, determined to do your duty".

But any work, done in any way, does not bring in spiritual benefit. There is a method of doing the work, which is called "YOGA". Yoga means union with God. Work that brings union with God is called Karma-Yoga. So one must work in such a way that the work may become Karma-

Yoga. Otherwise, though everybody works in life, that work brings him only suffering and misery but no spiritual happiness. Work must be performed in a spirit of dedication to God—without any hankering for the material gain, the doer being equal in success or failure. You do the work conscientiously, to the best of our ability—and leave the result to God. That is Karma-Yoga. If you have not spared yourself in the honest discharge of your duties, that is enough. The rest is in the hands of God. Such an attitude of life will give you constant and ever increasing courage and strength and will make you fearless. If you can develop this spirit, you will live like a free man. In life no man is free—in spite of the political and economic freedom he may enjoy. Everybody is a slave of circumstances. But if a man does not care for circumstances and the result of his actions, if he is alike in success or failure, circumstances cannot affect him. He is above them. That is real freedom or MUKTI. Real freedom means that one has no material desire. Happiness and misery of the world cannot touch him, for he has risen above the two. He has found joy in the contemplation of Self, which is ever blissful.

Not only the performance of formal duties, but every action should be dedicated to God, so that one may live constantly in Him. The Lord says in the Gita, "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in a sacrificial rite, whatever you give in charity, whatever spiritual exercises you practise, do them as an offering unto Me. It is only thus that you will be free from the bondage of action, bearing good and evil results, and having steadfast devotion to me, you will attain me".

But you cannot dedicate your actions to God, unless there is deliberate and conscious thought about it. So the Lord says to Arjuna, "Fight and constantly do thou remember Me. With mind and thought thus absorbed in Me, you will doubtless come to Me."

But, then, there is one great difficulty about one's actions and duties. How to find out what is right and what is wrong? There come occasions in the life of every man when he finds it difficult to take decisions, to understand what is the right course. Arguments balance on either way, and the man is in a fix. The advice of the Gita with regard to such situation is, "..... Every action has two aspects—good and bad, just as fire is inseparable from smoke. But if the action is done conscientiously in a spirit of dedication, no evil attaches to the doer." That is the secret. And a man, if he does his duty honestly as an offering to God, cannot go wrong. God himself will guide him from taking a false step.

When a man develops a religious tendency, he usually considers that the ordinary duties of life are a source of trouble or bondage. He likes to give them up and devote all his time to the contemplation of God. This is better said than done. Very few are so spiritually attuned that they can remain for long without any kind of work. So Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "If out of self-conceit and egotism you think you will not fight, your very nature will compel you to fight. Even for a moment one cannot remain without performing some action. All are made to act, helplessly indeed, by their temperament." So no chance of escape from work. If you want to escape from work, work will chase you. So it is better that a man

should do the duties that circumstances place before him, and they should be done in a right spirit. It is not what we do, but how we do it that counts in spiritual life. Even ordinary and trifling actions done in the name of God receive a spiritual significance, and the doer gets the same benefit as one does from formal prayers and meditations. In order to fill one's waking moments with the thought of God, one should perform every action, in the name of God.

Arjuna was the keenest of the Pandava brothers. A resilient mind like that of Arjuna could not be fully satisfied so easily. He was not yet convinced that fighting was the only course open to him for his spiritual welfare. Arjuna's problem at the sight of the impending horror was that if life meant such inhuman and terrible acts of destruction, it was better he did not face them. He wanted to have a lasting peace—he sought bliss that knew no waning. In our ordinary life also the same thing happens. At the most critical moment, when we are face to face with death, when we are about to have the last glimpse of this world, the deepest problem of life flashes before our mind. What is the goal of life! How could life be made really fruitful? And so on. Now it is admitted on all hands that the realisation of Truth or God is the only goal of man. This thought came to the mind of Arjuna also. Now, work or Karma-Yoga is not the only road to God. There are other methods also, namely, Jnana-Yoga, or the path of discrimination, the Bhakti-Yoga or the path of devotion and the Raja-Yoga, or the path of controlling the mind. If that be so, why should he pass through the horrible experience of a battle-field? Could he not more reasonably

take to any other Yoga, which did not entail so much suffering? So Sri Krishna tells Arjuna of the other Yoga and their relative merits. But the path of action is not only a Yoga by itself, it is also the foundation for all other Yogas. One must apply oneself to the normal duties of life before one can qualify oneself for Yogas. So there is no escape from action for a sincere and earnest soul. Without having undergone the experience of action one cannot attain to the state of "Actionlessness". To attain the state of controlling the mind, work is the stepping stone. One who has gained experience of performing the duties of life will find it easy to control one's mind—this is the practical advice of Sri Krishna to Arjuna. While speaking of the path of devotion, the Lord gives a very realistic picture of the various stages of ordinary persons. He says, "As long as one has got the body-consciousness one will find it difficult to worship the Impersonal or Formless God. For such a person the worship of the Personal God is the proper course. Those who find it difficult to practise this even, should be intent on doing actions for the sake of God. One who finds himself unable to this also, should abandon the fruits of all his actions and take refuge in God". Thus an ordinary man will have to begin his spiritual life with the performance of the normal duties of life. As a man progresses step by step in spiritual life, his outward activities will diminish by themselves. It is said that when the fruit comes into being, the flower, of which the fruit is the natural outcome, falls off automatically. So there cannot be any forcing of actionlessness on oneself. This state will naturally come in the process of evolution

as one grows in spiritual stature by the performance of one's duties.

But Philosophy is one thing, applying that to life is another thing. How often do we not find that our reason says one thing, but the actions we do, are quite the contrary. So however convincing were the arguments of Sri Krishna in favour of the fight, Arjuna was still unable to stir himself to action. Then the Lord showed to Arjuna the future trend of events; how it was already ordained that these warriors arrayed on both sides should meet with destruction. The images of these relations and kinsmen of Arjuna rushing into the jaws of Death came one by one before his mind's eyes. As different streams and rivers flow towards the ocean, so were these heroes entering into the chasm of Destruction. As moths rush into a blazing fire only to perish, so were these creatures rushing into the mouth of the God of Death. "These are already slain", said Sri Krishna, "be thou only an instrument in the hand of God for fulfilling His plan". In this vast universe everything moves in obedience to the plan of God. Man foolishly thinks that he is doing this or that. Nothing can a tiny human being do except it be the will of the Lord. One who knows and realises this, finds peace and bliss. But one who goes to action, impelled by egotism and self-will shatters himself to pieces and suffers.

What is the indication whether one carries out the will of God or simply follows his own plan, works as an instrument for the fulfilment of the plan of God or feeds only his own vanity? Well, his character will indicate that. One who completely surrenders oneself to the will of God is alike in pleasure and pain, in honour and dishonour, the same to friend and foe, loving and

compassionate towards all and does nothing for the sense-enjoyment. These will be the external signs that one is doing work not for oneself, but for the sake of God.

Teachings of the Gita cover eighteen chapters, in which Sri Krishna marshals argument after argument and describes almost every aspect of spiritual life till all the problems of Arjuna are solved. He then says, "Destroyed is my delusion, I have gained the knowledge of the Self. My doubts are gone, I will do what thou sayest". And Arjuna engages himself in the fight.

In the mental sorrow and suffering which overtook Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, we see a glimpse of the problems that face us in our own battle of life today,

and in the guidance which Sri Krishna gave to Arjuna we find the directions to follow in our own life. The immortal book concludes with the saying: "Wherever is Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Arjuna the great hero, there are victory, prosperity and success". In the same way we may also say, "If we depend on God as our guide, if we surrender ourselves completely to Him, success in our life is sure to follow". We mean, not material success but spiritual progress. That is what is ultimately one should seek for.

Salutation to One Whom gods in Heaven praise with divine hymns, Whose glory all the scriptures sing, Whom the Yogis realise in the depth of their meditations, and Who is beyond the limits of all knowledge.

INDIAN THOUGHT IN MODERN FRANCE*

By PROF. LOUIS RENON, UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

I am happy indeed to be able to address the Institute of Culture of the Ramakrishna Mission. I know how important is the role played by the Ramakrishna Mission in the spiritual and social life of contemporary India. The Ramakrishna Mission is rightly given a privileged place, and its name is one before which all men, whatever be their creed, should bow.

The monumental re-edition of the "Cultural Heritage of India" with its pleiad of collaborators, proves that the scientists of this country are ready to show an active sympathy towards your aims. Indeed, your aims are those of every

cultured man: to draw from all the forms of culture the elements which can contribute towards the creation of a new humanism. You are amongst those who nowadays contribute towards that fine achievement.

On the other hand you remain loyal to Indian tradition. With both its ardour and simplicity, Ramakrishna's thought recalls to my mind some axioms of the Upanishads, some sermons of the Lord Buddha, whereas Vivekananda is deeply rooted in the powerful current of the classical Vedanta.

The Vedanta too, and more especially Sankara's Vedanta, attracts sympathetic

*An address delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, on January 15, 1949.

curiosity in France. Two illustrious French men, Bergson and Romain Rolland, have contributed from varied angles in spreading the knowledge of Indian spirituality. In his last book "Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion" (The two sources of ethics and religion) Bergson compared the Indian mysticism to the Neo-platonic one and to the mysticism of the Christian Middle ages. He referred to the testimony of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Romain Rolland wrote in an impassioned style the biography of Ramakrishna and of Vivekananda, which were at once translated into English, and with which you are surely acquainted. Many a vocation in France was the direct result of the reading of those books.

But I would prefer to dwell upon the work of the scientists. The book of our friend Dr. Olivier Lacombe "L'Absoluselon Le Vedanta" (the Absolute according to the Vedanta) which was published ten years ago is worth one of the foremost places in the abundant literature on the Advaita. His French translation, with numerous critical notes, of the *Sribhashya*, was no doubt responsible for the many new readers who were attracted to the subject. Professor Lacombe is now engaged in researches on the philosophical basis of Indian aesthetics. He lectures on Indian philosophy and Sanskrit in the Universities of Lille and Paris.

Professor Masson-Oursel had the great merit of introducing into France the methods of comparative philosophy. Well informed about the whole of oriental speculations, his teaching includes Japanese philosophy as well as Ancient Greece. India remains nevertheless the focus of his interest. You are aware that he presided several times over the meetings of the Vedantic Centre then established in St.

Mande. The profession in which he publicly declared himself a fervent admirer of Ramakrishna has not been forgotten.

Miss Silburn has completed a general study comparing the vocabularies of Buddhism and ancient Brahmanism. The originality of her work resides in the fact that she draws her conclusions not from the Upanishads as is usual, but from the Brahmanas and the Vedic Samhitas. She has translated into French the *Panchadasi*, a poetical work of the medieval Vedanta, as well as two harder treatises of the school of Trika or Sivaism of Kashmir.

Miss Esnoul has completed a work on the Bhakti.

That old master Foucher has published a translation of the *Tarkasamgraha* of Annambhatta, a manual of the Nyaya-Vaisesika which he gives with the help of three new commentaries.

Eliade has just published a very interesting study on the technique of the Yoga. He demonstrates that this form of thought rests on a primitive type of spirituality based on psycho-physiology which is to be found amongst other Asiatic peoples. India has given shape to these techniques by backing them with a string philosophical structure borrowed from the Sankhya.

Several other works are in preparation on the problem of the personality in Indian speculations, on the notion of compassion (Daya) in Buddhism, on the theory of Karma in ancient Brahmanism, on the concept of *Asamskṛta* or "unconditioned" in the *Abhidhamma* of the Pali Canon.

I am in no way a historian of Indian philosophy, but I experienced great joy when translating during the war years the beginning of Sankara's commentary on the *Brahmasutras*. In the Manual of Indian Studies, of which part one has already been

published, I wrote in collaboration with my friend Prof. Filliozat, the chapters relating to philosophy. Prof. Filliozat is more particularly interested in Yoga, as well as in Buddhist thought. It is also Buddhism and more especially the schools of Vasubandhu, of Asanga, of Nagarjuna which hold the attention of Etienne Lamotte, student of La Vallée Poussin. We have a certain right in counting him as one of us, though he is of Belgian origin, for he is a disciple of Sylvain Levi and considers France as his second motherland. His translations, of the *Prajnaparamita*, with large annotations, drawn from the Chinese and Tibetan versions, are pure models of erudition. There is nothing surprising in the fact that in the country of Burnouf and Sylvain Levi the study of Buddhism attracts more than anywhere else seekers and scholars. An expert on Buddhist philosophy is the sinologist Demieville who is the director of *Hoboginn*, an encyclopedia on Buddhism started in collaboration with the French and Japanese.

Finally let us recall among the more early works those of Paul Regnaud on the Upanishads, the translation by Sylvain Levi of many important texts of the Mahayana, the manuscripts of which he had himself discovered, lastly the Manual of Rene Grousset, the well known historian of Asia, on Indian philosophies.

These few words will suffice I think to show you how great is the interest that scholars in France have for the Indian thought. I need hardly remind you of the numerous translations from English into French which Monsieur Jean Herbert and his collaborators have made of the princi-

pal thinkers and mystics of Modern India. You are aware of the success of these publications. To the same author is credited a very useful hand book on Indian spirituality.

It is evident that little by little the Western nations feel the necessity of incorporating into the education of their peoples rudiments of Oriental philosophy. Many of our Sanskrit students are attracted towards philosophy, or rather they study Sanskrit so as to be able to read the texts or at least to verify the translation of such texts.

I would like to recall in conclusion the activity of your representative in Paris, Swami Siddheswarananda. In the space of ten years he has made for himself a special place in the spiritual life of our country. He arrived in Paris without knowing a word of French; he is now capable and has been for a long time, of speaking in public and to uphold a controversy. Ardent in his principles, he is very humane and understanding towards others. The admiration, and sometimes the idolatry of which he is the object, has not diminished his modesty and good humour. I asked him last year to come to our Indian Institute in the Sorbonne to deliver a series of lectures. He interpreted for our students the *Taittiriya Upanishad* and I hope he is continuing the good work this year. I am very keen on seeing that a place is given, along with our critical method of work, to its traditional interpretation by a man who feels and believes. In conclusion I cannot do better than to evoke here amongst us the far away presence of our dear Swami.

"Let me tell you one thing. God can be seen"

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

THE 'I' OF MINE

By SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

THE MYSTERIOUS 'I'

My ego—the "I" of mine, is to me a veritable riddle. Standing at the vanguard of all events related and significant to me it seems to be so well-known, yet changing from moment to moment, assuming different forms and colour under different circumstances, it goes surrounded by an impenetrable mystery. I analyse and formulate all happenings outside me with great labour and precision but my knowledge of my own self mostly remains superficial and desultory. I go on in the work-a-day world satisfied with some sort of practical understanding of my ego and don't bother about probing deeper.

To this self-depreciation—failure to comprehend a very vital factor of one's personality—is to be ascribed many a disaster of man, individual and collective. Many of our sorrows do not in fact come from outside. They have their origin in the "I". Could we therefore fully understand its working and find out its real background, the impacts of life would have lost much of their overwhelmingness for us. Nay, we would have been enriched with that profound unitary wisdom which transforms the world of a million discords and evils into one of intense harmony and goodness.

THE CLUE

Through which door are we to step into the secret chamber of 'I'? By what method are we to be convinced of the base—a stable bottom deep below the continuously changing surface ripples? Is the door super-mundane, the device a transcendental miracle? Many philosophers and mystics seem to have thought in that

line. The road to self-realisation is indicated somewhere outside myself. The gulf between the limited self and the free self can only be bridged, they say, by some unearthly act not comparable to any other method of human enquiry—Grace, Intuition, Revelation, Divine Descent and so forth.

The Upanishads point to a different clue. It is akin to the method of science. Face the facts—not a convenient set of facts—but the whole range of happenings pertaining to the question. Don't be carried away by imaginary hopes nor shrink from any painful sacrifice if the Cause of Truth demands it. Judge without any bias. Verify your conclusions by applying to actualities. Always lean against facts and never on fictions.

It is plain then, that to explore the possibility of a complete knowledge of my ego we have to examine it through a wide range of fields. No data can be ignored. We have to weigh the manifestations of the 'I' not only in waking but in dream and dreamless sleep (to be called sleep for convenience) too and also in any other perspective if possible. The different findings will then have to be co-ordinated into one single coherent knowledge. We will see that whatever secret we discover, every bit of it was buried within our own being. Nothing came from outside.

IN WAKING

What are the appearances of 'I' in the waking state? Where is its centre, how far extended, the circumference? When I am awake, my beliefs, thoughts and utterances run in these lines:—I am a man or a woman, the son or daughter of so and so—

young or old—of such and such caste—strong or weak—beautiful or ugly—hungry, tired or ill etc. All these assertions are related to my body. The 'I' is all-through identified with the body. Any change in the body therefore, simultaneously changes the 'I' also.

Sometimes the 'I' is located in my thoughts and emotions. I say:—I am happy or miserable—kind or cruel—I am thinking—I am loving and so on. Countless are human thoughts and feelings; so this kind of ego-manifestation is also legion. The degree of change in the ego is also more varied than in the first type. This moment one idea comes—next moment another. The 'I' identified with those ideas undergoes corresponding transformations.

Body and mind are not two isolated systems. They are interdependant and almost always function conjointly. Hence the waking 'I' expresses itself as centred on the body-mind combine. Whatever statement I make about myself in relation to my person, family or society I cannot escape this characteristic stand. The sphere of the body-mind system becomes the circumference of the waking 'I' too. The urges and satisfactions of the body-mind become the primary interests of my personality.

Seated in a body measuring three cubits and a half—a minute speck of matter in the vastness of the earth around and boundless stellar worlds above—the waking 'I' naturally feels mortified to realise his insignificance in the scheme of infinite creation. Between an inscrutable darkness behind and an unpredictable extinction ahead, bickers the tiny flame of life—a mere point-event in the endless flow of Time. How many desires, hopes, joys—

how many blows, frustrations sorrows! And then, one day the curtain drops. Many that were coveted have been attained—many again have remained unaccomplished.

IN DREAM

The dream-ego too has its fulcrum in the body-mind combine, only, in a new field with a new system of co-ordinates—dream-time, dream-space, dream-causation. In itself dream is as valid as waking. The events of dream become meaningless only when the dreamer ceases to be such.

Appearances of the dream-'I' are more variegated. In one dream I am a pauper—in another, a king. It may also happen that I—a male am transformed into a female—a man into a lower animal! In dream, I wander in unknown regions—meet unseen things and persons—gain un-conceived-of experiences. The dream-ego like its waking counterpart proceeds through the same round of hopes and fear, pleasure and pain. It too has a definite circumference beyond which it cannot move. Philosophically, it too is a *Jiva-self*, a limited self.

Yet dream teaches us one significant lesson. Man, the undefined, has no right to be exclusively waking-bound. A scientific outlook of life, say the Upanishads, must be prepared to view dream as an independant 'state'—a field where the human personality works in a set of particular modes, just as in the waking. This very real familiar world is not 'my' invariable companion. In a moment it may disappear as it does in dream—ushering a new drama with new perspectives, new values. Does some unknown magician sitting behind unwatched bring to me successively the two experiences of waking and dream by a soft touch of his occult wand?

IN SLEEP

If we are not too much obsessed by the obdurate bias that waking knowledge is the only profitable knowledge we will see that the question, what happens to my ego as I fall senseless in sleep, is not a mere idle metaphysical jargon. By sleep here we mean—dreamless sleep. So long as that state lasts, the above question does not arise because, then for me, there is no thought, no cognition, no communication. The body and the senses have become unconscious—the mind too has ceased to function. But as I am awake I can look back into what had happened to me. I say: Nothing existed for *me*; I was in the enjoyment of a profound happiness. A simple experience expressed in a few words—but pregnant with rich implications. We see that there was an 'I' even though so unlike the waking or dream 'I'. It is no longer a ceaseless wanderer tossed, between pleasure and pain, light and darkness. The sleep-'I' is steadier, mightier.

In waking and dream I am one entity, my world is another. In sleep the two have combined into one. One homogeneous mass of existence and bliss is what I am and so too is my world. The 'I' has attained *mukti* from the limitations that had bound it in waking and dream. But this release is only a temporary one. The magic wand moves. The scene once again shifts to waking. Once again the burden of the world hangs heavily on the head. So the sleep-'I' too can not be the culmination of our search.

IN IMAGINATION

When the stark reality of this world stands in the way of a particular fulfilment the ego seeks, it resorts to a new technique—

imagination, taken in a wide sense. The person who has been utterly crushed by poverty and tyranny here on earth imagines an other world where after death, his sorrows will be healed—a more equitable, perfect life will be enjoyed. This future self is an imagined self. But imagination too has immense power. It is because I can imagine myself in any desirable fashion that I can bear many a blow of the world calmly. When the joys and satisfactions of our daily life are closely analysed we find that in each case only a fraction has come from the 'real' world—the rest being contributed by our imagination. The devotee seeks to deny his 'real' ego of passions and imperfections and establish himself as another self related to his God and ideal world.

Perverted cases of imagined selves are discussed at length in Modern Psychology. A terrible shock upsets the whole mental system. The ego cannot bear itself with its painful associations. The technique of imagination creates a new self. It has no relation to the past or the present. The person moves and works in his own private world deriving whatever compensation he can for the disappointments the 'actual' world caused him. A pitiable case but certainly justifiable pragmatically!

Leaving aside this latter abnormal phenomenon, the normal extension of the ego in the imaginary realm is more or less on par with its manifestation in waking and dream. The imaginary self too is a fleeting self and has none of the qualities of immutable Truth.

IN TRUTH

Through this entire gamut of observations the 'I' has been found to maintain one particular characteristic—its objectivity.

Even the sleep-I is to the investi gator, an idea that can be grasped, scrutinized, evaluated. But there is another line which the 'I' can follow—the line of subjectivity. The witness 'I' sees the waking, dream, sleep and imagination egos play their respective roles but does not itself take part in any of those plays. I cannot grasp myself as the subject in the manner I grasp my objective egos—I can only *be* it. In fact, I *am* it always. The three states with their first line egos come and go one after the other. Who strings them into unity—into continuity—into coherence? I—the Master-I, the Witness-I, the True-I. I stand on the second line, unchanging un-seeking, un-fulfilling. For *Me* there is nothing to attain, nothing to accomplish. The moment I deny my changing little selves and stand on Myself as the witness—that very moment I discover my true being. At no time, at no stage I the Real, am further from ME. When I am on the first line—a transmutable ego, I am subject to grief and delusion, fear and frustration, attachment and ignorance. As I shift to the second line—to my substratum, I become free from all

limitations. Not the temporary release of unconsciousness in sleep—but the Eternal *Mukti* of Super-Consciousness.

Let me not try to 'Know' Myself. I can 'know' my objective egos—the shadow selves but not the Subject—the Evershining Light. Knowing, thinking, speaking—these are below the truth of the Self which is self-expressive. My endeavour should only be to remove the *notions* of what-I-am-not. What remains is 'I'—the true 'I'. I will be lost, the moment I think myself outside me.

No Grace—no Descent—no mysticism is called for. It is a question of a simple self-examination—a courageous declaration of my birth-right. Sacrifice will of course be necessary—the sacrifice of attachment to the shadows.

The struggle is not a wild-goose chase. If we can accept the truth of our Self unambiguously, the deeper significance of creation and life will become fully understood. The "urges" of life will have their maximum fulfilment. Nothing will be lost. Everything will eventually be grounded in Truth. That Truth is final—Eternal. That Truth is 'I'.

"But who are you? It is the Divine Mother who has become all this. It is only as long as you do not know Her that you say, 'I', 'I'."

"Try to find out what this 'I' is. Is this 'I' the bones or flesh or blood or intestines? Seeking the 'I', you discover 'Thou.' In other words, nothing exists inside you but the power of God. There is no 'I' but only 'He.'"

"In the samadhi that comes at the end of reasoning and discrimination, no such thing a 'I' exists. But it is extremely difficult to attain it: 'I-consciousness' lingers so persistently. That is why as man is born again and again in this world."

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

KABIR'S APPREHENSION OF GOD

By PROFESSOR BRAHMA SWARUP MATHUR

There is an endless quest of God. There is a sound philosophy behind this quest. Man has come from God, but in his contact with the world he loses sight of Him. But the divine spark is within him. That spark tries to appear now and then. Some highly religious sages catch the divine spark and come to a near realization of God. Then they attain rest and contentment. Having neared or attained this realization these sages sing of it, sing of the glory of God. They have personal satisfaction, but that is not enough. That satisfaction they must share with others in the world. Lord lives in all of us. The satisfaction the sages have must be a possession of all. At least efforts are made for this achievement by the initiated sages. And so the humanity marches towards the apprehension of God.

Kabir's name is familiar to all. There are some interesting details of his life which are generally known. We may recall two things; he was born of Muslim parents and was a disciple of a Hindu saint, Ramandaji. Extreme poverty surrounded him all around. These two factors, supreme at the moment of his birth, coloured his entire songs and philosophy. Poverty made him look for God in ordinary concrete things of life. His Muslim parentage and his Hindu *Guru* made him sing of communal harmony.

As a consequence there is a splendid simplicity about his songs, which are written in popular Hindi and which are read by all with interest and illumination. For English readers, Rabindranath Tagore has translated his eternal songs into English. His message, therefore, is now almost universal. To many in South India,

who are not acquainted with Hindi, Kabir appears in the garb given to him by Rabindranath Tagore. Even to many in North who have grown English in their tastes Kabir is familiar through our national poet, Tagore.

What about his approach to God? He has sung:

O Servant, where dost thou seek Me?

Lo! I am beside thee.

I am neither in temple nor in mosque:

I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies,
nor in yoga and renunciation.

If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.

Kabir Says, 'O *Sadhu*! God is the breath of all breath.'

The very word 'servant' is significant. God wants service. And that is the entire story. God is all-knowing and is present everywhere. He needs no show or display. He is within man himself. What is needed is the right attitude and the true spirit for achievement. Temples are there. They are sacred. Mosques are there. They are also sacred. God is worshipped there. But God is not confined to any place. He is infinite. He transcends all. He is not bound by either time or space. He is all in all, and everywhere. God can be found nearer home. We need a pure heart to experience His presence. We have just to experience. The presence is there, but we have not yet experienced it. We have to develop our

nature, we have to invite by our deeds and thoughts God into the sanctuary of our heart. There are different ways of finding God. Renunciation is a way. But the common man, is incapable of complete renunciation or perfect yoga. Renunciation and yoga are lines for highly spiritual persons. What about men in the street? Men in the street can know of God in the world they inhabit. They must have a sincere desire to reach Him. They will undoubtedly reach him, but they must be sincere in their yearning and efforts. They must hold the world with one hand and God by the other as Sri Ramakrishna says. Then when opportunity comes they must hold the feet of the Lord with both the hands. Then there will be that moment of time when they will be face to face with Him in all His divine splendour and light.

God requires simple service. Even those who stand, serve Him. Kabir's God is thus a possession both for the sages and for men in the street. And so this simple approach. Kabir's idea was to sing of renunciation along with right life on earth, passed in devotion and work, and thus to initiate all in the mysteries of God. He wanted God to live in every breath, as breath of all breath, the chief concern of all on earth.

Kabir says: 'He who has found both love and renunciation never descend to death.' Kabir seems to be a synthetic philosopher whose one and the only concern is the pursuit of Truth. Here Truth is God. And he tries to achieve his goal through whatsoever paths he knows. He is certain that all have to be righteous to be in the neighbourhood of God. The saint who has passed his life in contemplation away from the interests of the world is as near God as one who lives in the world and yet has infi-

nite love and devotion. There is nothing that cannot be done through love and devotion. And so Kabir has repeatedly sung of God as Beloved:

O Friend, awake, and sleep no more!

The night is over and gone, would you lose your day also?

Others, who have wakened, have received jewels:

O foolish woman! you have lost all whilst you slept.

Your lover is wise, and you are foolish,
O woman!

You never prepared the bed of your husband:

O mad one, you passed your time in silly play.

These lines are of infinite love and devotion. Here the devotee is considered a woman and God takes the form of her husband. The devotee has to love the Lord, has to prepare his heart, the bed, where the Lord may rest, and has not to sleep. Then only the 'Beloved' can come. There is no sleep to the lover. If there is sleep, the Lord leaves. He finds himself not wanted. Why should he stay? This is clear. One thing more is made out. The heart of the lover must bear infinite love for the Beloved. Else all is foolishness and there is no achievement. And so Kabir does not stop from singing thus:

Wake, wake! See! your bed is empty.
He left you in the night.

Kabir says: 'Only she wakes, whose heart is pierced with the arrow of His music.'

The heart must sing to the tune of the Beloved. Songs arise, in fact they must arise, in the heart endlessly to welcome home the Lord of one's heart. This can be

truly with reference to the Great Lord Himself. Kabir's words are: 'He is dear to me who can call back the wanderer to his home. In the home is the true union, in the home is enjoyment of life: Why should I forsake my home and wander in the forest? If Brahma helps me to realize truth, verily I will find both bondage and deliverance in home.'

What a wealth of wisdom and experience in these words! The idea is simple. The husband must be sought in his home. Home is both bondage and deliverance. Bondage refers to attachment to earthly things exclusively. We say 'exclusively', because some attachment is perhaps necessary to the ordinary being. Along with this attachment there can be sufficient measure of freedom. And that would be deliverance. Non-attachment to earthly things is just a step homeward. Our home is God or with Him. We have come from Him. We have to go to Him. And so the step higher, breaking with the earthly things, is a step towards God, a step homeward. Kabir is a thinker for entire humanity. His thinking is simple and so is Truth itself. The simplest thing, the Truth, is so difficult to achieve. Yes, difficult to achieve because we do not possess the necessary love and devotion. We must have both to reach God. This is the idea of Kabir. God verily is in our home. What is he then? Is he not like the husband to a wife?

Kabir has taken this comparison of husband and wife to bring home the idea that God is not against family life. In family life there is love and devotion. Love and devotion signify the right road to God.

Kabir knows there are people who might laugh at this relationship with God as that of husband and wife. But in love and devotion there is no going back. There

must be some sort of blindness attaching to love and devotion.

My body and my mind are grieved for the want of Thee;

O my Beloved! come to my house.

When people say I am 'Thy bride, I am ashamed: for I have not touched Thy heart with my heart.

Then what is this love of mine? I have no taste for food, I have no sleep: my heart is ever restless within doors and without.

As water is to the thirsty, so is the lover to the bride. Who is there that will carry my news to my Beloved?

Kabir is restless: he is dying for the sight of Him.

Having indicated that God can be regarded as husband he stops to think. If God does not come as He will not ordinarily, man might have no faith in Him. There is restlessness so long as there is the selfish desire to meet the Beloved in some concrete appearance. We have just to think deeply, feel intensely, and His presence is there in our home. He will be there in unlimited joy and righteousness. Create the atmosphere and there will be nothing for shame, nothing for sorrow, nothing that might allow others to laugh at us. Have faith, love and devotion. And there we have Him endlessly with us.

Has not Kabir spoken thus?

A sore pain troubles me day and night, and I cannot sleep:

I long for the meeting with my Beloved, and my father's house gives me pleasure no more.

The gates of the sky are opened, the temple is revealed:

I meet my husband, and leave at His feet the offering of my body and mind.

The lines at the beginning reveal the same desire to meet the husband, and the same sadness in not meeting him. The picture is quite plain. The woman does not ordinarily experience many moments of happiness in the home of her father. But suddenly the gates of the sky are opened. There is free air and free enjoyment of it. This opening of the gates might signify some illumination and light. Ignorance disappears: clouds are rebuked, and there is all brilliance of some real experience and joy. That is the meeting with the husband. Remember this meeting has been arranged by a comprehensive offering, both of body and mind. If you simply think in terms of the meeting of bodies there is no joy for people on earth. There must be the offering of the mind. Offering of the mind refers to a certain mental attitude that prepares for the joyous meeting and experience. All that is with us is unreal, all that is with us is the creation of our mind. We need urgently the assistance of mind to build up our world of joys and comforts, of meeting and of love. Kabir wants people to understand this relationship of husband and wife deeply, so that their future might be one long happy experience. More than body there is mind. Mind creates a new world; body fastens to the present world and consequent unhappiness. Man might think of God as husband, but man can end his experiences happily only when he is making the double offering of mind and body. Upon reflection it will be found that there is a very intense idea behind this double offering. We have to work, taking the help of your body, for real illumination.

Mind also is needed to help our body and ultimately to help us to God realization.

For true and lasting happiness a combination of good mind and good body is required. God lines up with happiness. He reveals Himself in excessive happiness of the pure. There must be this double offering of body and mind given out of an irresistible urge to offer irrespective of what may follow next.

Dance, my heart! dance today with joy.

The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music, and the world is listening to its melodies:

Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music. The hills and the sea and the earth dance. The world of man dances in laughter and tears.

Why put on the robe of the monk, and live aloof from the world in lonely pride?

Behold! my heart dances in the delight of a hundred arts, and the Creator is well pleased.

This song is pure ecstasy. There is God in ecstasy. He wants to dance as he is near God. Excessive happiness, if impure, will not last. If it lasts it is certainly sacred and has been achieved after pursuing a long course of sadhana. This excessive happiness must make man mad with the love of God. He must dance, and in dancing, the joys and sorrows of the world will not affect him. He will be in direct communion with God. This madness, this excessive joy, this unending communion with God, all these are good and catching. The world, yet far away from God, will listen to this music, and may, come near God. The music is all-powerful and

deathlessly attractive. Man might have tears, but he will have to dance, having listened to this music. Even the world of apparently inanimate beings will dance, will have to feel the impact of happiness and righteousness. The righteous should not, therefore, shun the world. He must live with the people of the world. Living with them he will be a source of deathless light and inspiration. He will be thus sharing his righteousness with others. Who can then think of him as living aloof from the world in lonely pride? Kabir does not laugh at monks, but questions the living aloof, when it is done in calousness to the neighbouring afflictions of fellow-men. Righteousness must be like the water of the holy Ganga, benefiting all who drink of it and come near it. Righteousness of the sage must run on swiftly surrounding the entire world. God surely wants all to be righteous. He might be happy in the righteousness of a sage, but His happiness will be infinite like Himself if that sage has turned many in the world in the direction of God and sacredness. The sage is not to be selfish, living in lonely pride. Then he is no sage even. Let him move out in his sacredness to make others sacred. He has God with him. 'Allow God to be with others'—this is what God seems to say so clearly and loudly.

It is now plain that Kabir's philosophy of life is as simple as possible. He wants no new adventures for ordinary men and women. He will like them to stick to their work, love, and devotion. There is God everywhere, in all work, in all love and devotion. If the woman is sincerely devoted to her husband she is bound to experience excessive joy in which God will reveal Himself. A pupil is to be devoted

to his *Guru*, and in that devotion he will come across God Himself. A *Sanyasin* will find God in renunciation. And so on.

The conclusion is clear. Make the most of life according to certain principles of morality and ethics. Prepare for good living on earth. That is a sure prelude to a good living elsewhere, if there is life after death somewhere unknown to us thus far. Any super structure of transcendental beatitude has to find its plinth in everyday's good living, on this rock of simple security of to day, on this respect for the immediate. Every moment is a pilgrimage to eternity. Behind every particle stands the Vast. We have to pick up in due respect the handfuls of what we have and discover the divinity there itself. We have not to wait for the conditions this world does not present. In the vine of this very life we have to crush out the wine of the divine. We need not be only other-worldly, we have to build the tomorrow on the rock is to-day. Due prominence must be given to this life on earth. And thus we have to visualize our happiness as born of a synthesis of the two outlooks—other-worldly and this-worldly. This is the message of Kabir today. Kabir rightly exclaims: 'O Friend! hope for Him whilst you live, know whilst you live, understand whilst you live: for in life deliverance abides.'

Life is the thing. Live in the living present. The future will take care of itself. It cannot go beyond the present as its birth is in the living present. This is a philosophy of hope and achievement. God is to be apprehended and He will be apprehended by all, if they do their simple work with sincerity and devotion and love. Kabir's apprehension of God was for all, and not for himself alone.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MĪMAṂSĀ-PARIBHĀṢĀ: BY KṚṢṆA YAJVAN: TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY SWAMI MADHAVANANDA. PUBLISHED BY THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SARADA PITHA, BELUR MATH, DT. HOWRAH. 1948. PRICE RS. 2.

Next to Laugākṣibhāṣaka's *Arthasangraha* and Āpudova's *Mīmamsanyayaprakasa*, Kṛṣṇa Yajvan's *Mīmamsaparibhāsa* is the most popular primer elucidating some of the chief tenets of the *Purvamīmamsasastra* in a brief form. It deals with the aim and scope of the śāstra, viz., the investigation on *dharma* in the Vedic texts. It gives the definition of *dharma* and the authority on it, viz., the Vedas; the division of the Vedic texts into Brāhmanas and Mantras and the further division of Brāhmanas into injunctions and prohibitions and their supplementary texts, *arthavadas*; the sixfold and the threefold classification of the Vedic injunctions; the six *pramānas* determining the relation between the principal rite and its accessories and their relative merit when a conflict arises (as explained in the third adhyāya); the twofold division of accessories and the twofold division of rites in general along with their further division; the nature and special import of injunctions containing the potential and imperative suffixes—the two kinds of *bhāvanas*, their mutual relation and their three constituent parts; the four conditions to determine the names of rites, the scope and division of *arthavadas* and the authoritativeness of Codes and the customary practices of the *sistas* on *dharma* (as explained in the first adhyāya); the six *pramānas* explaining the relation between one rite and another (as explained in the second adhyāya); the conception of *kratvartha*, *purusartha* and *ubhavartha* among the rites and their accessories: and the six *pramānas* to determine the order or sequence between one *karma* and another (as explained in the fifth adhyāya). Thus the work deals with a few main topics found in the first five or six adhyāyas based on *upadeśa*. The topics elucidated in the latter

six adhyāyas such as *atideśa*, *uha*, *badha*, *tantra* and *prasanga* are not dealt with in this short treatise.

Mīmamsaparibhāsa has now got a few critical and elaborate commentaries in Sanskrit though it does not very much require the help of a commentary for its understanding. It had no English translation till now and the work under notice meets the long-felt need among the beginners of Mīmāṃsā in modern times and the English-knowing students in Indian philosophy. Its English translation with short notes by Swami Madhavananda is good, readable and faithful to the original, just like his more important translations of difficult texts like the *Brhadaranyakopaniṣad* and its *bhasya* of Śaṅkara, the *Vedāntaparibhāsa* and the *Siddhāntamuktavali* (in Nyaya). The work of translating śāstrin treatises is generally a very taxing and irksome job, and there are only a handful English translations of Sanskrit works in Śāstras which can be considered to be unambiguous in language, true to the original and bringing out clearly the real spirit thereof; and Swami Madhavananda's translations are among these few. Though his translation is uniformly satisfactory a few places may require a slight modification for the sake of scientific accuracy. The rendering of the compound '*phalasadhanayagavidhayakam*' (p. 7) as 'enjoins both the result and its means' is to be modified as 'enjoins the sacrifice as the means for the fruit'. It is a fundamental truth in *Purvamīmamsa* that the *phala* (fruit or result, can never be enjoined and the injunctions known as *adhikaravidhis* like '*agnihotram juhuyat svargakamah*' and '*udbhida yajata pasukamah*', one enjoining the *phala-sambandha* to the *homa* already by another injunction and the other enjoining both the sacrifice, *udbhid*, and its relation to its fruit-*phala-sambandha*—enjoin only the *dhatvartha*—the meaning of the root—either *homa* or *yaga*, as the case may be. That a fruit or result is not enjoined is indicated in another context in this treatise itself (vide pp. 58, 59). Similarly to translate *mantra*

and *brahmana* as 'sacred texts' and 'sacred commentaries' is not suggestive enough. The rendering of *arthibhavana* and *sadbhavana* as 'objective urge' and 'verbal urge' is also not very happy. In spite of these instances, the translation is very praiseworthy and it is bound to be a valuable guide to all modern students of Indian philosophy who seek to understand the fundamental doctrine of *Purvamimamsa*, one of the six *astika darsanas*.

The printing and get-up of this publication are excellent. The translator and the Ramakrishna Mutt are to be congratulated for having published this work which contains a lucid exposition of the ritualistic doctrines of *Mimamsa* and as such is a veritable boon for all beginners in that *sastra*.

PROF. V. A. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, M. A.
Mimamsakaratra Mimamsasiromani.

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA: BY SRI AUROBINDO. PUBLISHED BY SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY MADRAS. PAGES: 283, Price Rs. 7-8-0

This volume is not a treatise on Yoga but a collection of monographs which have appeared in the *Arya* from January to November 1915. As, however, the meaning of the title of the book is implied here and there, we may regard the discussions and the expositions as intended to make clear what Sri Aurobindo means by the Synthesis of Yoga. These essays thoroughly revised and altered form Part I of the Synthesis of Yoga. Like other books by the same author it has a rich mystic character, and the ideal revealed has a spiritual excellence, a knowledge suffused with deep emotion, transcendence, self-surrender and intense earnestness. Possessing neither the framework of a metaphysical scheme nor logical categories the non-mystical temperament is likely to be puzzled. The Synthesis of Yoga, roughly speaking, may be described as philosophy of the Gita (if it can be termed as such) diluted by Yoga and Sankhya ideas with occasional invasions into the realms of Advaita and Visishtadvaita in a difficult vocabulary. The easiest way, it seems, to understand him is to single out some fundamental ideas of the

Gita which pervade his work and which, when understood, considerably simplify the task of tracing the synthesis of integral Yoga.

The essays fall into twelve chapters indicated in the table of the contents. The first deals with the four aids—*Sastra*, *Utsaha*, *Guru*, and *Kala*—necessary for the attainment of Yoga-Siddhi. In the second chapter the main pervading thought is that the Yoga must start with an effort towards concentration which culminates in the absolute consecration of the individual to the Divine. The third deals with certain fundamental ideas connected with the Gita's way of Karma-yoga, namely, equality, renunciation of all desires for the fruit of our actions and action done as a sacrifice to the Supreme Lord. The fourth is a continuation of the third chapter in which the essential character of the sacrifice, of the triune path of Karma-Bhakti-Jnana and of the Divine, eternal Lord of our Sacrifice is delineated. It is shown in the fifth and sixth chapters that how the psychic being ascends towards greater consciousness through the sacrifice of love, work and knowledge. The last six deal with the following topics: Standards of conduct and Spiritual Freedom, The Supreme Will Equality and the Annihilation of Ego, The Three modes of Nature, The Master of the Work and the Divine Work.

While the reviewer is in general agreement with all these, it is inevitable that a detail here and there should appear doubtful and conflicting: for instance it is not clear how the Eternal will be at once Personal and Impersonal in his self-revelation (Page 38). If he is personal, because he is the conscious Divine, the infinite Purusha, it will be very difficult to conceive him as impersonal because he appears to us as Sat, Chit and Ananda (Italics ours). According to Sri Aurobindo (page 206) the Purusha—*prakriti*, Consciousness-Force, Soul supporting Nature, who are one even in separation, are at once a universal and transcendent Power. Even the individual who is a reflection of the Supreme is not the doer of works any more than the ego. It is the transcendent Shakti who is the doer. The Supreme becomes the dynamic as the Shakti and by her he is the originator and Master

of Works. This view is in sharp contrast to the Absolute Monism of Sri Shankara where the Reality is beyond even the semblance of action and the monotheism of Sri Ramanuja which attributes doership to the individual. The speciality of integral Yoga seems to be that the Sadhaka has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of world's burden also with it.

Sri Aurobindo's expositions will help to swell the volume of faith that to be possessed by the Divine and realize him in ourselves and in all things is the consummation of the individual consciousness. We cannot part with this book without a word of praise for its excellent printing and get up. The price is rather too high for the book.

DOCTRINE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE:
BY SRI AUROBINDO. ARYA PUBLISHING
HOUSE, COLLEGE STREET, CALCUTTA:
PAGES: 88. Price Rs. 1-8-0.

This is an attractive reprint of Aurobindo's articles on the subject written in the eventful days of 1907 when he was ably leading the struggle for National Freedom. All the articles, except the last one on Boycott, which fell into the hands of the Police, appeared originally in the *Bande Mataram*. A perusal of the volume shows how, long before Mahatma Gandhi entered the field of Indian politics and conceived the programme of his non-violent non-co-operation, the early pioneers of political revolution in the country had a very clear and complete grasp, in some respects even clearer and more comprehensive than the Mahatma's, of a method of political action which has eventually enabled India to reach her goal. A comparison of the Gandhian technique and principles with those described in these articles reveals by the side of close similarity, basic differences also between the two in outlook and underlying political philosophy. India today is in an introspective mood and inclined to be more critical of Gandhian ideologies. The publication of Sri Aurobindo's political writings at this juncture will prove to be of more than merely historical interest.

M. R. R.

KALKI OR THE FUTURE OF CIVILISATION: BY S. RADHAKRISHNAN. HIND KITAHS LTD., BOMBAY. PAGES 72. Price Rs. 1-8-0.

The publishers deserve to be congratulated for bringing out this first Indian edition of a book that has already made its mark in the sphere of modern thought. In spite of, rather, because of its much wanted materialistic civilisation and technical and scientific progress, the modern world is plunging deeper and deeper in the mire of suffering caused by cultural chaos, spiritual bankruptcy and a general neglect of the higher values of life. In this book on the Future of Civilisation, Dr. Radhakrishnan analyses with his characteristic clearness and profound insight, the main features of the maladies afflicting mankind in the realm of social and economic, religious and political, national and international life. The remedies, he suggests, are born of a better realisation of the essential spiritual nature and needs of man, both in individual and collective life, and the urgency of establishing a new world order based on the higher values of human progress. Although the book was written some years ago, the problems discussed remain quite fresh as they relate questions of perennial interest. The pages sparkle with the limpid light of philosophic wisdom, not lost in the heights of supra-mundane abstraction, but applied to and penetrating the depths of the daily recurring problems in our domestic, social, economic, political and religious life. A perusal of the volume is highly helpful to remove the cobwebs clouding the modern mind.

M. R. R.

INFLATION AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN INDIA TO DAY: BY PROF. T. V. RAMANUJAM M.A., VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE, MADRAS: CURRENT THOUGHT SERIES, PUBLISHED BY S. VISWANATHAN, 14, SINGANNA NAICK STREET, G. T. MADRAS. Pp-33. PRICE AS. 12.

The author of this small but excellent pamphlet deserves our warm congratulations for having given us a lucid presentation of the various aspects of the inflation problem in India. It is obviously intended for the general reader rather than for the

student well versed in modern Economic Theory and for that very reason, the argument is no where either complicated or difficult. Written in a highly charming and attractive style, it grips the attention of the reader from the very beginning and succeeds admirably in bringing home to him the gravity of the present economic crisis in India. The various measures suggested by the author to check the inflationary tendency in India, like the retrenchment of public expenditure, increasing the receipts of the treasury by appropriate fiscal policies, mopping up of surplus purchasing power and increasing production in the country, should receive the attention they so richly deserve. The sale of gold as an anti-inflationary device deserves special mention and further study. Rightly does the author point out that improvement in the efficiency of the administrative machinery in assessing and collecting the taxes is the *sine qua non* of a successful anti-inflationary policy. But care must be taken to see that in counter acting the inflationary tendency, the seeds of the future deflation are not sown. The level at which the stabilization of prices can take place is not definitely indicated. Such a policy requires that the inflationary gap must be correctly estimated. One wishes that the discussion regarding the Capital levy as an anti-inflationary measure could have been exhaustive. Its probable effects "on the expectations" and the incentive of the business Community call for closer examination. On the whole, the pamphlet written in a simple, well-balanced and convincing manner forms a valuable contribution to the enlightened discussion of the contemporary problems of our country and for this, our thanks are due to the distinguished author.

XYZ.

SRI KRISHNA KARANAMRITA OF LILASUKA, WITH A FOREWARD BY DEWAN BAHADUR K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, TEXT IN SANSKRIT, ENGLISH TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY M. K. ACHARYA; NEW EDITION, PUBLISHED BY V. RAMASWAMY SASTRULU & SONS, 292, ESPLANADE, MADRAS. PR-184; PRICE: RS. 2-8-0.

The foreward by Sri. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri forms the special feature of this new Edition of the immortal book in praise of Child Krishna. Running to no less than 21 pages, it helps the by reader to appreciate and enjoy better many hidden beauties of the Poem.

In the Sanskrit Text, spaces have been given between words which should gramatically go together because of sandhi. To take a simple case, 'वेणुमापुरयन्तम्' is put as वेणु मापुरयन्तम्। In some places specially, this is very jarring and confusing to the reader.

The printing and get up are good. We are sure the book will be valued much by all lovers of the Balagopala.

UTTARA SATYAGRAHA GITA. (WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION): BY PANDITA KSHAMA ROW. HIND KITABS. LTD. BOMBAY. 1948. PAGES: XVI 210 160. PRICE: RS. 6-12-0.

This is the second part of the narrative in simple Sanskrit Verse of the story of Indian Satyagraha conducted by Gandhiji for the attainment of Swaraj. The book covers the events from the Gandhi-Irwin Pact to the close of the first phase of the 'Quit India' campaign marked by Mahatmaji's release from the Agakhan's Palace in 1944. By prosecuting this work with such striking success, the distinguished Pandita has amply proved that Sanskrit is not at all a dead language but quite living and well suited to convey modern ideas and describe modern themes. The writer has rendered a double service to the cause of Sanskrit as well as Satyagraha by linking the two in literary wedlock. Sanskrit easily lends a unique dignity and charm to the narrative and elevates the theme of the story to a sublime plane. The spiritual message innate in Satyagraha is thereby only better brought out, enriched and heightened by its being sung in the language of the Gods.

The English translation is bound to be helpful to those who are not masters of the ancient medium. The printing and get up leave nothing to be desired.

M. R. R.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1947

The Vidyapith is a residential High School run on the lines of ancient Gurukul system suited to the exigencies of modern times. Its object is to facilitate the "the manifestation of perfection already in man" as illustrious Swami Vivekananda put it, while receiving secular education in modern lines.

In order to mould the boys into efficient citizens of a new social order, they are given training along with their usual academic course, in the following aspects: 1. Shrine work, 2. Recitation from Scriptures and writings of the best writer; 3. Flower gardening (theoretical and practical); 4. Vegetable gardening (theoretical and practical); 5. Tailoring, 6. Typewriting; 7. Nursing and first aid; 8. Painting; 9. Spinning; 10. Clay modelling; 11. Leather-bag making; 12. Journalism; 13. Banking; 14. Management of student's co-operative stores and stationary department; 15. Band-play, lathi-play, juzutshu, and dagger-play. Besides the Vidyapith boys conduct, (a) two manuscript magazines quarterly and one manuscript daily. (b) hold boys' court to settle their disputes, award punishment for minor offences and discuss precepts of good manners, (c) hold fortnightly debate on current topics, (d) arrange excursions to historical places once a year under an experienced drill commander, (e) learn self help and dignity of labour through various activities of their daily life. Scrupulous stress is laid on physical training and games as a result of which boys keep remarkably good health at the Vidyapith. The boys run a very active literary society and have a very alive and alert 'Sevak-samiti.'

During the year under review there were 176 resident students and five day scholars who were refugees from East Bengal. All the nine boys who appeared in the matriculation got through.

The total number of the books in the Library during the year was 5468 and the number of the books issued to teachers and students were 5000. All the few useful books published from here had satisfactory sale. Dispensary treated 4000 patients including poor villagers from the neighbouring places. A dairy of seventy two cattle was maintained, the daily milk supply from which was a little above two maunds. The area under cultivation measured about twelve bighas.

Heartfelt thanks are accorded to all friends, donors, subscribers, sympathisers and wellwishers. It is only very natural that this ever-steadily-growing institution should have many immediate and urgent necessities, for which the management of the institution require immediate financial help. Their urgent appeal for funds are to all who believed that some really useful work is being done here. The immediate needs are as follows: (1) One separate prayer hall to accommodate 300 persons; the estimated cost is Rs. 30,000. (2) A second store over newly constructed dormitory to accommodate three lower classes, the estimated cost is 20,000. (3) A water reservoir and laying out pipes for supply of water over the whole area; the estimated cost is Rs. 15,000. (4) A small building for the vocational class, the estimated cost being 15,030. and an endowment of Rs. 12,500 for helping the poor and meritorious boys.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BOMBAY

Foundation stone Laying Ceremony of the Students' Home, Charitable Dispensary and Lecture Hall

The foundation stone laying ceremony of the Students Home, Charitable Dispensary and Lecture Hall of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay, was celebrated with great eclat at 9. a. m. on Sunday, the 9th January, 1949 in the Ramakrishna Mission premises.

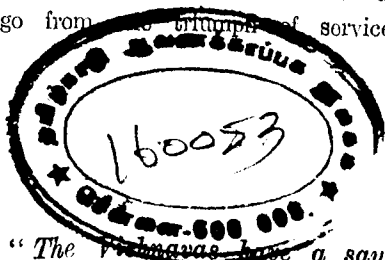
Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher, Premier of Bombay laid the foundation stone of the Student's Home.

In the course of his speech he said: "Everything connected with the venerable names of Sri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda is holy and sacred and I rejoice to assist in the work.

The Ramakrishna Mission has a long and proud record of social work to its credit. This Mission has nothing sectarian about it. It is open to all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. With reverence for all to whom it is due, this institution rises above the pettiness from which religious sectarianism suffers. The only religion it preaches is the 'universal religion of the Vedanta,' which stands for harmony and not for dissensions—for realisation and not for wrangling. Religion has so often been the arena of wars and hatreds that it is refreshing to be reminded that it should be the meeting ground of unions and sympathies.

And with the Mission Religion is no mere abstraction. It is translated into service—the service of the people. The Missions of the West have built up through the centuries a glorious tradition of service; and we, too have our heritage of self-effacing service. In these new times we need a synthesis of the best that is in both. Institutions like this Mission will help us to achieve it.

As I said at the outset with this Mission are associated such revered names as those of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. These names stand for the higher values of life—for all that enriches us spiritually. Between them, they symbolize the blend of noble thought and vigorous, purposeful activity. Blessed by this inspiring background, this Mission is destined to go from triumph to triumph of service to another."



"The Vedantists have a saying, 'He who worships Krishna is very clever'. The clever man in this world will live with God alone; and the foolish man will like to fall in the snare of samsara and suffer the consequent miseries thereof."

—SWAMI ADEHUTANANDA

While laying the foundation stone of the Charitable Dispensary, Hon'ble Mr. Moraji R. Desai, Home Minister, Bombay, exhorted the audience to follow the teachings of the 'Guru' (Sri Ramakrishna) and said that it will lead to 'Santi,' peace. The teachings of Sri Ramakrishna preached by Swami Vivekananda throughout the world had brought much credit to India. The dispensary was only one of the many useful services rendered by the Ashrama. True love was the best healer of all ills, he said.

Mr. M. A. Master, ex-president of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries laid the foundation stone of the Lecture Hall. During the course of his speech he said: "Many, many years ago, more than twenty five years ago, I came in contact with the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission when I was in Burma. A large number of our countrymen were there. They did not find suitable facilities for medical relief or other reliefs. It was at that time the Ramakrishna Mission came to the help of not only our workers but also the common class by organising in a large scale medical relief and other humanitarian activities. The Ramakrishna Mission's name is known all over the world not only for the spiritual uplift, but also for the splendid humanitarian service it has been rendering. Ladies and Gentlemen, kindly pardon me for making a confession. I am not a religious man. I realise, however, the splendid service for the uplift of the masses. Whenever there is any great national calamity in the country, whether it was famine, or whether it was starvation, we always find the Ramakrishna Mission came to help the humanity and brought peace and joy. It is this relief that appeals to me most."

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