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## CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                          | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. A PRAYER TO THE DIVINE MOTHER - ... ..                                                                                | 201  |
| 2. A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA - ... ..                                                                                | 202  |
| 3. WHAT IS RENUNCIATION? (Editorial) ... ..                                                                              | 203  |
| 4. THE DIFFICULTY IN RELATING THE DIVERSE SPIRITUAL VALUES OF THE ORIENT AND THE OCCIDENT - By Dr. F. S. C. Northrop ... | 212  |
| 5. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS - By Swami Nikhilananda ...                                                          | 217  |
| 6. THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR - By Sister Nivedita ...                                                                   | 220  |
| 7. THE NEED FOR INDO-BURMAN CULTURAL CONTACTS - By The Hon'ble Mr. U Win ... ..                                          | 221  |
| 8. HOW TO SEE GOD IN EVERYTHING - By Swami Yatiswarananda ...                                                            | 224  |
| 9. DISCOVERY OF THE NATURAL MAN - By Anthony Elenjimitam ...                                                             | 228  |
| 10. NOTES AND COMMENTS - ... ..                                                                                          | 231  |
| 11. REVIEWS AND NOTICES - ... ..                                                                                         | 237  |
| 12. NEWS AND REPORTS - ... ..                                                                                            | 238  |

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. . . . Be bold, and face  
The Truth ! Be one with it ! Let visions cease,  
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free."

Swami Vivekananda

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXXVII

OCTOBER 1950

No. 6

## A PRAYER TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

(From the *Devimahatmyam*)

देव्या यया ततमिदं जगदात्मशक्त्या निःशेषदेवगणशक्तिसमूहमूर्त्या ।

तामंबिकामखिलदेवमहर्षिपूज्यां भक्त्या नताः स्म विदधातु शुभानि सा नः ॥

O Divine Mother, Thine energy pervades this entire universe. Thou embodiest the powers of diverse presiding deities, Thou art the object of worship to all the gods and sages. Do Thou bestow on us what is auspicious. We bow down to Thee in devotion.

या श्रीः स्वयं सुकृतिनां भवनेष्वलक्ष्मीः पापात्मनां कृतघ्न्यां हृदयेषु बुद्धिः ।

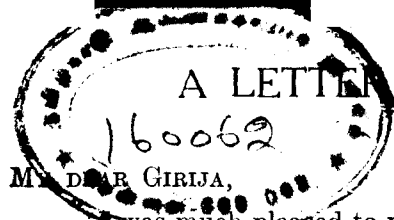
श्रद्धा सतां कुलजनप्रभवस्य लज्जा तां त्वां नताः स्म परिपालय देवि विश्वम् ॥

Thou art good fortune itself in the dwellings of the virtuous, and ill-fortune in those of the sinful. Thou art intelligence in the intelligent, faith in the heart of the devotee, and modesty in the high born. We bow to Thee. Do Thou, O Mother, protect this universe.

देवि प्रपन्नातिहरे प्रसीद प्रसीद मातर्जगतोऽखिलस्य ।

प्रसीद विश्वेश्वरि पाहि विश्वं स्वामीश्वरी देवि चराचरस्य ॥

O Mother, Thou art the Destroyer of the troubles of Thy supplicants. Thou art the Mother of the universe. Let Thy mercy be upon all. O Mother, Thou art the Mistress of the universe. Thou art the one Ruler of the moving and non-moving. Do Thou protect the universe and shower Thy mercy on all.



# A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

*Sri Hari my Refuge*

ALMORA,  
11-7-15

I was much pleased to receive day before yesterday enclosed in the letter of Atul a note of yours coming after so long a time.

Going on well! Well, go on like this. 'If companion is available, well and good, otherwise make yourself alone a fair'—do not give up this old saying of Swamiji.

Whom else should you look upon? The Master used to say, 'I am and my Mother is.' Enough, whom else to seek? What is wanted is resignation. If one can become an adept in resignation, gradually everything turns favourable. Be resigned in Sri Ramakrishna. You will see what happens afterwards. The Master used to say, 'When you see an imitation custard-apple you naturally remember the genuine one.' In the like manner, his photo will remind you of him. Considering the photo of the Master as the Master himself devote yourself in his service and worship. You will see how in reality you become imbued with his thought-essence (*bhava*). Come, engage yourself with a resolute mind. Let others do whatever they like. You keep sitting like a rock with your own God in your heart. Merge your life and mind in Him. What will you earn by vain wandering? Days are on the run—they will never stage a come-back. Do not forget the main object. Make him your own. Then everything else will follow as a matter of course.

Whoever he may be, if anyone comes to you as a refugee to our Lord, with an idea of following his path, keep him with you. Begging will bring food.

Atul said the right thing, 'In the beginning there was so much of resolution to get a house. Now, when there is a house, there are no men to live in.' But perhaps, there will come so many again as there will be no accommodation, no place to stay. Everything has its stages through which it has to pass.

Supreme patience is essential. If only one can stick on patiently, after some time everything comes to be favourable. It is because men cannot hold to patience that they fail to achieve anything. Else there is no other reason for their failure. Success is inevitable for one who sticks on with patience.

There is no certainty of my going to Kankhal now. But know there is no dearth of my sympathy on that account. My full sympathy is there. Master Mahashaya will not fail to send the monthly rent. For your part, intrepid you go on with your spiritual practices, with your entire mind and soul. Let whatever others may say just pass through your hearing. Be not shaken from your own attitude. I have confidence that you will succeed. Victory unto Sri Ramakrishna! Gird up your loins and jump into action. Victory unto the Lord!

I am sorry to hear of the reply of A—. Let it go. We need not bother about anything else now. Let things happen as the Lord may will. You keep yourself engaged in this manner for one year. Who knows what all things may happen by His will during this time? I shall be writing to Atul afterwards. Please convey my good wishes to Priya. I am not writing to him separately. Divakar is a man of steady intellect. Tell him to go on with his spiritual practices vigorously.

What is there if you have to stay in the locality of the householders? You need not pay your attention to any side. If you can, just drag Mahimananda there. Please convey my love and good wishes to all. My love to you,

SRI TURIYANANDA

P. S. My health continues to be as before. Mahapurush is keeping well. Everything is all right here. May it be all well with you all. Please let me know the address of your residence in your next letter. Convey please my love to Kalyan, Nishchaya, Mahimananda and all others.

THE SAVING RÔLE OF 'RENUNCIATION AND SERVICE' IN THIS BENIGHTED WORLD

III

## WHAT IS RENUNCIATION?

‘येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम्’

*What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal?*

'What, is renunciation?' asks the debonair charvaka in a patronising generosity, which has a soul of ironic satire, and before the answer is given lolls down his lusty lips in the sparkling, foaming and outflowing chalice of colourful pleasures. He gets drowned in a moment and splashes the froth of wine in the air of 'life' reflecting momentary rainbows of enticing invitation. Waves of vivacity dash high in victorious impetuosity.

But lo! the scene changes ere long. Gone are the moons and songs, dames and wines and poems. He raises up his dishevelled head in dreary uncertainty. Ah, his frightened bewildered looks, you can hardly recognize him. This dancing, dangling, winy, wily world has branded his frame with burns and blisters of unmistakable experience. He is a scorched man. His lips are lacerated. His flesh is torn. His frame is a mass of congealed pain. In his veins flow up and down the black venom imbibed from the first serpent. His blood is a virulent contagion. His breath is a poison. He is a hideous ruin of a once stately structure. It is difficult to imagine that there was a time when he was a beaming buoyant lustrous man throwing out waves of 'life' about him. And now he is a piece of charcoal so to say sending forth cold-waves in the minds of the on-lookers. His eyes are the very poems of pity.

Now he brings an ear full of total eagerness to listen to the answer of the question, 'What is renunciation?'

He is the very statue of patience now. And you begin your tales, well-known to some, may be unknown to many:

"Maitreyi, my dear," said Yajnavalkya, "I am going to renounce this life for monasticism. Allow me to settle the affairs between you and Katyayani."

Maitreyi said, "Sir, if indeed this whole earth full of wealth be mine, shall I be immortal through that?"

"No", replied Yajnavalkya, "your life will be just like that of people who have plenty of things, but there is no hope of immortality through wealth."

Then Maitreyi said, "What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal? Tell me Sir, of that alone which you know to be the only means of immortality."

And this is renunciation.

Yama had committed himself to Nachiketa with a promise to give three boons. Two boons were easily granted. When Nachiketa asked for the third boon Yama was in difficulty. He wanted to beguile the young cherub. But he was more than a match even for the king of death. He stuck to his guns having wanted to know as to what happened to man after death, does he exist or does he not.

Yama said, "Choose sons and grandsons who will live a hundred years, herds of cattle, elephants, horses and gold; choose a vast territory on earth, and live thyself as many years as thou desirest. Or, ask for some other boon that thou thinkest

equal to this wealth and long life. O Nachiketa, be a king on the wide earth, I shall make thee the enjoyer of all desires. Whatever objects of desire are difficult to get in this world of the mortals, do thou ask for them all according to thy choice. These fair damsels along with chariots and musical instruments—such indeed as are not obtainable by men—be thou attended on by them whom I bestow upon thee. But ask not again anything about death.”

Nachiketa, the very incarnation of *śraddha* made a short shrift of everything. He said that he did not want anything whatsoever. All those horses, dances and songs could be kept with Yama himself. He had no use for empires and the other luscious gifts that were proposed. The only thing he wanted to know was the ultimate truth about man, the Self-knowledge.

And this is renunciation.

“Bharata returning from the kingdom of the Kaikeyas heard of his father's death and his brother's exile, and refused the throne which had been reserved for him. He wandered through the woods and jungles of Chitrakuta and implored Rama to return to Ayodhya and seat himself on the throne of his father. But Rama had given the word and would not withdraw from it.

‘Humble token’ answered Bharata, ‘still I seek from Rama's hand

Token of his love and kindness, token of his high command,

From thy feet cast off those sandals, they shall decorate the throne,

They shall nerve my heart to duty and shall safely guard thy own,

They shall to a loyal nation absent monarch's will proclaim,

Watch the frontiers of the empire and the people's homage claim!’

Rama gave the loosened sandals as his younger humbly prayed,

Bharata bowed to them in homage and his parting purpose said:

‘Not alone will banished Rama barks and matted tresses wear,

Fourteen years the crowned Bharata will in hermit's dress appear,

Henceforth Bharata dwells in palace guised as hermit of the wood,

In the sumptuous hall of feasting wild fruit is his only food,

Fourteen years shall pass in waiting, weary toil and penance dire

Then, if Rama comes not living, Bharata dies upon the pyre!’

And this is renunciation.

The battle-field of Kurukshetra. Sri Krishna drives the stately chariot of Arjuna in between the two armies poised in readiness to jump into action. Viewing the composition of the armies, which includes relations and near and dear ones, Arjuna is nonplused. After trying to vindicate his weakness in all possible ways he casts aside his bow and arrow, sinks on his seat declaring that he won't fight. The Yogesvara gives him the knowledge of the Atman. Arjuna picks up his bow and arrow and says, “Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through Thy grace O Achyuta. I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will do Thy word.” Mark the significant words, ‘...I have regained my memory.’

And this is renunciation.

Yayati, the son of Nahusa, had two wives; the one was the daughter of the Asura king and the other was the daughter of the Asura priest, Sukra. Towards this

Asura priest he behaved badly, and was cursed by him that he should lose his youth and become old at once. But he was allowed to confer his old age on somebody else. His heroic young son Puru took pity upon his father and exchanged his youth for the latter's old age. Thus young again, Yayati, drowned himself in all sorts of sensual pleasures to all conceivable extremes for full ten centuries, at the end of which he awoke to see that he was not in the least satisfied, hungers and desires being stronger than ever. The realization that dawned in him after continued enjoyment of a thousand years he expresses as follows:

“Verily, not by satisfying desires, is craving ever appeased. No, it only grows and becomes stronger as fire by ghee poured into it. Even the whole earth, filled with treasures, gold, cattle, and women, they are not enough for one man. Considering this, seek calmness of mind. Only he who never injures any being, by deed or thought or word—becomes one with Brahman. He who fears nothing, of whom nothing is ever afraid, he who desires nothing and knows no hatred, becomes one with Brahman.”

Yayati returns his hired youth to his noble son Puru, places him on the throne and goes to forest where he devotes himself to rigorous austerities for a thousand years.

And this is renunciation.

King Suddhodana kept the young prince encircled with luxuries and far away from the realities of the world. He was married to one of the most beautiful brides. By the time a son was born to him he had somehow seen the excruciating and chronic miseries of the world. The consciousness of the suffering of the people transformed the luxuries about him into a bed of thorns as it were. The one thought that devoured him was how he could find a way out of this misery for the suffering millions of the world. That great call from the unknown,

which no body can disobey when it comes to any, came with all its power to Siddhartha. And the Prince went forth from the home to homelessness leaving behind him all the luxuries of the palace, the throne, the young wife, the cherub-like child and all securities of the settled life—in search of the Truth, the remedy for all the sorrows of the world.

And this is renunciation.

“The young girl Kisa Gotami had an only son. And he died. In her grief she carried the dead child to all her neighbours, asking for medicine, and the people said; ‘She has lost her senses. The boy is dead.’

At length Kisa Gotami met a man who replied to her request ‘I cannot give the medicine for thy child, but I know a physician who can.’

And the girl said: ‘Pray tell me sir, who is it?’ And the man replied, ‘Go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha.’

Kisa Gotami repaired to the Buddha and cried; ‘Lord and Master, give me the medicine that will cure my boy.’

The Buddha answered, ‘I want a handful of mustard-seeds.’ And when the girl in her joy promised to procure it, the Buddha added: ‘The mustard-seed must be taken from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent or friend.’

Poor Kisa Gotami now went from house to house, and the people pitied her and said: ‘Here is mustard-seed: take it.’ But when she asked, ‘Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?’ they answered her, ‘Alas! the living are few, the dead are many. Do not remind us of our deepest grief!’ And there was no house but some beloved one had died in it.

Kisa Gotami became weary and helpless, and sat down at the way-side, watching

the lights of the city, as they flickered up and were extinguished again. At last the darkness of the night reigned everywhere. And she considered the fate of men, that their lives flicker up and are extinguished. And she thought to herself: 'How selfish am I in my grief! Death is common to all; yet in the valley of desolation there is a path that leads him to immortality who has surrendered all selfishness.'

Putting away the selfishness of her affection for the child Kisa Gotami had the body buried in the forest. Returning to the Buddha, she took refuge in him and found comfort in the Dharma, which is a balm that will soothe all the pains of our troubled hearts."

And this is renunciation.

\* \* \*

"No man can serve two masters....Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on.

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.

...Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

This is Jesus the Christ.

And this is renunciation.

\* \* \*

"Lord Muhammad slept upon a mat, and got up very marked on his body by it: and I said, 'O Messenger of God! if thou had'st ordered me, I would have spread a soft bed for thee.' Lord Muhammad said, 'What business have I with the world? My condition with the world is that of a man on horse back, who standeth under the shade of a tree, then leaveth it.'"

And this is renunciation.

\* \* \*

Tulsidas was a hyper hen-pecked husband. He could not bear the separation from his wife even for a short while. And it was almost a scandal. Everytime the messenger from his father-in-law's house would come to escort the bride to her parents for even a short visit, he would be refused.

But once Tulsidas had to absent himself from home for some unavoidable business. Back home, when he did not find his wife there, he anxiously enquired of his mother her whereabouts. She said that as she thought that it was not proper on their part to consistently refuse to send the bride to pay a visit to her parents, she had taken the opportunity of his absence and sent her to his father-in-law's house.

Before long, shameless Tulsi appeared before his wife at his father-in-law's house perhaps with a broad grin on his face! The lady was surprised and annoyed and told him in great indignation, 'To have no shame to come running after me in this lecherous fashion! Fie upon such love! Ah! my dear, had you but as much love for Sri Ramachandra as you have for this body made of skin and bone, you could have attained the Supreme in this life itself.'

These words of his wife wrought a revolution in Tulsidas. His inner eyes were opened. He went away in search of Sri Ramachandra and in the fullness of time attained Him.

And this is renunciation.

\* \* \*

These were the days when Sri Ramakrishna used to remain immersed in constant God-intoxication. People used to think that he had gone mad beyond cure. The stories travelled to his village home. His virgin wife came to look after him in the temple garden of Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna one day asked Sri Saradamani in privacy, "Tell me the truth of your heart, have you come to drag me down the path of *samsara*?" Forthwith came the reply, "No. Why on earth should I drag you down to the path of *samsara*? I am here to help you in your chosen path."

And this is renunciation.

\* \* \*

"One day finding his wife asleep by his side, Sri Ramakrishna thus said to himself, 'Here is a woman's body which the world holds so dear. But he who takes pleasure in it is confined to the body and cannot realize God. Tell me frankly whether you want this or God. If the former, then here it is.' His purified mind answered this searching question by merging in a samadhi so deep that it lasted the night. Next morning after considerable difficulty he was brought back to consciousness, by the repetition of Lord's name in his ear."

And this is renunciation.

\* \* \*

"Sri Ramakrishna: Lakshminarayan Marwari, a Vedantist used to come here (at the temple garden of Dakshineswar to visit the Master) very often. One day he saw a dirty sheet on my bed and said,

'I shall invest ten thousand rupees in your name. The interest will enable to pay your expense.' The moment he uttered these words, I fell unconscious, as if struck by a stick. Regaining consciousness I said to him: 'If you utter such words again, you had better not come here. It is impossible for me to touch money. It is also impossible for me to keep it near me.' He was a very clever fellow. He said, 'Then you too have the idea of acceptance and rejection? In that case you haven't attained perfect knowledge.' 'My dear sir,' I said, 'I haven't gone that far!' (All laugh)"

As a test perhaps Sri Ramakrishna directed the merchant to the Holy Mother telling him that he might give the amount to her if she had no objection to accept it. But the Holy Mother rejected the proposal, saying that if she accepted the money it would be as good as Sri Ramakrishna's accepting it, because all the amount will then go only to his service. Sri Ramakrishna was mightily pleased.

And this is renunciation.

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One day when Sri Ramakrishna was absent in Calcutta, Narendranath (afterwards Swami Vivekananda) came to Dakshineswar. Finding there was none in the room, a desire arose in his mind to test the Master's renunciation of wealth. So he secreted a rupee under the bed. He then went to the Panchavati for meditation. After a time Sri Ramakrishna returned. No sooner had he touched the bed than he started back in great pain. Wondering, he was looking round, when Narendra came and watched him silently. An attendant examined the bed, and the presence of the rupee was disclosed. Both the attendant and the Master were surprised. Narendra walked out of the room. When the Master

was told of it later, he was glad that Narendra had tested him. Once he had said to Narendra, 'Test me as the money-changers do their coins. You must not accept me until you have tested me thoroughly.'

And this is renunciation.

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In those days of harrowing penury after his father's death Narendranath one day entreated Sri Ramakrishna to pray to the Divine Mother on his behalf for the removal of his pecuniary difficulties. Sri Ramakrishna said tenderly that it was not his habit to make such mundane demands of the Mother, and persuaded Narendranath to approach the Divine Mother personally with his own petition. (In the words of Narendranath) "Reaching the temple, as I cast my eyes upon the image, I actually found that the Divine Mother was living and conscious, the Perennial fountain of Divine Love and Beauty. I was caught in the surging waves of devotion and love. In an ecstasy of joy I prayed, 'Mother give me discrimination! Give me renunciation! Give unto me knowledge and devotion! Grant me that I may have an uninterrupted vision of Thee!' A serene peace reigned in my soul. The world was forgotten. Only the Divine Mother shone within my heart."

"As I returned, Sri Ramakrishna asked me if I had prayed to the Mother for the removal of my worldly wants. I was startled at this question and said, 'No Sir, I forgot all about it. But is there any remedy now?' 'Go again', he said, 'and tell Her about your wants.' I again set out for the temple, but at the sight of the Mother again forgot my mission, bowed to her repeatedly and prayed only for love and devotion. The Master asked me if I had

done it the second time. I told him what had happened. He said 'How thoughtless! Could you not restrain yourself enough to say those few words? Well, try once more and make the prayer to Her. Quick!' I went for the third time, but on entering the temple a terrible shame overpowered me. I thought 'What a trifle I have come to pray to the Mother about! It is like asking a gracious king for few vegetables. What a fool I am!' In shame and remorse I bowed to Her respectfully and said, 'Mother I want nothing but knowledge and devotion.' "

And this is renunciation.

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After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, specially during the time when Swami Vivekananda was away in America, Swami Brahmananda was found immersed in severe *tapasya*. During this period he sometimes took a vow not to ask for food or other necessities of life from any one. Generally an unknown devotee brought food to his door, but sometimes there would be days when he had nothing. Once, while he was sitting in silence, a stranger laid a warm new blanket beside him. A few moments later another stranger came by and took the blanket away. Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) sat still, smiling to himself as he watched the strange play of the Divine Mother.

And this is renunciation.

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Young Venkataraman had a vigorous health at the age of seventeen and he had seldom known what was disease. But with out any apparent reason whatsoever one day a strange fear seized him that he was going to die. The young soul frightened though, felt that he had to face this phenomenon of death and see through it to find

what happened when one died. A thorough self-analysis followed and the result was the realization of the truth, that 'the material body dies but the Self, the Spirit transcending it, cannot be touched by death. I am therefore the deathless Spirit.' This realization brought a metamorphosis in his conception of values. He lost all interest in pursuing the ordinary course of life. The one yearning was to remain immersed in the depths of the bliss of the real Self. But the home was not the place for it. One day therefore he strayed forth in the wide homelessness. (In the fullness of time he came to be known as Sri Ramana Maharshi.)

And this is renunciation.

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By the way, who is the charvaka and who is Yayati? It may startle us to know the fact. The charvaka is you or I, the common popular unregenerate man, whose immensely enlarged edition is Yayati. Who knows through how long a chain of lives through how many thousands of years, through what all diverse forms we have been seeking the same experience which Yayati came to have after burning his unregenerate self for long thousand years in the fire of sense pleasures. At any rate everyman will ultimately have to come to the same experience, because truth is unescapable. And the result will be a complete upheaval in the inner man, a thorough reorientation of the conception of values, pattern of thought and mode of life and the setting of the psyche on the opposite wheel.

Renunciation is the coming back home in the parlour of the Spirit. It is the (process of or attained) emergence of the inner being of man from the world of the tharldom of the senses into the threshold of that freedom which is the very essence of Man.

I was running after a mirage. Some how having come to know that it was a mirage I was running after, I give up the run and set in to dig out a perennial stream from beneath the surface-sands. This is renunciation. The world-experience through the senses is the mirage. The perennial stream is the inexhaustible source of the universe, God. Not going consciously after God and God alone, is going after the mirage. Going after God means going after Reality. We may try to go to Reality even through our laboratory. Our laboratory will then be another name for renunciation. We may stumble on God anywhere in the universe, for where is He not? But we know that we have stumbled over Him only after having renunciation and not before that.

It is impossible for even the most learned and the cleverest man to truly and effectively understand renunciation, unless he has the clearest realization of the intrinsic nature of the *samsara*, this empirical world of relativity, this our earthy life on this revolving planet.

We rush out to enjoy this world with all our senses. And how is it? Nobody has expressed it better anywhere than Vidura of the Mahabharata-fame in his wonderful parable of 'the man in the well':

"A Brahmana once lost his way in a dense forest full of beasts of prey. In great terror he ran about, looking in vain for a way out. Then he saw that the terrible forest was surrounded on all sides by traps, and, that a dreadful-looking woman encircled it with both her arms. Five-headed dragons, big and horrible to look at, and rising like rocks to the sky surrounded this great forest. And in the middle of this forest there was a well, covered over with underwood and creepers. The Brahmana fell into it, and remained hanging in the branches of a creeper. As the large fruit of bread-fruit tree, held by its stalk, hangs down, so he was hanging there, feet upwards, head downwards. And yet another, even greater, danger threatens

him there. In the middle of the well he perceives a big and mighty serpent, and from one end of the covering of the well he sees a giant elephant, black, with six mouths and twelve feet slowly approaching. But in the branches of the tree, that covered the well, all kinds of horrible bees were swarming and prepared honey. And as the honey was dripping down, it was greedily swallowed by the man hanging in the well. For he was not weary of existence and did not give up the hope of life, even though white and black mice also were gnawing the tree on which he hanged.

The parable is thus explained by Vidura: The forest is the samsara, the round of existences in this world; the beasts of prey are the diseases; the hideous giant woman is old age; the well is the body; the dragon at the bottom of the well is time; the creepers in which the man is hanging is the hope of life; the elephant with six mouths and twelve feet is the year with its six seasons and twelve months, the black and white mice are the nights and the days, and the honey drops are the sensual pleasures."

Even when life has been narrated so realistically by Vidura as in this parable, with how many of us the truth of it has sunk deep into our consciousness? How many of us have more than listened to it, have felt the horror underlying life of the ordinary go, as narrated in the tale? When we have realized the essence of the parable this is renunciation.

It must be absolutely clearly understood that renunciation consists neither in mere running away from the world in a clumsy, cowardly manner with confusion in head, thousand and odd unmitigated desires and grievances in the heart, and living shabbily picking graceless doles from the unwilling hands of merit-marketeers, nor in a mere irresponsible extra-social living of no purpose. Renunciation is not laziness and defeat nor escape out of fear.

It is the only living fire of life which cooks up experiences into the nourishing food for the soul. Renunciation is not

frustration, though every frustration in life, as a life-lesson may, with its counter part, success, help bring one to what is known as renunciation. It is essentially a realization—an eternal inner flame, if we may say so. It is the man's coming to the apprehension of a truth, having which, values undergo a headlong change. It may come either when you are in the depth of penury, frustration, ignominy, despair and helplessness or when you are in the crest of 'success,' plenty, honour and dignity, just as it happened with Prince Siddhartha. But when you have it, you are totally a changed man. Neither of the opposites mentioned above will have any influence upon you except in the way that they have brought within a secret new dawning of the spirit as a result of which a chronic night which had been dogging the consciousness has lighted out. A thorough change in the entire outlook is the first result. One stumbles on the truth as it were and puts on it the seal of the full recognition of his own experience: 'न प्रजया न धनेन त्यजेनैके अमृतत्वमानयुः', 'Neither by progeny, nor by wealth, by renunciation alone some attained immortality.'

What happens is this. As one goes ahead on the path of life, perhaps life after life, through different occupations, the inner being goes on taking notes which are all incorporated in the soul, as it were, of the being, just like the fruits' maturing up by imbibing sunshine. A moment comes when the inner experience is full and there is the consummation of ripeness. This is the stage of renunciation. Therefore the time-factor is a paramount element in renunciation.

It may happen so, a man is inwardly full of the highest type of renunciation, but he

does not know what it is. It is there in him, all the time like a sweet pain which he does not like to get rid of. He does not lack anything yet his mind is profoundly dissatisfied. There is an inner affinity with the twilight. He stands as it were on the eternal flux that flows suspended between a world lost and a world unborn. His soul hungers for something unknown. The known has lost its grip over him. Perhaps a word, a suggestion, or a chance-hint throws him into flames and he has discovered what he wants. Things are by now clear. He wants to know that by knowing which nothing more remains to be known; he wants to acquire that by acquiring which everything is acquired. He wants to get at that one concentrated stay and not all the vulgar defused prop. That happiness, that knowledge and that being beyond which is nothing higher, bigger, and better conceivable in the universe he wants to acquire. Even unknowingly he was on the way, in search after this very goal, through his previous many lives and in this one. Nothing has been lost. No experience has been without use and value. Everything, even all the wrongs and mistakes that have been committed, have been negatively helpful in bringing him to this state of existence.

So we see, renunciation is as it were, an acquisition in the consciousness. It is the ultimate economics of life. Renunciation is the very soul of Truth and the secret of *ahimsa*. It is the only cure of all, what the modern psychologists call 'tensions'. It is seeking God alone and God only. Getting rid of all sorts of selfishness and going to Selfhood is renunciation. The powerful assertion of the innate divinity of the inner Man is renunciation. It is not decrying of world, it is seeking out that

changeless reality which is immanent in it and which transcends it. It is that passionate and heroic search after the only *terra-firma* which lies beneath the quick sands of eternal flux. It is the striving to acquire that only meaning of existence, that victory absolute having which one is placed beyond the reach of all the dual throng of the world. Renunciation is that sure instrument with which you can take the bull's eye of the universe infallibly. It is the quintessence of all spirituality, the secret of Self-realization, of the attainment of Buddhahood. All paths to God lie through the portals of renunciation.

No renunciation, no apprehension of Reality. You may have terrific learning, staggering wealth, bewildering eloquence, bewitching physical health and beauty, baffling cunning for cheating everybody effectively in the world, devastating scientific power and a perforating intellect—but between yourself and the Reality there will always remain an expanding universe of distance unless you have that peculiar possession, renunciation. And by having renunciation you attain the very core of reality, for renunciation essentially means severing all psychological, and physical holdings and bondages with all that is only unreal. Renunciation means home-coming—the final return of the prodigal man.

Sankara says:

"Vairagya or renunciation is the urge to give up all transitory enjoyments (ranging) from those of an (animate) body to those of Brahma-hood (having already known their defects) from observation, instruction and so forth".

An insight into this definition will show that only after the enjoyment and rejection of the world are complete, renunciation dawns in man. Brahma is the highest being in the scale of relative existence. Renunciation presupposes that you refuse

to become even Brahma with all his powers over the universe; you simply seek to know and become the Truth itself. Remember, it is only after such an attitude was clearly shown by Nachiketa that Yama revealed to him the highest Truth. This our eternal little brother is an object lesson in renunciation for all times.

Renunciation has got clearly two aspects, the positive and the negative—of the giving up and the catching up. You go out of the room and you come in the open. Now there may be eternal controversy as to whether you first give up and then catch up, or first catch up and then give up. The truth is that light travels faster than sound. The inner man grows faster than the events of life. No one gives up things without having a fore-taste of an unconscious inner acquisition.

'Renunciation,' says Sri Ramakrishna, 'does not mean simply dispassion for the world. It means dispassion for the world and also longing for God.' This longing is the fore-taste. It is both the seed and the fruit of renunciation.

Renunciation is its own reward. The proof of renunciation is in more renunciation and yet more renunciation. Know that only to be mere simulacrum of renunciation which after blazing up brightly for a moment, progressively pales out. True renunciation becomes gradually ever more golden until at last what brightens the sun, is directly realized as the very essence of the renouncer.

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We shall next come to consider: Renunciation Down The Ages—

## THE DIFFICULTY IN RELATING THE DIVERSE SPIRITUAL VALUES OF THE ORIENT AND THE OCCIDENT

By DR. F. S. C. NORTHROP

*This is the full text of the address delivered at the unveiling of the bronze portrait of Swami Vivekananda on June 14, 1950, at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, by Dr. Filmer S. C. Northrop, Professor of Law and Philosophy at Yale University, and the author of the well-known book, THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST.—Ed.*

I have not had the privilege of knowing the man whom we are celebrating tonight, but I have had the privilege of knowing Swami Nikhilananda and Swami Akhilananda; and knowing them and realizing that they are in part, at least, what they are because of Swami Vivekananda, I am exceedingly happy to be here tonight. I trust that you feel for me when, as an American, I attempt to say something

about the spiritual values of the world. Perhaps the best thing that I can do is to point out some of the difficulties in the program that Swami Vivekananda has laid down for our time. The program, namely, of combining spiritual values of the great East with the scientific, technological-political and other values of the Western world. This problem is, I believe, very much more difficult than most people

suppose. Perhaps the best way to get at the difficulty is to turn to secular matters.

In the midst of the second World War, Chiang Mon-Lin, who was at that time Chancellor of the National Peking University, came to this country. He was just about to leave that University to enter Chiang Kai-Shek's National Yuan as its Secretary. He came to see me in New Haven and there he talked, as every Oriental who is intelligent does talk, about this problem. He had come to the conclusion, as a result of the introduction of Western science and technology and Western political ideas into his own country, that the present methods of doing this are a failure.

The reason for the failure we can now see, even though most of our educators and our missionaries overlooked it. Anthropologists in our own time have made the difficulty evident to us. The anthropologists of the nineteenth century thought that they could understand the behaviour and values of a foreign culture if they went to that culture, lived in it over periods of years, and described it objectively. They soon found, however, after decades of doing this, that they were not understanding the foreign cultures at all. And the reason was a very simple one.

The heart of the matter is that it is impossible to convey facts to people; we only convey facts by bringing them under words. And the minute we have words, we have facts plus ideas.

What the anthropologist found, therefore, when he lived with a foreign culture for decades, was that he had been conceptualizing the foreign facts in his own, rather than their, ideas. Thus it was that scientists came upon what is the greatest discovery of the social sciences of our

century: the discovery that you never understand a religion or an institution or any fact or behaviour in a culture other than your own, until you stay with that culture long enough to find the concepts that the people in that culture use to describe their experiences.

I have just been in a conference with Professor Kluckhorn of Harvard. He discovered this to be true of the Navajo Indians in our Far West, even though they do not have a written literature. He lived with them for ten or fifteen years and thought he understood them. He described everything they did; he saw it all. One day he woke up to realize that he hadn't been understanding them at all, because he had been thinking about them from the standpoint of the concepts of the culture of the United States rather than from the standpoint of the Navajos' concepts. The result was that he had to start all over again and tease out of them the basic notions that they used to conceptualize the facts of their experience.

The name for the basic concepts anybody uses to express the facts of experience is *philosophy*. This is why no people are understood until their philosophy is known. Hence the title of Professor Kluckhorn's most recent paper on the Navajo, "The Philosophy of the Navajo Indians."

Let us now put this idea in reverse in the light of Chiang Mon-Lin's experience as one of the leading educators in China. The American have carried through centuries of missionary activity in his country. Europeans, Catholic and Protestant, had been there also, to inculcate the religious values of the West. Western churches, schools, colleges, and medical institutions had been built.

What was Chiang Mon-Lin saying

concerning all this? He was saying that we conveyed our Western religion in our words, and we conveyed our Western science and technological gadgets again in our words, but the Chinese looked at all the Western things in the only way they know how to look: through their conceptual eyes. The result is that several centuries of missionary activity and incorporation of a constitution based on Western models and the introduction of Western technological instruments never took root in China.

Chiang Mon-Lin illustrated it in this way: He was in a garage the day before he took a plane to this country. A Chinese mechanic was repairing a Ford. He couldn't get the mechanic to screw the screws in all the way. The mechanic screwed them in just far enough so that intuitively the plate held. Why did he regard that as sufficient?

Look at this statue of Swami Vivekananda. This statue is exhibiting in the concrete the intuitive Oriental way of knowing reality and looking at things. Now it was this intuitive Oriental way that the Chinese was using when he was repairing that Ford. It is not an accident that Oriental civilization never produced mathematical physics or science of the Western type.

One obtains certain spiritual values by the Oriental approach to reality; but Western science and technology is not one of the products of those spiritual values. Now Chiang Mon-Lin had come to this conclusion: that you are not going to succeed in putting together an Oriental and a Western civilization by merely bringing Western religious practices and scientific methods and instruments to the Orient. You have got to bring to the

Orient the basic concepts that the West uses to conceptualize experience. As long as the Oriental looks at those Western scientific gadgets from the standpoint of intuitive knowledge of the facts of experience and from the standpoint of the kind of concepts for describing the facts of experience to which he is accustomed by centuries of tradition, he will never screw the screws in all the way in the Ford. This is why American automobiles in China after a few months are often a combination of tin cans, wire and twine. The native mechanics never really repair the cars. They merely patch them up. They patch them up so the plate holds intuitively. And then when it gives a little bit, they patch up the patch, and when that begins to break, a little bit, they wire up the patch of the patch, and when the wire begins to break a little bit, they use string to tie up the wire that ties up the patch that patches up the patch. Thus Chiang Mon-Lin came to the conclusion that there is no easy way of doing what Swami Vivekananda indicates to be the basic problem of our time. There is no way of putting together Oriental and Western civilization short of introducing Oriental people to the basic concepts of the Western philosophy of science. This was his conclusion. Until Oriental people learn to think about and describe the facts of experience from the standpoint of the basic concepts that produced Western science, philosophy and technology, never under heaven will they understand the apparatus and the gadgets or properly care for and repair them.

The converse is true with westerners who would incorporate Oriental religious practices. To indulge in yoga directly will inevitably be to look at it in terms

of the Western conceptual outlook. The result will be a religious patchwork. Before any Westerner can safely take on Oriental religious practices, he must first be given the Oriental intuitive concepts or philosophy which give those practices their sane meaning.

I think it is important to emphasize this point. Otherwise what is suggested by Swami Vivekananda may sound very simple. Take the spiritual values of India and put them together with the values of the Western world. What could be easier?

Nevertheless, this is a problem that no people in the world have learned yet how to solve. Chiang Kai-Shek's government failed because her attempt to merge Chinese Confucian and Western Christian values did not work. Pearl Harbor happened because the Japanese tried, only to bungle the solution. British India was another trial which did not succeed.

Another caution must be noted. It is a misrepresentation of the situation to say that the problem is that of combining Oriental spiritual values with Western scientific efficiency. The moral, I believe, of Chiang Mon-Lin's experience is this: that the word *spiritual* has different meanings, just as Her Excellency Mme. Pandit has pointed out to us that the word *democracy* has more than one meaning. I believe it is the truth to say that the Oriental concept of the spiritual is but one of those meanings. It is the meaning at which one arrives if one approaches the universe with intuitive immediacy. Curiously enough, I think there is more rubbish talked about the Oriental world than about almost any other culture on the face of the earth. Oriental peoples are always referred to as the great transcendental mystics of the world. If I were to describe Oriental people, I would say

that they are the one people in the world who have been consistent hard-boiled intuitive empiricists. They are the people who have said: "I am not going to believe in anything that I do not directly experience with immediacy. I am not going to indulge in any inferred entities."

Failure to realize this is the mistake that most Westerners make when they are moved by Oriental religion. They do to Oriental religion exactly what the Chinese mechanic did to the Ford. They look at the Oriental religion from the conceptual standpoint of religion in the West. Now religion in the West was characterized by St. Paul when he said,

"The things that are seen are temporal."

It is only unseen things that are eternal. To a Westerner, religion or the spiritual always means something that involves an active faith and a leap beyond immediacy. St. Paul put it again when he said,

"Now I see through a glass darkly, but then I shall see face to face."

This is the Western way of conceptualizing religion.

What does this Western way mean? It means that within immediacy there is nothing divine. The divine is on the other side of immediacy. The Oriental concept of the divine, however, is right in immediacy. It is right in the immediacy of the darkness. No leap of faith beyond immediacy is required. The only difficulty in understanding Oriental religion and philosophy is that it is so easy to understand. If one wants to get to the heart of it, do exactly what all the sages tell you. Stop thinking, that means, stop trying to get behind the immediacy. Stop imagining, stop putting up hypotheses, stop indulging in logical arguments. Just stay with pure immediacy.

They tell you also what the divine factor is in pure immediacy. They name it diversely as Brahman, Atman, Nirvana, Tao, and Jen. It is the factor that cannot be described. It is known with immediacy, and yet it cannot be described. Hence if you go to one of the great sages and say, "Tell me what Brahman is," he will reply, "You tell me first what you think it is." So you say, "It is sweet." "Neti! Neti! No! No!" he replies. "It is sour." "Neti! Neti!" "It is long." "Neti! Neti! It is not long." "It is short." "Neti! Neti! It is not short." "It is medium." "Neti! Neti! It is not medium." "No! No!" is always the reply.

Yet what he is saying is clear. For what is there in the realm of immediacy that is not designated in some determinate way? Let us look around and see right now. Merely drop out all the images you have. Drop out all the sounds, all the differentiations. What you have left is the pure undifferentiated immediacy. This is Brahman.

The Western religious object is not known in this way. Theistic religions are not restricted thus to immediacy. In Western religion we start with immediacy, but the West tends to regard immediacy as mere appearance. It says that immediacy is not real; it is instead merely a sign of a more real object beyond itself. And to know this more real religious object you have to have active faith first. You have to postulate the divine before you can experience the divine, and the proof of the divine pudding is in the eating. But you can't ever get the experience if you don't first take the leap of faith.

According to the Upanishads no such leap of faith is necessary, as one of the Upanishads says, Brahman was here all

the time. It is here now and all the time within immediacy. It is merely covered up in spots with the sweet, the sour, the yellow and the blue, but it is now and always, while they come and go.

What I am leading up to is this: In order to get to the heart of Western culture and its science, so that it becomes conceptualized in its terms rather than in intuitive Oriental terms, the Oriental must add to his own spirituality the Western theistic concept of the spiritual, the concept of the spiritual which identifies it not with the undifferentiated intuitive existential immediacy but with something beyond immediacy knowable only by the intellectual intuition by means of what Plato called ideas. Conversely, the West must enlarge its concept of the spiritual to include that of Asia.

The foregoing analysis enables us to see why the program that Swami Vivekananda has laid out for us is so difficult. Failure to realize that different parts of the world have different concepts of the spiritual is the reason also why all in the past who attempted to merge the Orient and the Occident have failed. Each part of the world has assumed that it has a complete and perfect concept of the spiritual or that its concept was identical with that of others, and that all that it can learn from anybody else is a new illustration of or a new instrument for achieving its spiritual goal. To achieve the Swami's vision, therefore, we must come to the modification in outlook just pointed out. We have to pass on from the spiritual values of any one of us to the spiritual values of all of us. We must move on not merely to a symphony of all the world's political theories and all the world's esthetic forms, but also to a symphony of all the world's spiritual values.

I believe it to be just as true that there are spiritual values in the West about which the Oriental East knows very little as it is true that there are spiritual values in the Orient, these intuitive ones, of which the West, with its mere intellectual intuition of the spiritual, has not dreamed. So Swami Vivekananda, it seems to me, has given all of us a bigger challenge than we might have at first supposed. It is the challenge not merely of enlarging the political faith of each provincial part of the world, to be sensitive to the political faiths of other parts. It is the challenge also of stimulating the spiritual faith of each part of the world to be sensitive to the different spiritual faiths of other parts.

It would be a miracle, would it not, if politics could be completely comprehended only by all the nations making their particular contributions, and that religion could be comprehended by one people or culture alone. Certainly, religion is the deeper thing. It is the more subtle thing. It is the more difficult thing to comprehend and to get the heart of.

Thus, to me at least, Swami Vivekananda sets us out on a new path: the path of enlarging the concept of the spiritual in the East and the West so that the one becomes enriched by the inclusion of the other. This way, I believe, and this way alone, can we build a political home on divine ground.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS

By SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

(continued from the previous issue)

### PRACTICAL DISCIPLINES

The goal of the Upanishads is to enable man to discover the ultimate reality and also to transform his life in the light of that discovery. The seers of the Upanishads were not satisfied with mere intellectual knowledge, which would only be an addition to man's other information. He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman. Hence serious students of the Upanishads are required to practise certain disciplines. Mere intellectual honesty and truthfulness are not enough. The Upanishads often describe a teacher's asking the aspiring student to practise for a long time austerity, faith, self-control, and chastity. Thus alone can he understand and realize the true nature of reality.

The first step in acquiring the knowledge of the Upanishads is the hearing of the

truth (*śravaṇa*) from a qualified teacher. But to remain satisfied with mere hearing, however competent the teacher might be, would be a sort of blind faith, though the benefit from another's experience should not be minimized. Reality known merely from the testimony of others rests on dogma. Intellectual conviction is necessary. Then comes the second step, known as reflection (*manana*). The student must be convinced, by his own reasoning, that what the teacher instructs is true. But where transcendental knowledge is concerned mere reasoning is not enough. It often creates doubt. The knowledge gained by one kind of reasoning may be superseded by reasoning of another kind. At its best, intellectual knowledge may indicate truth, but it cannot demonstrate it. Here comes in the third step, namely, meditation (*nididhyāsana*). After

receiving intellectual assurance, the disciple contemplates the truth by dwelling upon it without interruption. This is generally called yoga. By means of it a higher faculty of mind is developed, enabling the student to apprehend reality by a direct and immediate experience. The philosophy of yoga, formulated by Patanjali has been accepted by all vedantic philosophers. The main disciplines of yoga are the control of the mind, the control of the senses, detachment, chastity, truthfulness, non-violence, reverence for holy things, forbearance, concentration, and meditation. The higher faculty, without which a direct knowledge of superconscious truth is not possible, is in every man, but generally remains veiled by ignorance. The practice of yoga removes the veil.

The direct knowledge of reality is absolutely necessary. A man's knowledge of multiplicity, created by ignorance, is immediate. It can be dispelled only by an equally immediate knowledge of non-duality. Reflection gives him only a mediate knowledge, which cannot totally destroy his wrong knowledge. Only by the immediate knowledge of reality, through right perception, can the "fetters of the heart" be broken and "all doubts resolved",<sup>81</sup> and the true nature of things be seen like a fruit "lying on the palm of one's hand".

#### ETHICS

In order to practise meditation effectively a man must cultivate a spirit of discrimination (*viveka*) between what is real and what is apparently real, and detachment (*vairagya*) from the apparently real. The ego (*ahamkara*) and its identification with impermanent objects and narrow interests of life are generally the root of all evil.

The control of the ego is the meaning of detachment or renunciation, which is the central point of the Upanishadic ethics. Ethics includes both self-abnegation and social morality. Ethical training is both implicit and explicit in the teachings of the Upanishads. It is assumed as the condition precedent for the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. The *Katha Upanishad* tells the story of a disciple who had to overcome various temptations of the senses, power, and wealth, before receiving Self-Knowledge. The same Upanishad declares that the knowledge of the Self,

"Never reveals itself to a person devoid of discrimination, heedless, and perplexed by the delusion of wealth,"<sup>82</sup>

In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (V. ii). Prajapati, the Creator advises the man with demoniac qualities (*asura*) to cultivate compassion (*dayadhvam*), the average man (*manushya*) generosity (*datta*), and the privileged man (*deva*) self-control (*damyata*). The same Upanishad advises men not to break away from society until they have fully discharged their duties towards it and gained its goodwill.<sup>83</sup> The ethical disciplines find their fulfilment when the advanced student embraces the life of sanyasa, or total renunciation. In this stage he renounces the desire for offspring, wealth, and heavenly worlds after death. He cultivates inwardness of mind (*nivritti*) and turns the mind away from its outgoing propensities (*pravritti*). Physical activity gives place to contemplation.

#### LIBERATION

In the depths of contemplation the seeker attains to knowledge of non-duality and to liberation (*moksha*). He becomes

free from the life of *samsara*, or the unceasing cycle of births and deaths in which one identifies oneself with the phenomenal world. Sankaracharya says that the liberated man realizes the complete identity of Atman and Brahman without any trace of duality. According to others, such as Bhartiprapancha, the liberated man does not accept diversity as real in itself but as included in the all-comprehensive reality of Brahman. Taken as a whole the philosophy of the Upanishads seems to represent Sankaracharya's view. However it may be, liberation is the culmination of morality and of the intellectual search. It transcends the distinction between good and evil, self and non-self, as commonly understood.

*Moksha*, or liberation, the non-dualistic philosophers carefully point out, is not the result of knowledge. It is not a new acquisition. The law of causality applies only to the phenomenal world. It cannot affect Brahman. Causation is incompatible with Atman, which is one and without a second.

"The Self is not born; it does not die. It has not sprung from anything; nothing has sprung from it."<sup>84</sup>

Liberation is not something created, but the discovery of what has existed from eternity and has only hitherto been concealed from us. If liberation were something foreign to man's nature, he would lose it again, even after attaining it. As people who do not know the location of hidden gold buried in their backyard fail to see it, though walking over it again and again, so man, through ignorance does not see Brahman, though it is his true Self.

He who knows the Self is liberated. The knower of the Self continues to live but never forgets its non-duality, immortality, and divinity. Thus, according to the Upanishads, liberation is not the result of the knowledge of Atman; but this knowledge itself is liberation in its fullness. Desire is *samsara*; desirelessness is liberation.

"When all the desires that dwell in the heart fall away, then the mortal becomes immortal and here attains Brahman."<sup>85</sup>

The knower of the Self is like a man who, having been asleep is now awake and dreams no more of empty things. He is like one who, having been sick, is now whole again; he is like one who, having been possessed by a ghost, is free and normal again.

Liberation can be achieved in this life, and the liberated soul is called *jivanmukta*, free while living in the body. For him is destroyed once for all the belief in the ultimateness of multiplicity. He is free from fear and grief. No discord, which is the result of the perception of duality, can mar the serenity of his life. No evil can possibly come from him, for he had subdued all evil while practising the disciplines for Self-knowledge. His life is by no means given to non-activity, but he sees "non-action in action." Even while performing action through his body and the sense, he sees the Self to be actionless and detached. He realizes that the Self is not the doer, but the witness, not the actor, but the spectator. At the time of death he dissociates himself from his seeming identification with the body and merges in Brahman, the unity of existence. This is called the final release (*videha-mukti*).

<sup>81</sup> *Mu. Up.* II. ii. 8

<sup>82</sup> *Ka. Up.* I. ii. 6

<sup>83</sup> *Br. Up.* I. iv. 10

<sup>84</sup> *Ka. Up.* I. ii. 18

<sup>85</sup> *Ka. Up.* II. iii. 14

Liberation in the present life is possible only for the fortunate few who are determined to achieve here and now the knowledge of non-duality through the discipline of complete renunciation. But there are those who, though sincere in their desire, do not realize non-duality before death. They, according to the Upanishads, go from this plane of existence to a higher one, without returning to earth, and in the end attain to liberation. This is called *krama mukti*, or liberation by stages. And the vast majority of mankind, who, lacking self-control, follow the natural impulses of their hearts, are born again and again, their embodiment being determined by the nature of their action and thought.

"Good deeds lead to good and evil deeds to evil." <sup>36</sup>

Everyone will ultimately attain to the knowledge of Brahman.

This is a very brief summary of the philosophy of the Upanishads. One can hardly exaggerate the influence of that philosophy upon the individual and collective life of the Hindus. Since the days of India's greatness, her political, social and

<sup>36</sup> *Br. Up.* III. 7

## THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR

By SISTER NIVEDITA

India alone, amongst all the countries of the earth, has had the boldness that could abolish the mental barriers between sacred and secular, high and low. India alone, having thought out the great philosophy of Advaita, has had the imagination to command Man to become the Witness, to declare life to be only play. It is a lofty task, road, how shall we call others there?

"And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat!'" These sombre words are recorded in the Christian Gospel of St. Luke, as spoken by Christ only an hour or two before He was betrayed to His enemies. Such is the strength of the Avatar, that when the whole world has conspired to put Him on his trial, to hypnotize Him into a belief in His own weakness and forlornness, He is only conscious the while of putting the world on its trial, and sifting it as wheat. He is the one steady point in the great matrix of humanity, quivering, sifting and oscillating in all directions. He is the point of inversion of all the feebleness and weakness of the common mind.

(continued to page-230)

## THE NEED FOR INDO-BURMAN CULTURAL CONTACTS

By THE HON'BLE MR. U WIN

*The Hon'ble Mr. B. Gopala Reddi, Finance Minister of the Government of Madras, gave a lecture on "Need for Indo-Burman Cultural Contacts" before the Cultural Studies Group at Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, on Wednesday the 14th June 1950. The Hon'ble U Win, Education Minister, Burma, (and acting Foreign Minister) presided over the meeting. The text of the article is adapted from the Hon'ble Mr. U Win's presidential speech.—Ed.*

As all of us know that both India and Burma belong to the same geological region. India and Burma together form the arch of the Bay of Bengal—a mere pond compared to the great seas and oceans. As may be expected India is the one country with which Burma has most contact throughout her history. Legends would have it that the Burmese race descended from the Sakya clan of an Indo-Himalayan race to which Lord Buddha belonged and migrated to Burma to escape extermination by Vidhadupa. The successive Burmese kings were proud to claim their descent—whether authentic or not from the Sakya kings. It was even claimed by the annals of the pagodas in Burma that Lord Buddha himself visited Burma. The district town of Thaton was a port of 'Suvarnabhumi'—'Golden Land' at which merchant-ships from ancient India are reported to have called regularly. There are remains in various parts of Southern Burma which indicate Indian settlements. All these go to show that in spite of the physical barriers there was intercourse between India and Burma from the earliest times. Who knows what the archaeological survey of Burma will disclose further in the near future? The early history of the South-East Asian countries like, Siam, Cambodia and Java shows that at one period in history, the Indian colonization of South-East Asia was very active.

Then comes the epoch-making Buddhist evangelist movements. The amazing zeal of the early Buddhists of India spread the gospel of Lord Buddha far and wide over the continent of Asia, and Burma received the full benefit of it. So much so that the Buddhists of Burma claim to possess the purest form of Buddhism today. Thus was laid the foundation of cultural association between India and Burma. With the spread of Buddhism other branches of Indian culture also appeared in Burma. The Burmese Buddhist Law was derived from the Laws of Manu. The modern Burmese alphabet is the development of Devanagari and South Indian scripts. The Burmese dancing and musical instruments are modifications of the ancient Indian dancing and musical instruments. The epic of the Ramayana is still played all over Burma regularly with great ceremony and action. There were instances of marriages between the princes of India and Burma in the early part of the Christian era indicating much closer political intercourse than that obtained in later periods. In fact the theme of a very popular play in Burma called 'Padeikkhaya' is the love of the Burmese princess of the Pagan days for an Indian prince beyond the seas.

For about seven centuries previous to the resumption of intercourse between India and Burma as a result of the British occupation, there was complete stoppage

of intercourse between the two countries. During this period Burma's interest was mainly directed towards China and Siam. This was also the period of national unification in Burma.

The India and Indians I have been referring to so far are from the mainland of India and the people dwelling there respectively. There was however uninterrupted intercourse between Burma and the outlying parts of India. The relations between Burma, Manipur and Assam, peaceful or otherwise, were always intimate. Many rulers of Manipur and Assam owed allegiance to the Burmese kings. In fact the people of this part of India belong to the same racial stock as the Burmese people. The Manipur cavalry used to be an integral part of the Burmese army. Much of the Hindu element in the present day Burmese culture was due to the infiltration of the Manipuri scholars overland. The Manipuri Brahmins have acted as Court Chaplains to the kings and have officiated in secular court ceremonies. They are still regarded as sole repositories of the true science and art of astrology in Burma. The boundary between India and Burma on the Arakan-Chittagong borders was always fluid. It was only there that the Muslim kingdoms of India came into contact with Burma. There was no intercourse whatever—cultural, commercial or diplomatic—between the principal Burmese kingdom and the Muslim kingdoms of India. Occasionally stray travellers and traders entered Burma and some of them were mentioned as taking service under the Burmese kings.

First came the Indian sepoy and then with the annexation of Burma by the British which began in 1826 and ended in 1884 the situation was changed entirely.

The Indo-Burma relations entered a new phase altogether.

As in the case of the conquest of India the British mainly used the Indian soldiers in the successive Burmese wars. The Indian soldiers were mercenaries trained and led by the British officers. After the wars some opted to remain in Burma either in Government employ or to settle in the country which they found to be productive and sparsely populated. Those who returned also spread travellers' stories about Burma and many Indian traders, settlers and seekers after employment under the British administration therefore came in the wake of the conquering hordes. That was the beginning of modern Indo-Burmese relations. With the spread of British rule, rapid expansion of trade and extension of the field of exploitation of natural resources, agriculture, forests, minerals, etc., the floodgate of the migration of Indian capital was opened. Till recently principal Government offices not occupied by the British were held by the Indians. In the medical and Engineering Services about 50% of the superior cadre and 90% of the inferior posts were held by the Indians. These statements are made not in a spirit of bitterness but to give a concrete idea of the Indo-Burmese relations in the British period. The railway and port labour was the entire monopoly of the Indians. The *sarangs* and *khalasis* of the thousands of vessels of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co., plying the inland waterways of Burma, were all Muslims of the Chittagong District of Bengal. Thousands of labourers in the oilfields and mines all over the country were all Indians. These were the conditions prevailing when the World War II broke out. In short, Indians were found in all the key positions of Burma's economic life.

In the struggle for freedom India has been a source of inspiration to the Burmans. The G.C.B.A. which was the first militant nationalist organisation had strong affiliations with the Indian Congress. A section of the Association was even styled the Swarajist, a term borrowed from the Indian freedom politics. Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanaya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Motilal Nehru were bywords in Burma in the early phase of the fight for freedom. The sincerity and sacrifice of the Indian leaders had acted as shining examples to the leaders of Burma. The literature of Indian politics was read by the students and politicians of Burma with avidity.

Only in the later days did the Burmans extend their reading into the fields of Irish politics and Russian revolution. There was in the past also a notable attempt at political concord between Burma and India to overthrow the European domination in the beginning of the 19th century. King Bodawapaya of Burma sensing the danger of the British imperialism in the East sent emissaries to India to contact the Mahrattas who were then in power and who were also feeling the British pressure. The attempt was however frustrated by the British discovering it and the preoccupation of the Maharajas with their immediate problems. This episode goes to show that the Burmese people had even in that period of history visions of concerted action by the oriental powers against the western domination.

We have now some material on which to base our thoughts about the future of Indo-Burmese relations. To sum up, geographically Burma is India's closest neighbour with trade potentiality. The historic lines of communications between India and Burma through Manipur and Assam have been exploited in the last war. As these

border regions are opened up by the respective national governments, the overland communications between India and Burma would be greatly extended in the near future. A vista is opened of an era when these at present backward places will assume the position of Switzerland and Austria in Europe. The Tamu and Ledo Roads are the unmistakable signs of such a future.

History has shown that India and Burma must march together in amity and concord if they were to achieve greatness in accordance with the direction of Nature. We know each other as few people do. Our understanding of each other's needs and difficulties is very profound and deep-rooted. With such knowledge and understanding, sympathy is not difficult of cultivation. In the New Asia, India and Burma are going to play very important parts. Both India and Burma have much to give to the new Asia. Asia has now much hope but still has much work to do. Millions are still struggling for freedom and many nations are exerting to bring about unity and peace in the wake of political freedom. The Asia we all long to see is undoubtedly in sight but before we reach it we will have to overcome immense difficulties. Owing to the imperialistic policy of pre-independence days, there was very limited contact made between the people of India and the people of south East Asia and as a consequence we find today that the relationship is not so close as it should have been. Owing to her deep understanding of India through long association and her racial affinity with the people of South East Asia, Burma is in an ideal position as a bridge between India and South-East Asian countries if India is to take prominent part in the affairs of South-East Asia.

# HOW TO SEE GOD IN EVERYTHING

By SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

(continued from the previous issue)

## AVOID THE TEMPTATION OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

This intuitive power, when it is directed to the centres and the mind, may bring supersensuous powers of knowing, hearing, seeing, smelling, and so on. Now, here is a great temptation.

Having progressed to some extent and attained dispassion for the things of the physical world, the spiritual seeker may become attracted by the charms of the subtle world and deviate from the spiritual path.

"These are obstacles to the attainment of the superconscious state," says Patanjali. Commenting on the aphorism Swami Vivekananda observes—"These powers are obstructions to the attainment of the highest goal,—the knowledge of the pure Self and freedom. These are, as it were to be met in the way, and if the yogi rejects them, he attains the highest. If he is tempted to acquire these, his further progress is barred."

As the aspirant after spiritual illumination comes to recognize the occult powers and phenomena as obstacles and so avoids them, he is able to unfold real intuition and thus experience directly the glory of the supreme Spirit which transcends body and mind, physical and subtle worlds, good and evil in all forms.

## SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES, PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

Sri Ramakrishna, speaks of the three bodies of man and also the Ultimate Reality beyond them all: the body consisting of the gross elements is the physical body, and then there is the subtle body made up of the mind, the ego, and so on. Then there

is the causal body by means of which one enjoys the Bliss of God and holds communion with Him. Remember this. On the physical plane with our physical eyes we see only physical things. On the psychical plane with our mental eye we see subtler things. On the spiritual plane with our spiritual vision, with our spiritual eye, we come in touch with the Divine forms, with the Divine Reality. We can see divine forms. We may as well realize the formless. Now, corresponding to what we may call the individual causal body, there is a universal causal body. Our teachers call it Ishwara. That is the personal, though all-pervading aspect, of the Divine Reality. The transcendental Spirit first manifests itself on the subtlest plane of consciousness. That is called the *Chidakasha*—the plane of spiritual consciousness out of which arise different spiritual forms. On this plane we still have the individual, as soul, and the Cosmic, as the Oversoul. Wonderful is the Divine Play that takes place between the soul and the Oversoul. This the mystics alone realize. Let me try to explain it if I can with the help of an analogy given by Ramakrishna.

## MYSTICAL REALIZATIONS—WITH FORMS AND WITHOUT FORMS

This body of ours is like a plate, as it were, containing the water of mind, intelligence, and ego. Brahman, the Supreme Spirit, is like the sun and is reflected in the water. In this water of the mind waves are rising, but remember, whatever be the nature of the wave, each wave is illuminated with the light of the sun. The same light is there and the same light illumines many waves. If this body of

OCT. 1950 ]

HOW TO SEE GOD IN EVERYTHING

225

ours is the individual plate, this world of ours is the Cosmic plate. Our mind has as its correlative the Cosmic Mind, and behind the Cosmic Mind there is Cosmic Spirit. The same sun reflects itself on the little wave, as well as on the ocean, and what happens on this little water of ours is very small compared with what is happening on this Cosmic Water of the spiritual ocean out of which boundless waves, boundless forms, mountain-high waves, smaller waves, ripples are rising, and remember all are illuminated by the same Spirit. There are various kinds of forms. Now, when the mystic sees a Divine holy form, may be of a Christ, or of a Buddha, or of a Krishna, he is seeing something very, very personal. Again may be the same mystic beholds a grander phenomenon when the personal has merged in the impersonal. He sees the Divine Spirit shining in and through everything. From the plane of Form the devotee goes to the plane of the Formless. How does the devotee see, how does the devotee know? He has the spiritual eye. He has the spiritual understanding.

Sometimes a conflict arises in our mind. How can God be both with form and without form? From his deeper experience, Sri Ramakrishna tells us:

"There is the ocean and owing to great cold part of the ocean freezes and then when the sun rises the form disappears."

There is no contradiction between the Form and the Formless. When it is cold, forms appear as ice and when the sun rises again the form becomes formless. So also in the case of the devotee. When his heart is filled with devotion he wishes to see Divine forms. Again, he wants to be in communion with Formless or it may be that the Infinite spirit reveals Itself as such. Mystics possess the spiritual eye and under-

standing which are unfolded through spiritual disciplines.

## ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CHRISTIAN MYSTICS

Think of St. Theresa, seeing the holy form of the resurrected Christ. The form was of unspeakable beauty and majesty. Some times the mystic did not see any form. There was a time when She felt the presence of Christ, but she did not see anything, and this feeling was something that was transforming. Did she have any vision of the Cosmic? One day we are told, she was able to perceive in one instant how all things are seen and contained in God. That left a tremendous impression on her mind, but she could not definitely write on that point. Had she written she would have been probably branded as a heretic. It is criminal for a Christian mystic, to say that he or she saw that everything is a manifestation of God.

In Christendom there was another great mystic, St. Francis of Assisi, but it is unfortunate that we know so very little of his experiences. He is classed as the chief of nature mystics of the Western world. He had visions of God, but more than any other mystic, he saw something Divine in nature. His love for God, his love for man, his love for animals, for birds and everything was unbounded. A little hare kept him company and that hare was his beloved friend. He regarded the birds of the forest as his little brothers and sisters. He felt the presence of life in the trees and, out of deep love, requested a woodcutter not to chop off the whole tree but give it a chance to grow. The sun, wind, and fire were his brothers. The moon, water, earth were his sisters. He recognised a sister in death "from whom no man living can escape". All creatures reflected a divine

radiance and this filled the Saint's mind and heart with joy.

#### EXPERIENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Those of you who have been studying *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* must have discovered already that here we have a remarkable document of spiritual experiences unparalleled in history. The Master had various visions of God in His various aspects—God as Mother, Father, Friend, Beloved, as the Soul of all souls. He realized the universal Spirit and felt he was a part of that. And there came a time when he also realized the Transcendent Being. Step by step, from the Form to the Formless, he went higher and higher and was lost in the experience of the Transcendent Reality beyond all relativity. By following the process of “not this,” “not this”, he reached the transcendental experience which Sankara, the great mystic philosopher, described in glowing terms:

“Only Bliss, Bliss-without direction, relation, form or name. The unembodied Soul lost in Its unspeakable bliss beyond all relativity, waking, dream, and deep sleep”.

Most mystics, as Sri Ramakrishna tells us, do not care to come down from this blissful state, but he came down. The Divine will brought him down. He was asked to remain on the threshold of the superconscious. From there he could view the whole universe, men, all beings, and all things shining with the Divine radiance that filled his heart with Divine glory and joy. He came down to share his unique spiritual experiences with his disciples and with his fellow beings. And not only that. He made the foremost of his disciples realize the unique experience of the Transcendental and also helped him to come down to the plane of Divine Immanence where he saw everything shining with Divine Glory.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S REALIZATION OF THE TRANSCENDENT AND THE IMMANENT

Vivekananda, as we saw already, had a glimpse of the Divine State, when he was ridiculing the idea of God being manifest in everything and the Master threw him into a deep spiritual mood. This time it was the power of the Master that brought him the vision. Later on, through his own spiritual disciplines and also through the grace of his illumined Master, he realized the transcendental state of which he had only a glimpse before. He was meditating with a brother disciple. His consciousness was changing and one of those present with him tells us: “Vivekananda exclaimed, ‘Where is my body?’ He had lost the consciousness of his body. He was lost in the Superconscious.” Swami Shivananda, one of his brother disciples who was a witness of what was happening said,

‘Seeing him in that so-called unconscious state, seeing his body as cold as a corpse, I and the other disciples ran in great agitation to the Master and told him what had happened. The Master knew what was happening. He showed no anxiety. He just smiled and said: ‘Very well,’ and then relapsed into silence.’

The swami returned to our so-called ordinary plane of consciousness and came to the Master. He said:

‘I was happy in the superconscious state. In my infinite joy I had forgotten the world. I beseech you to enable me to remain in that state.’

The Master replied:

‘My boy! How can you ask for such a thing? You wish to stay absorbed in your personal joy like an ordinary man! I tell you this realization will become so natural to you that in your normal state you will realize the one Divinity in all beings. By the Grace of the Divine Mother you will do great things in the world; you will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor!’

As we all know, the Master's words later on proved to be true to the letter.

#### SEEING GOD IN MAN

Sitting at the feet of their illumined Master, Swami Vivekananda and his brother disciples learned the twofold ideal which they graciously passed on to us,—the ideal of renunciation and service, the ideal of work and worship, and the ideal of meditation on the Godhead and along with this, the ideal of the service to the God-in-man. They all realized that humanity is one and that it is God-embodied.

One day the Master was speaking to the disciples on the teachings of a great spiritual teacher. His name was Sri Chaitanya. He was a great prophet of Divine Love. The central theme of his teaching is:

“Have relish for the name of God, have compassion for all living creatures, and do service to the devotees of the Lord.”

Hearing this the Master fell into the superconscious state. As he returned from the heights of superconsciousness he said to himself, and the disciples all heard:

“Compassion to creatures! Compassion to creatures! To show compassion to creatures, no that is not right. It is not compassion but it is service to man, recognizing them to be veritable manifestations of God.

Swami Vivekananda got a new light. He observed:

“The ideal of Vedanta lived by the recluse outside the pale of society can be practised as well in the home and can be applied to all our daily schemes of life. Let everyone understand that it is God alone who has manifested Himself, as the world, as all created beings and things. Do service to man, knowing him to be the manifestation of God. This will purify your heart and you will realize in due course that you, too, are part and parcel of the Divine Being.”

We hear the Swami saying—

“From highest Brahman to the yonder worm, And to the very minutest atom,

Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love; Friend, offer mind, soul, body at their feet. These are His manifold forms before thee, Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God? Who loves all beings, without distinction, He indeed is worshipping best his God.”

#### SEEING GOD IN EVERYTHING

The man of self-realization sees God in everything.

“One clearly realizes that God Himself has become the universe and all living beings.”

We spiritual seekers must have the spiritual eye Says Sri Ramakrishna:

“You will develop that eye as soon as your mind becomes pure.”

The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna always remembered these words of the Master.

In our distracted, divided modern world we need something of this Cosmic vision that humanity is one and is God-embodied. We need the vision that came to the ancient teachers of the Vedas, the vision that came to Arjuna, as we find in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the vision of the Cosmic Spirit with heads and feet everywhere, eyes everywhere ears everywhere. We need the vision of the ancient teachers of the Upanishads who saw the the One spirit shining in the earth, in water, and in the sky; saw this Spirit shining in all beings. They realized this spirit shining in their heart of hearts, as also the Breath of their breath, as the Ear of their ear, as the Eye of their eye. It is necessary for us all to feel this living presence of the Supreme Spirit, to realize the Divine Immanence in all our being, in all our senses, in all our limbs, and in our mind and heart. The ancient teacher of the Upanishad says:

“Realize the Spirit in all. Realize that the husband is dear because of the Atman within; realize that the wife is dear because of the Spirit within; realize that the children are dear because of the Spirit within. Things

are dear because they reflect the Spirit. This Self is to be realized, this Self is to be experienced.

How? Hear about it. Reflect on it. Meditate on it. Our spiritual teachers ask us along with that to do service to our fellow beings. Meditation, worship, prayer, as well as spiritualized service, enable us to reach our Goal sooner. They help us, as Sri Ramakrishna declares, to unfold the spiritual eye that enables the soul to have spiritual visions. Sincere meditation and loving service, together, purify the mind speedily and take us nearer to the Goal. Let us always remember the words of Ramakrishna:

"The pure mind acquires a new attitude.

Through that pure mind one sees God in the world. Therefore, one needs spiritual discipline."

We all need spiritual discipline so that we may become pure. And when we attain purity of the heart we see the Divine Spirit not only in our heart of hearts, but also we witness the same Divine radiance in everyone; and then we become really free. That is the highest Goal of life. That is the source of infinite Bliss. We all need spiritual disciplines. We all need purity. We all need the spiritual vision and the bliss and joy that comes with the direct experience of God—the Divine Reality, our true Being which is both transcendent and immanent.

## DISCOVERY OF THE NATURAL MAN

By ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

(continued from the previous issue)

I do not hold in the least that all the Hill tribes, nor a great majority among them are patterns of the Natural Man of my dreams. But certainly these human beings, their thoughts and deeds, these unsophisticated children of Mother Nature up in those hills have helped me more than anything else to glimpse into the pristine purity of the Natural Man, the ideal without the original blemish.

Our life on this earth, our birth on this planet, is a lapse and a sort of self-forgetting, not in the Platonic or Wordsworthian sense alone, but more so from a purely psychological and esoteric point as well. We have lost our natural and normal moorings. We are no longer in tune with the Infinite Power-house that is Life and Love in the universe. We suffer from the just nemesis of our own misdeeds, we are

smitten with the deadly monster of physical and mental diseases and yet we do not seem to have understood the nature of our disease, the real make-up of our being, the laws governing the growth, development and decay of our inner personality. We fall easy victims to manifold diseases and yet the serpent-bites do not seem to teach us any lesson. We continue to revel and gloat until the bubble of life breathing in our nostrils, bursts and we are gone. The very make-up of the social and political organisations in our cities and society are ill-suited for us to get that amount of introspection and vision necessary for us to hold on to our natural moorings or to return to the lap of Mother Nature if we have strayed away from the bosom of our Earthly Mother and Heavenly Father. We sink, stinking of our unnatural life, die

shipwrecked in the ocean of worldliness, which is but another name for unnatural life.

Yes, it is only too true that we all need be reborn anew, re-generated of the womb of Mother Nature. What is indeed born of flesh is flesh, what is born of spirit is spirit. Nature is Spirit, but not Nature in its relativity or *maya* form, but Nature in its essence. Even matter that is based on extension and time is but condensed form of energy or spirit, consciousness. The revelations of Atomic Energy should be carefully studied not only in its physical and chemical aspects alone, but more in its psychological and metaphysical senses as well. Nature, the ontological reality on which is based the phenomenal world, is Reality. What is Real is Ideal or pregnant with consciousness. Mother Nature in Taoist philosophy, in Sankhya system and in the esoteric teachings of many a religious system and philosophy is the same as the "Father in Heavens" of the Christian Gospels and God of theistic religions. What is beyond this personal God or Mother Nature is the ineffable, the *super-ens*, the Absolute beyond names and forms, which no human language can say what it is in itself. Yet even the royal path to reach the Absolute should be traversed through God or Nature as the high jump from the sense-bound world to the Real, the Absolute is but an exceptional grace for a handful mystics like Plotinus, Amonius Saccas, Lao Tze, Pythagoras, Jesus, Sankara, Kabir, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and a few other supreme guides and saviours of history.

Natural living is the best way to preserve one's physical and mental health and get cured if and when we fall victims to diseases and nervous troubles, neurasthenia

and asthma, blood-pressure and heart-troubles, through our unnatural living. Drugs and operations may remove the symptoms and often chemical drugs and much-advertised *materia medica* can only push back or suppress diseases but very rarely cure or heal our diseases. Naturopaths are the best friends of the sick and world-weary men and women of this Machine Age. If naturopathy, psycho-analysis and psychiatry could be combined with the psychology and science of saints and sages, with the life-wisdom of God-consciousness or Self-realization or Natural living, then man can cure diseases with mere words and he can command the raging seas and tempests and the seas will obey him. The great many "miracles" that are recorded in Christian gospels, in the Buddhist Tripitakas and the rich and variegated Greek and Indian mythologies are all but the results of great minds tapping at the door of Mother Nature to release her hidden forces to heal the wounds and relieve the sufferings of Mankind. The secrets and powers at the feet of Mother Nature are known to be literally infinite. All that is needed for the prodigal children is nothing but to return to the lap of this benevolent, all-merciful and all-powerful Mother Nature. Says Lao-tze:

"There is a thing inherent and natural, which existed before heaven and earth. Motionless and fathomless, it stands alone and never changes; it pervades everywhere and never becomes exhausted. It may be regarded as the Mother of the universe. I do not know its name; if I am forced to give it a name, I call it Tao, and name it as supreme"

Great indeed is the great discovery of this universal Mother of all born beings, of all creation that is a sure source of light and strength to us all. Aye, even rocks and mountains are Life not to poets and

ontologists alone, but to mystics and physicists as well.

Yes, now I understand why Indian philosophical systems, the Vedanta in particular insist so much on the natural and humanistic basis of life. To our ancient *Rishis* the raindrops that fell from the skies, the luxuriant vegetation, the moon and the stars revealed the depths of Mother Nature and the Natural Man born of her bosom. It is for this reason that they raised monuments of the Perennial Philosophy of Man, as embodied in the Upanishads, the veritable Himalayas of the soul in the land of the Himalayan range. As a born lover, who through sublimation, gets freed from the slightest dirt or filth and focusses his whole love on Beauty in itself as lavished in Creation and keeps his heart well-poised as the delicately tuned and vibrating chords of a violin or harpsichord, so did their hearts and minds remain ever enraptured and eternally nourished through the vision and realization they have had of Man the Natural, freed from Original sin and the consequent weaknesses and distortions.

Oh, the grandeur of Man the Natural! But we miss him in huge cities and wherever an unbalanced and thoughtless machine-civilization have held their sway, or power-politics or mammon-tyranny have held their sway. They tell us that we cannot put the clock back and that we have to move with the wheels of civilization. I wonder. Why should we be mere cogs in the wheels of the machine civilization, become international business magnates, gain power and fame through party politics and demagogue orations if thereby we have lost our own soul? What doth it profit me if I gain the whole world and suffereth the loss

of my own soul? Or what small a man give in exchange for his soul? The soul of man, as it came unspoilt and unsullied from the womb of Mother Nature? Alas, we lose our Humanity, those delicate and refined natural relations and homeliness between man and man, man and woman, parents and children, citizen and statesmen. We all need be reborn anew, of the "spirit of God," of the bosom of Mother Nature. We can get a glimpse of what we are all destined to be if we only study the children under five, their innocence and purity, sincerity and incandescent love. What those children are unconsciously that a man has to become consciously. In fact the whole burden of prophets and philosophers who have taught the world a better way of life, precisely consists in this that man, through religion or philosophy, is called upon to traverse the path from the unconscious innocence and purity of children to the conscious state of perfection of the saints. Freudians may laugh, but not the soldiers and apostles of the Kingdom of God, for "unless you become like little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of God," says the Master.

Yes, these simple hill tribes unspoilt, children of Mother Nature, have taught me more about God and Nature through their simple living than priests, theologians and academic philosophers during the years of my search after Truth that is Beauty, Beauty that is God, God who is Reality. Yes, the Mahayana Buddhists of Tibet, the animists and Nature-worshippers of the Darjeeling Hills, the spiritualists and esoteric schools of Kumaon Hills in Northern Himalayas, the Shaiva Siddhantists of Kashmir, the Tantric ritualists of Nepal and Bihar, are "backward and undeveloped

racess", if the church religions and machinised societies were set up as the standards of progress and patterns for the entire mankind to follow. But if by progress we understand the discovery of Mother Nature and the laws through which the brute man is reborn of God the Spirit, of Nature the Mother, then the so-called civilized peoples living in cities like Calcutta, Bombay, London, New York, Paris, Rome and Moscow, together with the thousands of smaller towns and villages they prey upon, may really be "backward and undeveloped." The hands and feet of the technical and industrial progress may be active, but Man, the real man, the mind and heart of man remain undeveloped or underdeveloped.

At a time when the neurosis of machine civilization and senseless power-politics were eating into my vitals I ran away from the city life of Calcutta and my quest after the Natural and Normal Man has been crowned by the discovery of the

unspoilt children of Mother Nature right here in these hills of the sub-Himalayan regions. These hills and the people taught me a mystery, which I can experience, but hardly express. But it is roughly something like the "Discovery of the Natural Man", a new revelation through which many problems of social, economic and political life which worried my brains and strained my nerves for the last four years or so have been solved, or very nearly reaching solutions. As a tender mother who sitting by the side of her only prodigal son, tends and heals his wounds and whispers the secrets of right living, right thinking and right realizing, so I find myself enraptured, enthralled, entranced by the musical melody of my Mother Nature in her youthful bloom of Beauty and Grace, whispering to me a new theology and philosophy through which my past wounds are being healed and the path to unending progress and ever-widening vision is shown ahead.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### ANTI-MATERIALISM?

In a message to the 74th Congress of German Catholics which sat for three days in Passau (Bavaria) attended by high German and foreign church dignitaries and about 100,000 Catholics, Pope Pius XII is reported (Sept, 3, 1950) to have said that the events of the past year had been a 'visitation' for the German people, who would have to bear their lot in humbleness. "Only in humble devotedness" he continued, "can you master the fate which has fallen upon your country. I am first of all thinking of the millions of expellees and refugees from

the East. This affliction may somehow turn out a blessing for the Germans and for other peoples. At a time when scientific discoveries are chasing one another and technical progress is being misused by the materialists to dazzle other people, the Catholics of the whole world must form a dam against materialism".

"In spite of the widespread power of materialism, the fight against it was not hopeless since together with the Catholics", the Pope said, "we dare say this, the majority of mankind is still on the side of God."

Urging the employees and workers alike to pray for a Christian spirit, the Pope said, social peace could not be established by "programmes, decrees and arbitration alone".

The spiritual quality of the message is inspiring. In his advice to the German people to bear their lot in humbleness—not in any sense of frustration, unmitigated grudge, and hidden lust for snatching power at the first opportunity—there is that wisdom which bears the leaven of regeneration for that crest-fallen nation. The future of the German people depends much upon how they would reorient their psyche and how much they would learn from the terrible historical blunders they have committed as a nation. Only the high-serious cultivation of the essential Christ-spirit can help guide them in the right path.

The Pope's call to the Catholics of the whole world 'to form a dam against materialism' is, if we may say so, an urgent good piece of spiritual engineering. But considering the immensity of the task, we feel, that it may not be enough if the work is left only to the Catholics of the world. The call may be extended to any and all in world to whatever religion, faith or denomination they may belong. Whoever feels for the higher values of life is a self-deputed free labourer in this high and stupendous task.

Then it also may be that many who seem to be materialists, have a mere bias for it and have no conviction against spirituality. Materialism seemed to have delivered them goods and so they are in its camp temporarily. But after analysing the goods if they find that they are not so good as they would have them they will naturally look for values to supplement the shortage of their necessity. The spiritualist should not then

say, 'unless you strike off your name from the other camp I am not going to come to your aid.' Compromise has got to be done on the relative plane. The spiritualist will have to do every humble work in the parlour of materialism. In the realm of spirit nothing is lost for ever!

Even the hyper crass materialist Marx had a mighty heart. The dispossessed, the tyrannised, the exploited people of the world were the only great concern of his life. Is there no spirituality in this great concern? Had he only acknowledged the 'Fatherhood of God' he would have been hailed as the greatest Christian for he lived for the humble. Of course then there would have been no Marxism as such! The spiritualist must be incorrigible in his search for a meeting ground even with the determined materialism. Self-righteousness should be considered a sin by the spiritualist. He should not also forget that the very throne of materialism which is such an eyesore to the spiritualist of the day, has been made by the patient labour of lapses of the spiritualists themselves. Are all those who swear by spirituality really spiritual? Are not there a legion of inveterate materialists donning the spiritual garb? Let there be a confession in the sanctuary of the conscience.

We cannot run away from the impacts of the law of necessity. It is absurd to think that the spirit might have any frontier. Materialism can have only that much of empire, if any, which spirituality has denied itself. An absolute vacuum is unthinkable anywhere in the universe.

We must beware against further dividing the world which is already divided against itself as it were, in the celestial name of spirituality. Most of the work of the spiritualist has to be done within

himself. To the extent the spiritualist has ceased to be obsessed and oppressed in his own privacy by the night-mare of materialism, the world has grown in spirituality. The battle field of the spiritualist is within himself. His victory will flash in his eyes in sweetness and light and not in angry words against somebody professing some 'ism'. What is matter itself but a seeming variation of the spirit? Then where is the case at all against materialism before the truly spiritual? Why should he not have eternal patience if he is confirmed in truth? That is not to say that the spiritualist has no work to do. But to feel strongly about the values spiritual, must not come to mean compartmentalization of life. Crucifixion itself made Christ whole. It was a mode of the assertion of the Divine.

Mere being 'on the side of God' must necessarily mean a victory won after which there was no fight. The real fight is to find out by rigorous self-analysis whether they really knew God and were quite sure of their being on His side. And when they have attained that knowledge in all its super-abundance, all walls about them will vanish, and with that all religious guns and spiritual bullets if any. They will be in the wide broad open of God. They will mount the cross of life in supreme silent benediction without dreaming to oppose anyone with the hands and feet of denouncing activity. If the world will be ruined, it will not be so much by the might of materialism as by the failure of spirituality.

So in respectfully listening to the call of

the Pope let every spiritualist understand where exactly the 'dam against materialism' has to be built. In spiritual dam-making there is no concrete, brick or steel work. Only an inner spiritual deluge, which can out-tide the tide of materialism, not in any antagonism, but as a superior assertion of helpful effectivity, can help serve that high purpose which the Pope, as we understand, has in mind.

There is yet another aspect of the work, an equally important aspect. Religions must meet in essential spirituality casting off all complexes, mannerisms, and empire-lusts if any. They must see eye to eye, with one another. Calling names must cease for ever. Surreptitious unkindness and unfriendliness must be cast off. The habit of hitting under another's belt must be given up. The weak points, and we are sure every religion has its own, of every religion should be the common concern of every other religion's patient and devoted nursing. Spirituality divided against itself is the most perverted form of materialism. It must be felt within their very soul by the spiritualists that different religions were but the necessary strings in the Vina of Essential Spirituality, the One Religion of Eternity. If every string looks after the health of its own soul there will rise quivering in the sky such ravishing music of enthralling power that the prodigal heart of materialism will rush out of its way to woo the divine nymph that was all soul and no body, and thus be transformed into its object of love.

5-9-50.

#### MATERIAL SURVIVAL AND SPIRITUAL REDEMPTION

In a message to the Eighth Congress of the Baptist World Alliance which sat at Cleveland (Ohio) President Truman is re-

ported (July 23, 1950) to have said: "To us is given that boon denied to many once happy nations—freedom of religion.

Would that we could use that freedom to the glory of God.....to speed the day when the still small voice of conscience would supplement force in the Government of man. We reject the communistic teaching that Christianity is untrue, that religion is unnecessary. Nations of the world cannot survive materially unless redeemed spiritually."

President Truman affirmed, "I am of ever deeper conviction that what we need today is a of revival of religion."

We are happy to note that the President of U. S. A., which in India is superstitiously believed to be a land of materialism, has spoken so unequivocally on the necessity of revival of religion and rededication to the Christian faith. The sincerity with which the President has spoken is evident and enlivening. It is a pretty good study of contrast to observe that in some exalted quarters of India almost a real fear to utter the very name of religion seems to be cultivated with care, and that in the name of prospective good of the people! Mere state policy apart. But let it be understood that any attempt on the part of the influential people to foist the idea of secularism as such, as an article of faith, or any attempt of apotheosizing the concept like the good old 'Goddess of Reason,' can have only disastrous effect on the already unbalanced (due to different reasons which are well-known) psychology of the people, and thus on the future of the nation and ultimately on the humanity at large. A ghost was invited with all honour to drive out a goblin. After the goblin was gone the ghost turned down on the people to break their necks. Do you think it was an unreal danger after all?

It is therefore we feel disturbed, when we find well-meaning people making too

much with the word 'secular' without apparently knowing that there is hidden poison in that concept. And this poison may ultimately destroy the very basis of unity which is essential spirituality. Let us set aside vanity and see things when they are pointed out. Let none imagine that he is infallible and alone in trying to do good to humanity. There is much to learn and unlearn. To name India 'secular' is unnecessary. Enough for civilization to call her 'democratic.'

It may be that President Truman is more conveniently placed in the matter of speaking on religion so candidly than the big men of the State of India, which is a land of multi-religion. But this inconvenience does not take away the responsibility from the leaders of the state to see that the cumulative mass of the spiritual ideas and the cultivation of them do not wane. We do not feel that our leaders are always alive to this great desideratum. If they had been, this last Sri Krishna Jayanti could not have passed without any much national thinking and meditation. The argument that Sri Krishna was a legendary figure or that he was a God of Hindu pantheon will not hold water. Legendary or historical, whatever he might be, the India of today is much the making of Sri Krishna. Our great men, whom we are proud to call leaders and fathers of the nation, were great by assimilating a few rays from the Light of Sri Krishna. The Jayanti of such a national hero has passed in India in such a way, as if Sri Krishna was no one to India and humanity. Whatever may be the virtues of secularity, whatever may be its necessity and convenience, this lack of faithfulness and loyalty to the real givers of life and light to the nation which may be counted to be its indirect contributions,

are its surreptitious vices. We hope our leaders will understand the real psychological needs of the people if they want them to be saved from many virulent dark forces that are energetically at work.

To come back to our point. Full recognition of the necessity of the cultivation of essential spirituality is the most primary psychological duty of the responsible people of any state, for as President Truman has rightly said 'the world cannot survive materially unless redeemed spiritually.'

It may however be pointed out here that the obverse of what the President said is also true. The world cannot be redeemed spiritually unless salvaged materially. Legitimate material upliftment to a decent standard, of the entire humanity without excluding a single voiceless individual, is the very primary function of spirituality in this hapless age. You simply insult the entire manhood of a man if you give him sermons when he requires a bread. In the scheme of the religion of India, even *kama*, sensual enjoyment, has an authorised and honoured place side by side with *moksha*, liberation. While the Indian spirituality avers without any compromise that the ultimate end of human life is God-realization alone and nothing else, it points out with equal and unequivocal emphasis that 'the empty stomach can have no religion.' Therefore those who are honestly anxious to see the world spiritually redeemed must at the outset see that no stomach goes empty for want of food, no body is kept bare to the vagaries of weather for want dress and no head is kept exposed to the inclemencies of climate for want of a shade. To the extent one has worked for supplying these fundamental physical needs of humanity one has acted for spirituality, whatever his fad or doctrine. In fact

spirituality does not so much consist in declaring an allegiance to a faith or creed or religion as in sincerely feeling within oneself an indomitable urge for liberation from all possible bondages and in diligently working for creating such conditions as may be suitable for not only himself but also for his fellowmen everywhere to progressively realize that freedom.

It is a mistake to think that we do not require this earth's goods and things to help us in our journey on the spiritual path. We cannot reject the body for through this medium alone we have to attain the highest. So with this end in view we have to take intelligent care of whatever 'matter' we have in this world and utilize them strictly for the spiritual progress of the entire humanity. Therefore equitable distribution of the world's goods is a basic spiritual necessity. It will be asked how far are those who say that they are not with the materialists, sincerely working to this end? The fire that blazes in the stomachs of men can burn down all the mansions of God, for it is not that God is not in that fire. Once we can come to realize this sovereign fact there need hardly be any quarrel between the 'spiritualist' and 'the materialist'. But facts show we are far from realizing this fact. No problem can be solved by putting our backs at one another.

In a letter to the Editor of *The New York Times*, published on September 4, '50, the Editor of *Tej*, an Indian daily, has brought a very serious charge against America. He says in the letter along other things. "...We need food and machinery. America has plenty of them. We wonder when we see that America is not inclined to give us a portion of this stock even at normal prices. *You destroy surplus food but do not help people who are*

starving. We in India do not understand this mystery."

To destroy food-stuff when half the population of the world go underfed or unfed! We would pine to be told that it is not a fact, that it is a false allegation. But if it is a fact, only America knows it best, there could not be a more horrible fact. It is strange that there is no wide movement\* in America against such a national sin. The earth's yield is after all humanity's. Has America really much any moral right to destroy it only because it

was grown on a piece of soil which geographically belongs to America? This is hardly the way for making the way for the spiritual redemption of the world, we fear.

We have great faith in the spiritual potential of America. So we believe she will not lack in the beneficent power of self-analysis and the resultant self-improvement. Remember friends, without transcending the domination of economics and politics we cannot reach that security which is made of the very stuff of peace and plenty.

5-9-50.

Continuation of 'The Sacred and The Secular' from page-220

And from this point of view, the occurrence of the Divine Man is a logical necessity. Without Him as the spiritual pole, the tendency to co-ordinate our wandering impulses in the fixed outlines of character would be impossible. Even the meanest and the poorest of us, inasmuch as we are man at all, are witness to Him, since all our efforts culminate in Him. Even the least of our strivings relates us to His vast achievement, and to that alone. Seen in this light, how true it is that we pray for more strength, and not for lighter burdens! It is strength we want, not calm. Calm is only a result. It can be cultivated by practice. But if we have strength at the root then calm and peace and steadfastness cannot fail to be its flower.

The ego that is identified with the body has its gaze entirely on one set of phenomena. It sees itself attacked, condemned, suffering and scorned. The ego that identifies itself with Brahman is directly aware of none of these things. Afar off, it may be the witness of them. But its gaze is fixed on the opposite whorl of movement, that of spiritual intensity, and to it, it appears that the world is put to the test. He who knows Himself to be One with the whole universe, how should He think of loneliness, how dream of passivity? He knows Himself as the persecutor as well as the persecuted, and both alike the 'Mothers's Play.' Unbroken *Sachchidananda* is His consciousness, unflawed bliss is His being. And in Him meet the hopes and longings of us all.

There is one form of realization which can be developed in the *thakur-ghar* (shrine), and quite another in the rough-and-tumble of the world. Both, let us remember, are realization. Both are paths hewn through the mind to the knowledge of Brahman. Only the science of the Avatar can help us, even in the life of street and market place. In *Sachchidananda* culminate all joys and all knowledge, even the knowledge and the joy of earth.

\*We are supremely happy to learn what a Washington report of Sept. 28, '50, has to say: "A Bill which will permit food gifts to other countries from United States surpluses was pending before Congress.....The Congress will re-convene in November and may pass it then." We fervently hope that the Bill will have a smooth passage to enactment. America, we trust, will make the most kindly use of the beneficent powers of this prospective legislation. It should not however be insisted that US surpluses should be sent to other deficit countries only as 'gifts.' Certain countries may not find it consistent with national dignity to receive even kindly gifts more than once or so. The point is, either through gifts, when accepted, or through rationalised or humanised commerce, when solicited, the surpluses of any part of the world must promptly reach the mouths of the hungry millions, wherever they be. That will be one of the truest contributions to fundamental peace, and towards the establishment of a Welfare World.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO. PART V. BY NOLINIKANTA GUPTA. PUBLISHED FROM SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, 369, ESPLANADE, MADRAS 1; PP. 82 PRICE RS. 1/8/0

The famous yogi of Pondichery is familiar to all. He has been engaged in developing a method and a technique of more or less his own pattern to realise the Ideal. The traditional suggestion of 'Yoga' is an approach to the Reality through any of the recognised paths each of which may vary in the details according to individual temperaments, the fundamentals remaining in tact in all cases.

The title of the booklet may suggest to treat of the methods Sri Aurobindo is discovering, in this approach to the Reality. But the booklet is a rendering of some questions and answers regarding various topics, not necessarily relating to Yoga or Sri Aurobindo, given by 'the Mother.' In this respect the title is rather misleading. It contains twelve topics such as the 'Origin of Sin,' 'Measure of Time,' 'Role of Evil,' 'Man and Superman,' 'True Charity,' 'The Soul and its journey' etc.

The opening essay states: "The differentiation or variability there in the Immutable is a play immanent in the integral self-nature of the Supreme." This seems to involve the admission of variation in the Verity which is contra to the Advaitic apprehension of the Ultimate. But then all these are only a reading of the 'Unique' from duality. To say that "Indeed he (man) is the first original form of the formless," may be only an anthropomorphic assertion. The 'Role of Evil' gives us a Christian idea that evil moveth the Divine and casueth His Grace and Descent for the resurrection of man. The 'Man and Superman' visualises the sublime dream of the emergence of a higher humanity. The 'Soul and its Journey' presents the passage of the soul through the various planes from the time of death till its final rest. It also deals with the pull of Karma during the Soul's passage. As things stand these are only hypothetical in as much as they can neither be denied nor defined convincingly.

The book provokes thought.

S. S. P.

VYRAGYA MALA. BY SWAMI SIVANANDA. ANANDA KUTIR, RISHIKESH (HIMALAYAS) PRICE RS. 2/- PP. 118-

Only from the pen of a renouncing monk can such lines flow. The small book of 64 poems on every page rings with the ancient call of renunciation. It also exposes the hollowness of a body-bound life. Truly this may be said to be an elaborate commentary on Bhartrihari's famous line that 'Renunciation alone is one's refuge as all else is fraught with fear'. This will be a nice *vademecum* for an aspirant.

S. S. P.

SRI LALITA SAHASRANAMA WITH TEXT. TRANSLATION AND NOTES BY D. S. SARMA, M.A.; PUBLISHED BY THE MADRAS LAW JOURNAL OFFICE, MADRAS 4. PP-139; PRICE RS. 1-8-0.

Sakti worship is a thing much misunderstood even by scholars and a publication like the *Lalita-Sahasranama* by Prof. D. S. Sarma comes as a breath of fresh air. It interprets in language simple and direct, not only the import and contents of the text of the Sahasranama but shows in proper perspective the place it occupies in the philosophy and ritual of Sri Vidya. Re-interpretation and presentation, as is done here, in a modern garb, of the gems of religious literature which have illumined the path of religion through scores of shining centuries will do more to restore religion to its rightful place in our life, than lengthy treatises on new-fangled notions and theories which have no roots in tradition. Prof. Sarma has so interpreted to us already the *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Kathopanishad*, the *Ramayana* and the *Tales and Teachings of Hinduism*. In undertaking the present work he does not claim to be a devotee but says he was led to its study by the faith and suffering of a devotee, who was none other than his wife. Her life had been profoundly influenced by the rhythm of the chanting of the *Lalita-Sahasranama* and in her last days when she suffered most the chanting held her spell-bound and acted as a divine balm to soothe her pain. The book is therefore dedicated as an offering to the departed soul.

The *Lalita-Sahasranama* is not a mere book of devotion but is a mine of information, instruction and guidance to the Yogi as well as to the Jnani. It contains the quintessence of the Kundalini Yoga and the philosophy of the Tantric sadhana.

It emphasises the importance of internal purity and equanimity of spirit before external ceremonial and worship. It shows how the gentle and the terrible, joy and pain, life and death, have all their place and meaning in life when seen as the Divine Mother's dispensation in the plenitude of her wisdom.

In the introduction, speaking of the hymn, the author observes "We see poetry and romance, religion and philosophy, occultism and psychology vying with one another in coining names for the deity (P. 5)...She remains a Goddess of transcendent beauty, leading a host of divinities against the forces of evil. She is ever young, ever rosy like the morning sun and the jewels she wears rival the stars in their splendour (p. 6)...She is fond of poetry, dancing and music and the chanting of the Veda. She is, in fact, the home of all arts, the treasure-house of all *rasas*. She is worshipped by the highest gods in heaven and yet

she is accessible to all, even to the child and the peasant. Her grace is easily won, for her mercy demands no merit on our part. At the same time, she is the ultimate reality, above all dualisms ever free, ever pure, formless and timeless—and without cause, without lapse and without a limit" (p. 7)

The Lalita-Sahasranama refers to the two main divisions among the Saktas viz the followers of *Samayachara* and the followers of *Kaulachara*, and the scale is held even, equal recognition being given to both. The names like Dakshinadakshinarayadhya, Savyapasavya margastha, indicate that the Goddess could be reached by both the ways.

The publication will be welcomed by all those young learners who love to learn the Lalita-Sahasranama and learn it with meaning. We have no doubt that it will prove as useful and popular as the author's Bhagavad-Gita. N. S.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRI KRISHNA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS 4

A public meeting in connection with Sri Krishna Jayanti celebrations was conducted on the evening of Sunday the 10th September '50, at the Math premises.

After prayers, Swami Kailasananda, President of the Math, welcomed the gathering. Then Swami Rudrananda who had returned to India after a long stay for twelve years in the Fiji Islands, addressed the gathering in Tamil and said the the form (*Murti*) of Sri Krishna has attracted all people more than the forms of the Lord in any other incarnations of His, and has been the cause of joy to all. One is attracted either on hearing of him or reading on him, and also gets purified by that. His life and teachings give us pure thoughts and rouses in us a state of ecstatic bliss. The Gopis who were all in love for him used to forget themselves in whatever state they might be immediately on hearing the sweet music of his flute or on catching sight of his enchanting personality. In fact this magnetic attraction of the Gopis by Sri Krishna has been the cause of

many criticisms by some and that is only due to the critics' ignorance of the significance and magnitude of bhakti. In whatever state of mind one might be Sri Krishna's teachings will surely elevate one's thoughts and convert him completely. For it is only the mind that is responsible for man's actions and it reflects his thoughts in his actions. The thoughts of the Gopis were of a high state of pure nature and they were so much engrossed in his thoughts that the trees, birds and everything they saw—all appeared to them as Sri Krishna. All rejoiced at the sight of Sri Krishna—young and old—the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Then the speaker proceeded saying that we must read the original books like the *Bhagavata*, the *Gita*, the *Mahabharata* which proclaim the glory of Sri Krishna and his teachings. The *Gita*, is capable of giving bliss to all according to their grades. It removes our cowardice and make us stand as real men. Again it teaches us against retaliation. Then the Swami urged that everyone should not only read and know about Sri Krishna from such original works but cultivate an intense bhakti towards him. For rightly has He been called as the shepherd of all the Jivas who are going blindly

along the path of *samsara* and who are led by him through the right path and finally enabled to attain him.

Then Swami Adidevananda speaking in English said that the very word 'Krishna' originates from the root meaning 'to attract.' He attracted men, women, children, beasts and even inanimate objects. Sri Krishna symbolises the Truth of all philosophies. He is Being and Becoming. He is immanent and transcendent. He is the impersonal Supreme as well as the adorable Object fit for meditation by all. He is the Absolute, the Real, and the Ideal and the concrete. He appears as if he is in human form and helps humanity. There are various ways of looking at him. We find him in human form and this is no doubt true. But that is not exhaustive of his real nature. He manifests in everybody and in everything. We cannot judge him by any particular human standard. He is a philosopher and poet, lover and warrior, prince and shepherd. But he cannot be limited by time and space. Narrating many instances of his having granted his vision to many and his having blessed them, the Swami said that in whatever way we look at him there is something wonderful, something unique. Krishna, the Gitacharya is accepted as the most prominent of all the aspects of his life. But greater still is His aspect as the Bhagavat—the Redeemer of humanity. Saying that the conflicting episode in his earlier days at Vrindavan the Swami said that everything depends on the view we take about him. All contradictions meet and resolve in him. Contradictions as conceived by the limited human intellect do not exist in the Absolute, the Supreme. He cannot be judged by human standards. Finally we see that the real Krishna who embodies all, is nothing but Bliss. He is the *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*. Our means of knowledge are too dull and defective to understand the significance of his life and message. Swami Vivekananda said we can never understand him as long as we are bound by senses for he is beyond senses. Sri Krishna has given us a universal philosophy in the *Gita* in which the Reality though beyond all relations, in its absolute nature, is related to the world of beings and non-beings in its cosmic aspect. The word 'Karma' which before had a limited meaning as vedic 'yajna,' assumed a liberal meaning when he said

that any action done in the right spirit without desire for its fruits will lead to yoga. Certainly this is a new meaning of the word by which any man high or low, will get means for the purification of the mind. Similarly He has given new meaning and values to old words like 'Sankhya' and 'Yoga'. It is wrong to think that we only love God and that He does not love us. He is always redeeming humanity by His boundless love. Sri Krishna as the perfect Bhagavat, the speaker said, is the core of his appearance on the earth. Other aspects are only secondary. The Swami then concluded saying that it is the duty of everyone to hear, think and contemplate on the life and teachings of the Avatars and thereby attain life eternal.

After the conclusion of the meeting, the *arati* to Sri Ramakrishna was conducted and the function came to a close with the distribution of prasad to the devotees.

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#### REPORT FOR 1949

From small beginnings this Sevashrama which was started in 1901 has now grown into a full-fledged hospital of 50 beds with all up to date arrangements and is one of the main hospitals in Hardwar.

Besides the Charitable Hospital and free dispensary the Sevashrama is also maintaining a free Library for the public. The total number of cases treated during the year was 69,729. The Medical relief work for Refugees started in May 1947 was continued throughout, and during the year under review, 83 patients were treated as Indoor patients and as many as 30,212 patients attended the Outdoor Dispensary. Fire relief, feeding of poor persons (mostly Harijans) have also been the features of the activities of the Sevashrama.

Underground drainage, water supply and other sanitary installations are being arranged, thanks to the munificence of the Government of Uttar Pradesh in sanctioning a sum of Rs. 78,000/- and the work is expected to be finished before the end of 1950. The authorities thank the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of India for their grant of Rs. 10,000/- to defray the

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## CONTENTS

|                                                                                               | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA - ... ..                                                     | 241  |
| 2. HYMN-FLOWERS - <i>Translated by Dr. V. Raghavan</i> ... ..                                 | 242  |
| 3. RENUNCIATION DOWN THROUGH THE AGES ( <i>Editorial</i> ) ... ..                             | 243  |
| 4. REALITY OF REALITIES - <i>By Swami Satprakashananda</i> ... ..                             | 253  |
| 5. "UNLESS THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE..." -<br><i>By The Rev. Samuel H. Goldenison</i> ... ..   | 260  |
| 6. BUDDHA CAME TO FULFIL AND NOT TO DESTROY -<br><i>By N. Subramanian, B.A., L.T.,</i> ... .. | 262  |
| 7. MAVALIPURAM - <i>By Eliot. C. Clark</i> ... ..                                             | 266  |
| 8. LIFE OF SRI RAMANUJA - <i>By Swami Ramakrishnananda</i> ... ..                             | 270  |
| 9. NOTES AND COMMENTS - ... ..                                                                | 274  |
| 10. REVIEWS AND NOTICES - ... ..                                                              | 277  |
| 11. NEWS AND REPORTS - ... ..                                                                 | 280  |

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Be bold, and face  
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,  
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free."

*Swami Vivekananda*

## THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXXVII

NOVEMBER 1950

No. 7

### A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

*Sri Hari my Refuge*

ALMORA,  
3-9-15

MY DEAR GIRIJA,

Your letter dated the 26th August, brought me all the information. Priyanath had written me from Magra a card prior to yours, but as there was no certainty of his stay over there, I could not write to him back.

However, I am pleased to know that you are carrying on the work well. If you are able to do your work with the full application of your mind and soul, you succeed in working for both here and hereafter. The Inner Controller sees everything and ordains appropriately. 'As the attitude so the gain'—try always to remember this supreme saying of Sri Ramakrishna.

None has the capacity to comprehend the will of the Lord. Even through great evil He creates good. Though apparently all this will look catastrophic, His will must only be productive of good for He is all good and the ocean of kindness.

This year the Nature seems to be rather very angry with Bengal. In Bankura there is again scarcity of food due to want of rain. There will be need for opening relief-work in Orissa, I hear. Lord's will comes to pass. If only we can do our work perfectly well, we shall consider ourselves blessed and fruitful. Mahapurush has collected for your work some money by begging and has sent the amount to Baghbazar. Recently he has sent Rs. 70 and some more amount is expected afterwards. Work very hard.

Convey please my good wishes and love to all. In Mahin Babu's letter I came to know that K- is at Vrindavan. He had told us before going; so it will not be correct to say that he has played a truant. We gave him our consent for going. He is keeping well at Brindavan.

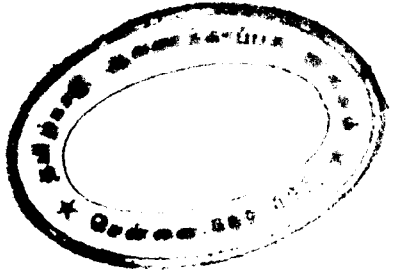
Mahapurush, Sitapati, Frank and myself are staying here. Atul and Kshudamani are staying at a little distance in a separate house, which they have hired for the purpose. It is just three weeks they have come here. Atul is much better. Kshudamani is also keeping well. My health is sometimes good, sometimes bad. It is going on like that. All others are keeping well. My good wishes to Ashoka and others, and to you too,

Yours,

SRI TURIYANANDA.

## HYMN - FLOWERS

तच्चश्रुतीक्ष्यसे येन सा गतिर्गम्यसे यया ।  
 फले तदजं ज्ञातं यत् त्वत्कथाकल्पपादपात् ॥  
 अहो स्वादुतमः शर्वसेवाशंसासुधारसः ।  
 कुत्र कालकलामात्रे न यो नवनवायते ॥  
 मुहुर्मुहुर्विश्रान्तस्त्रैलोक्यं कल्पनाशतैः ।  
 कल्पयन्नपि कोऽप्येको निर्विकल्पो जयत्यजः ॥  
 निमेषमपि यद्येकं क्षीणदोषे करिष्यसि ।  
 पदं चित्ते तदा शंभो किं न संपादयिष्यसि ॥  
 धन्योऽस्मि कृतकृत्योऽस्मि महानस्मीति भावना ।  
 भवेत्सालम्बना तस्य यस्त्वदालम्बनः प्रभो ॥  
 शुभाशुभस्य सर्वस्य स्वयं कर्ता भवानपि ।  
 भवद्भक्तिस्तु जननी शुभस्यैवेश केवलम् ॥  
 वचश्चेतश्च कार्यं च शरीरं मम यत्प्रभो ।  
 त्वत्प्रसादेन तद्भूयाद्भवद्भावैकभूषणम् ॥



'That is vision by which you are seen ; that is activity by which you are reached ; and that is fruit, O Eternal Lord !, which is from the celestial tree of your inquiry.

Oh that supremely sweet nectar of Siva's service and praise which, at everyone of its smallest moments, appears newer and newer !

Hail to that one unborn Lord who, incessantly creating the universe through a myriad of forms, is yet devoid of form.

If only for a single moment, you, O Siva, will take abode in my mind, rid of its impurity, what will you not obtain for me ?

'I am fortunate,' 'I have achieved,' 'I am great'—such an assumption will indeed be well-founded, O Lord, for him who has his foundation in you.

O Lord, you yourself are the author of all that is good as well as bad ; your devotion however is mother only of unalloyed good.

The speech, the mind, the act and the body that I have, O Lord,—may that, by your grace, bear the sole adornment of oneness with you.

—BHATTA NARAYANA, STAVA CHINTAMANI,  
 109, 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 119.

—V. RAGHAVAN

## THE SAVING ROLE OF 'RENUNCIATION AND SERVICE' IN THIS BENIGHTED WORLD

IV

### RENUNCIATION DOWN THROUGH THE AGES

#### FOREWORD

Almost all the religions are practically agreed in accepting that this state of man is a degeneration of his original state of glory which can be recaptured. That state is called by different names and ways suggested for its attainment are indeed many. An uncompromising urge to shoot back to that original state in the minimum possible time is renunciation.

All the orthodox schools of Indian Philosophy are agreed on this one essential point that they accept *moksha* or spiritual liberation as the only ultimate end of life. No intelligent and fruitful planning of life is possible without accepting *moksha* as the definite end of life. Our ancestors knew this fact. This was how they could conceive of such a highly integrated and balanced scheme of life characterised by four *varnas*, four *ashramas* and four *purusharthas*. If this scheme is properly analysed, it will be found that in its pristine pure form, whatever might be its later degeneration, the original idea was squarely based on renunciation. Renunciation was the very backbone of their conception of life. The highest *varna* of the original idea was required to make renunciation the very law of its life. Only one fourth portion of life could be devoted to the pursuit of physical enjoyment but even during that time the three austerities of *adhyayana*, *yajna* and *dana* had to be maintained. The ideal sober house-holder's life was just a preparation for *Vanaprastha* and finally *Sannyasa*. And life began with a rigorous period of austere *Brahmacharya*. Among the four *purusharthas* *kama* and

*artha* were accorded honoured places. The injunction was that life should not be lived without enjoyment. But one could not ignore *dharma*, ever while seeking *kama* and *artha*. And the very soul of *dharma* was controlled by the ultimate value *moksha*. This is how through every incident and pursuit of life the golden thread of renunciation had its way.

But it is evident that long before the idea of renunciation could be utilized as the pivot in the matrix of life-scheme, there must have been long centuries of search after this sovereign ideal. It will require a lot of research in the ocean of ancient Indian literature to find out when exactly first this freeing conception to *tyaga* arose from the depths of human unconscious to the level of human consciousness flapping its wings of translucent light in rhythmic waves of expanding freedom. That was the greatest moment of human history, now buried in the blue of time as its very own essence. Who can guess what a mighty thrill had gone forth in the spheres with the release of the eternal ochre flash from within the heart of time, this most beautiful, the most transmuting, divinizing and adorable Ideal. This was the very inmost secret of the Profoundest. This made man the eternal victor, and universe his colourful toy. Ah, the soothing poetry of the first soft emergence of renunciation !

#### THE NATIVITY OF RENUNCIATION

The early Indo-Aryans were a virile people. They loved life, the world and the heavens passionately. They loved majesty,

splendour, radiance, strength, power, victory, joy, beauty, plenty and abundance. Their prayers will reveal the truth of the above statement :

'Adityas,....grant our children and their seed, extended terms of life, that they may live long days.' *Rg.* VIII. 18.

'Vouchsafe us food, prosperity and progeny and lengthen our days that we may see long life.' *Rg.* val. 11. 7.

'Make thou my chariot to be first. And bring the fame of victory near.' *Rg.* VIII. 69. 5.

'Force, thou art: force mayest thou give me: hail! Power thou art: power mayest thou give me: hail!' *Yj.* 11. 17. 1-2.

'All manliness that is in heaven....bestow Ye Aswins upon us.' *Rg.* VIII. 9. 2.

'Make me a bull among my peers, make me my rivals' conqueror.' *Rg.* X. 166.

'Let thine heroic strength come from behind us, before us, from above us or below us. From every side may it approach us.' *Rg.* 1. 27. 9.

'May my energy and my force, and my self, and my body and my shelter and my shield, and my limbs and my bones, and my joints, and my members, and my life, and my old age prosper by sacrifice. May my preeminence and overlordship, and my wrath and my angry passion, my violence, and my impetuosity and my victorious power, and my greatness, and my breadth, and my width, and my height, and my length and my increase and my improvement prosper by sacrifice. May my religious rite and my immortality, and my freedom from consumption and my freedom from disease, and my life and my longevity, and my fair dawn and fair day prosper by sacrifice.' *Yj.* XVIII. 3-6.

'Bring cattle, bring us ornament, bring us embellishments and steeds, together with a weight of gold.' *Rg.* VIII. 67. 2.

'Give us up not, Agni, to want of heroes, to wretched clothes, to need, to destruction. Yield us not holy one to fiend of hunger.' *Rg.* VII. 1.

'May we subdue all famine and evil want with store of grain and cattle' *Rg.* X. 43. 10.

'Only the active conquers, dwells in peace and thrives: not for the niggards are the gods.' *Rg.* VII. 32. 9.

Indra responds to the call of 'the early rising one, the active one.' *Rg.* 1. 132. 2.

'Never may sleep or idle talk control us.' *Rg.* VIII. 48. 14.

From the above quotations one could run away with the idea that the early Indo-Aryans were not only worldlings but even hedonists. But the fact is, the above quotations give only a fractional glimpse of the Aryan mind. The early Aryans loved the world, passionately, every speck of it, in all its diverse aspects. They were so to say devotees of 'Life.' But their aspirations soared higher and higher and grew tremendously from within. Their intense love for life drove them to the discovery of the basic stand of life, the Truth, the Cosmic Order, the *Rita*. And this discovery of *Rita* alone saved the Indo-Aryans from becoming materialists and hedonists. They wanted the good things of life but not at the cost of Truth, or without the sanction of *Rita*. They came to know that life and joy were rooted in Truth alone. And thus the life-force and the genius of the race consciously tended towards spirituality, which ultimately became the very law of its growth.

The *Upanishad* says :

"The Law is what is called the true, and if a man declares what is true, they say he declares the Law, and if he declares the Law, they say he declares what is true. Thus both are the same." *Br. Up.* 1. 4. 14.

This consciousness of Truth or Law governing the life and the world came indeed very early in their history. Their prayers from early times were full of striking courage of conviction. They wanted that prosperity alone which had truth as its cause and prop. They really invited gods' curses upon themselves if they were untrue!

'All falsehood, Mitra-Varuna! Ye conquer and closely cleave unto the Law eternal.' *Rg.* 1. 52. 2.

'They who are full of sin, untrue, unfaithful they have engendered this abysmal station.' *Rg.* IV 5. 5. (Hell is the creation of the untrue)

'Agni, to us with speech that has no falsehood, grant riches.'—*Rg.* 14. 6.

'Thrice, Agni, let thy noose surround the demon who with his falsehood injures Holy Order.' *Rg.* X. 87. 11.

'Truth is the base that bears the earth; by Surya are the heavens sustained. By Law the Adityas stand secure and Soma holds his place in heaven.' *Rg.* X. 85. 1.

'Oh Indu overcome and drive the false afar.' *Rg.* IX. 10. 56.

'Burn up the fool who ruins truth with falsehood.' *Rg.* X. 87. 12.

'Let arrows pierce the liar in his vitals.' *Rg.* X. 87. 15.

'Whatever sin is found in me, whatever evil I have wrought, if I have lied or falsely sworn, waters, remove it from me.' *Rg.* 1. 23. 22.

'The giver of life places the truth-speaker in the highest place of honour.' *Atharv.* 11. 4. 11.

'Lord, in order to make men walk along the straight path of *Dharma* and to develop men's faculties harmoniously Thou subjectest the undutiful to discipline. Let us obey Thy Laws and Commandments.' *Rg.* 1. 51. 9.

This great anxiety of the early Indo-Aryans to live in obedience to the Truth, the Law, or the *Rita* was indeed the most fundamental urge of their mind. They wanted good things, 'good road and perfect safety.' They wanted life. They wanted eternal life. They wanted Light. They wanted Immortality. They wanted the Real. They knew, there was no safety in the unreal and the mortal. It is remarkable that in the famous prayer of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, unreality, darkness and death are identified. Reality Light and Immortality came to be considered as identical.

Something very wonderful now took place in the psychological history of the Indo-Aryans. Their highly enterprising mind brought them to a supreme discovery. And this discovery forms the plinth of the superstructure of the supreme religion, philosophy and culture of India. It was the discovery of the identity of the ultimate cosmic principle and the ultimate psychic principle. In the knowledge of this identity lay secreted the ultimate security of life.

Some very thrilling passages of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* declare :

'I have known the Infinite Being, who is self-fulgent and beyond all darkness and delusion. One passes beyond death only on realizing Him. There is no other way to Immortality.

There is naught higher than or different from Him; naught greater or more minute than Him. Rooted in His own glory He stands like a tree, one without a second and immovable. By that Being the whole universe is filled.

This divinity, who created the universe and who pervades every thing, always dwells in the heart of the creatures, being finitized by emotions, intellect, will and imagination. Those who realize this become immortal.'

Once this profound discovery was made men must have aspired to attain this ultimate security which is Immortality, which again is the identity of the ultimate cosmic principle and the ultimate psychic principle. We should like to believe that in all probability the nativity of the conception of Renunciation might have been coeval with the dawning of the knowledge of this ultimate identity.

Before the clear possession of the idea there must have been preliminary bubbles arising out of the Aryan mind. It would indeed be a fascinating experience to dally with these bubbles, count them and sometimes try to prick one or two them just for the fun of it. But where is so much

of time and space for us just now? We should therefore try to be content taking broad sweeps following the trail of the idea travelling different times and climes and peoples down to the present day and humanity. In our very modest compass it will not be possible to show to any comprehensive and satisfying degree the wonderful play of of the mysterious fire of this idea in the history of man. Nothing more than the very barest outline we are going to touch upon here.

#### IT GREW AND GREW AND PERVADED

Once this sovereign idea had dawned in the Aryan mind, it simply sank to the furthest depths of the consciousness and possessed the very soul of the race. It may be said in just gratification that in the whole history of the Hindu race, by supreme Divine grace, this idea was never lost to them totally. There have been of course seasons of depression but never one without being followed by a period of renaissance. If one is anxious to know the secret of the surprising virility of this most ancient race, we should like to tell, how could they who knew the very secret of immortality and practised it in life could have helped baffling death? Through renunciation they enjoyed both life and death and they continue to live, and they will, to be sure, if they remain faithful to the Ideal, which formed the vertical axis of all scheme of life and conception of values of the Indo-Aryans through millenniums.

By the time we come to the *Upanishads* the spiritual realizations were abundant, ideas are absolutely clear: Brahman, Atman, karma, maya, transmigration of soul, mukti—all have already swam up unmistakably on the plane of verifiable cognizability. Before the Brahman-Atman-

Mukti conception could be accepted as greatest facts of life they had to be realized in intuition. And this intuition could come only from the austere practice of renunciation. The *Upanishad* says:

'The intelligent aspirant after Brahman, knowing about this alone, should attain intuitive knowledge. .... Knowing It alone one becomes a sage. *Desiring this world (the Self) monks renounce their homes.* This is (the reason for it): The ancient sages, it is said, did not desire children (thinking), 'What shall we achieve through children, we who have attained this Self this world (result). They, it is said renounced their desires for sons, for wealth and for the worlds, and lived a mendicant life.' *Br. Up.* 4.4.22.

The *Brihadaranyaka* which is considered to be the oldest *Upanishad* is here referring to the ideal of renunciation as an ancient tradition. And we know, such traditions take ages to grow. Distillation of the pure spirit of renunciation must have taken centuries of experiment. Centuries before the composition of the *Dharma-sutras*, (say, during seventh century B.C.) the institution of renunciation had already inextricably entrenched itself as the highest ideal in the Hindu scheme of life. 'As early as the time of Panini (which may be somewhere between 700 to 500 B.C.), we know of what were then called the *Bhikshu-sutras*, the code of discipline governing the life of the *Bhikshus* and *Parivrajakas*.' References to the ideal of *Sannyasa* are only plenty in the great epics of India.

Though it cannot be said with any great certainty whether in the days prior to the advent of Buddha there were many monastic orders of the highly organised type, yet it is pretty sure that there were many ascetic persuasions centering round certain schools of spiritual thought. The *Brahmajala-sutra* discusses as many as 62 systems of doctrines held by *Sramanas* before

Buddhism arose. *Sutrakritanga*, a Jaina work, lays down their number as 363. Ascetic literature of India was quite vast even prior to the composition of the *Mahabharata*. The keynote of the *Gita* which is considered to be the essence of all the *Sastras*, is nothing but *tyaga* according to Sri Ramakrishna. One modest Indian view holds that Sri Krishna, the teacher of the *Gita*, lived somewhere near 1400 B.C.

#### OUT ON A SIGHT-SEEING IN HISTORY

The sixth century B.C. was indeed a golden age as far as the spiritual history of humanity is concerned. Giant teachers arose in different lands to teach spiritual doctrines suitable to their own people. Pythagoras in Greece, Zoroaster in Iran, Mahavira the Jaina and Gautama the Buddha in India, Laotze and Confucius in China all belong to Sixth century B.C., according to certain accepted tradition.

The Greek religion, the religion of the Hellenic people from about 1500 B.C. to 500 A.D., was not highly spiritual. It has been dead for centuries beyond recovery. The Greek deities are glorified human beings, immortal—even though subject to wounds and pain, driven by human moods and passions, plotting against one another and taking sides in human conflicts. Homer created a common religion out of the local cults by giving Zeus the preeminent place among the Olympian gods, and definite personalities to other deities. The other influences which later on moulded the Greek religion for the better were stoicism and the philosophies of Eleatics, Sophists, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. All the later influences succeeded in imparting to the Greek religion a sort of ethical sublimity, but it never attained any supreme spiritual excellence like that of the Oriental Reli-

gion. As a result of this the idea of renunciation could not thrive in Greek religion. Though stoicism has got a demeanour of renunciation, the former has to be carefully distinguished from the latter. Stoicism is negative in content, whereas renunciation is creative victory. Even Socrates' *Gnothi seauton*, 'know thyself', and Platonism are very different from Vedantism.

It is instructive and interesting to note that though Greece became the *guru* of the modern western civilization in almost all matters, it totally failed in the realm of the spirit. This we think is due to the fact that the Greek religion failed to develop the sovereign ideal of Renunciation. It is the scion of Judaism, the Oriental Christ who is the spiritual Master of modern western civilization. We shall come to the Nazarene later on.

Zoroastrianism is the most positivist religion of the world. This religion has no strong tendency towards *tyaga*. But due to its excellent ethics it has also side by side a preeminent place for altruism. Yet, it would seem rather strange, even in spite of the decisive influence of the religion of India, Zoroastrianism could not to any appreciable degree develop the ideal of renunciation. The conception of the high life poverty, celibacy and renunciation is indeed far removed from the Zoroastrian ideal, which aspired after 'the fullest realization of the vital forces and the disappearance of the opposite tendencies.'

According to this religion,

'he who has a wife, is far superior to him who has no wife; he who has a family is far superior to him who has none; he who possesses riches is far above him who has no riches.'

It may however be pointed out that altruism which this religion emphasises is nothing but a form of practical renunciation. And we believe that this exactly

has been the great saving factor of this religion, which has perhaps the smallest number of adherents among all the existing faiths of the world.

About the date of Zoroaster it is immaterial for us here to enter into any controversy. We are simply concerned with the content of his religion. We have however followed one existing view in grouping him along with, Mahavira, Buddha, Laotze and Confucius, in point of time.

#### THE FIRST RENAISSANCE OF RENUNCIATION

We come to the Buddha. Buddha is the thing of the very heart of India. True to the essential genius of the religion in which he was born Gautama the Buddha laid the greatest stress on the basic ideal of renunciation, on which stood the magnificent edifice of his practical ethics. The criticism against the Buddha, as some thinkers would have it, is the other way about, that he laid too much emphasis on renunciation, so much so that incompetent people also renounced in very large numbers and the result was baneful. The truth of this criticism however does not take away the fact, that by laying this emphasis on renunciation, though in a protestant fashion, the Buddha helped served to save the inner content of the *Sanatana Dharma* from getting lost in the meshes of complicated ritualism, and a hideous kind of materialism. Swami Vivekananda says that at a most critical hour of her history the Buddha saved India by bringing Vedanta to the light and giving it to the people. The Buddha was indeed one of the noblest scions of the Hindu-maternity. From his inspiration streamed forth the first renaissance of renunciation in the history of the world. Before the advent

of Sri Sankara he was the one great Hindu who by the stupendous power of his exalted renunciation, which he lived and preached with rarely excelled mastery, determined the course of future Hinduism. It should be understood well that the Buddha himself was the Tathagata, the knower of That, which is attainable only through renunciation. When after enlightenment during the course of his peregrination the Buddha was oneday begging in the streets of the capital of his father's state, the proud old king came riding on his war-horse to ask, 'Son! why is this?' 'My father' came reply, 'It is the custom of my race.' The old king could not follow him evidently. Buddha had to explain that by his 'race' he did not mean the 'mortal line' but his spiritual pedigree.

Buddha was so to say the father of modern monasticism as practised in the world. The missionary zeal of the early followers of the Tathagata created wonderful history. They went to the four corners of the world with the message of *tyaga*, *maitri* and *karuna*. They heightened the tones of those civilizations wherever they went.

In India for several centuries Buddhism played the role of a liberalizing power. One inspired emperor of blessed memory, Priyadarshana Ashoka, did inestimable good to the people of Greater India by assimilating and propagating the true intent of the message of Buddha. Days were indeed glorious when the followers of the Buddha truly and practically followed their Master, his inspiring renunciation. But alas, history shows that time is jealous spoiler!

The great senior contemporary of Buddha was Mahavira the Jaina, the 24th or the last Tirthankara. The power of his renunciation has played a very important

part in moulding the mind of India of the subsequent days. He left behind him a strongly organised religious Order. Popularization of the great doctrine of *ahimsa* was much the life-work of Mahavira. It was largely due to the sustained efforts of his followers that the practice of animal sacrifice fell into disuse in India.

The influence of Mahavira on Mahatma Gandhi, who himself practised renunciation was great indeed. If *ahimsa* has worked wonders in the history of the 20th century through the life of the Mahatma, thanks are due not to a small degree to the renunciation of Mahavira.

#### IN THE FLOW OF HISTORY

In order to follow the religious movements chronologically we shall now travel to China before we come back westward to take up the thread.

The national religion of China, if we are permitted to have such a unitary conception, is a confluence of the triple streams of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. The deepest note of the first and last streams is definitely renunciation.

Laotze, the prophet of Taoism seems to have been a perfected yogi, a *sthitaprajna*. He held self-conquest as the highest ideal of life and so must have preached self-restraint, dispassion and renunciation. His philosophical theories and spiritual dicta have preeminent Indian association.

In the spiritual disciplines advocated by Laotze strands of both Rajayoga and Jnana-yoga are discernible. He says, 'The excellence of mind is in Abyssal Stillness'. This is what is known as *samadhi* in Rajayoga. Again he says 'When one gives undivided attention to the vital breath and brings it to the utmost degree of pliancy he can become as tender as a babe; when he has cleansed away the most mysterious sights (of his imaginations) he can become without a flaw.'

How will he be who has realized the Tao? Laotze simply gives a description almost identical to that of a *sthitaprajna*:

'He (who knows the Tao) will keep his mouth shut, and close the portals (of his nostrils) (the gates of the senses). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will attemper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity of others. This is called the 'Mysterious Agreement'. (Such an one) cannot be treated with familiarity or distantly; he is beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness; he is the noblest man under heaven.'

From the above quotations it should be evident that renunciation is the quintessence of the teachings of Laotze.

Though a junior contemporary of Laotze, Confucius stands out as a strong contrast to the former both in mode and philosophy of life. Laotze had a passion for seclusion and unknownness. It would seem, nobody knows for certain where and when and how this great man passed away. It appears, he simply melted away in the pervasiveness of Tao. But Confucius was cast in another mould. He had a passion for society, and social justice. He stood for good government, laws of propriety, good manners. Unlike Confucius, Laotze never believed in moralising, but in natural spontaneity of the heart of the people and independence. Confucius sought favour of kings and princes while Laotze renounced them all.

Renunciation was not at all a pronounced tenet of the teachings of Confucius. But it is not altogether impossible to discover in some of his analects a predilection for what goes to make for renunciation. To give one example:

"When Ssu-ma Niu asked for a definition of the man of noble mind, Confucius said, 'The man of noble mind has neither anxiety nor fear.' 'Neither anxiety nor fear!' He rejoined, 'Is this the definition of a noble man?' 'On

searching within' replied the Master, 'he finds no chronic ill, so why should he be anxious or why should he be afraid?'

And who could really be free from anxiety and fear? Those famous words of Bhātrihari automatically come to one's mind:

'In enjoyment there is the fear of disease; in social position there is fear of falling off; in wealth, the fear of (hostile) kings; in honour, the fear of humiliation; in power, the fear of foemen; in beauty the fear of old age; in scriptural erudition, there is the fear of opponents; in virtue the fear of traducers; in body the fear of death. All things of the world pertaining to man are attended with fear; renunciation alone stands for fearlessness.'

But to be sure Confucius was no mystic. He was at best ethical empiricist. It is not that he never tried the esoteric way but he failed, for he was cast in a different mould. In one analect he says:

'I have spent the whole day without food and the whole night without sleep in order to meditate. It was no use. It was better to learn.'

His own words explain why he should have failed to meditate. Evidently he did not know the very fundamentals of yoga as enunciated by Sri Krishna:

'(Success in) yoga is not for him who eats too much or too little—nor for him who sleeps too much or too little.'

Confucius taught empirical goodness. Lao-tze taught spiritual excellence. Confucius was a social physician, while Lao-tze was a mystic metaphysician. They are in fact complementary to each other. Taoism is the real bed-rock on which stands the great Chinese culture with its beautiful superstructure of Confucianism. Buddhism juxtaposed Taoism and thus helped also Confucianism. It will however be a mistake to imagine that one could really anymore separate the triple streams in order to find out individual contribution of each to

the ancient culture of China. That undefinable thing known as culture is a strange alchemy. Yet a discerning ear can not but hear a new united voice of Lao-tze and Buddha behind the favourite harpsichord of Confucius, which he so much loved to play on.

#### THE SECOND RENAISSANCE OF RENUNCIATION

Let us now fly from Peking to Palestine just to have a glimpse of the wonderful Son of Man. 563 years after the birth of the Buddha there arose under the sky of Palestine a mighty wave of spirituality the power of which is felt even today in the four corners of the world. Christ himself vouchsafed that he came to fulfil and not to destroy. He never rejected the religion in which he was born. He only transmitted a new *elan* into the very soul of that religion. Moses was mighty but Christ is supreme. Christ brought this ancient religion of Israel to grand heights of spiritual loftiness by the power of his roaring renunciation. Christ was another name for renunciation and he preached renunciation above everything else:

'So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple.'

Christ was a sannyasin of the highest conception. From him streams forth the second renaissance of renunciation. The power of the religion which goes by the name of Christ is not in its theology but in the dynamism of the personal life of Christ. The apostles of the Catholic Church became spiritual giants by imitating the personal life of Christ, the very quintessence of which is renunciation. The dynamism of the renunciation of Christ was something so living that it waved forth in the subsequent history of humanity in the form of hundreds of missionary enterprises. Behind

the silent and noble work which the heroic Christian missionaries have done in the different parts of the world under most exacting circumstances the one abiding inspiration has been the renunciation of Christ. Christ gave his all for men and so men gave their all in his name.

#### THE WAVE FROM THE DESERTS

After 541 years of the death of Christ on the cross there was born a new prophet in the deserts of Arabia. He preached to the vital people of Arabia one of the simplest religions of the world. *Islam* by which name this religion goes, signifies resignation to the will of God.

Unlike many of the religious teachers of the world Mohammed was a non-renouncer. He married several times. The paradise Mohammed promises to the righteous is a place full of such pleasures of body and mind as the desert-people might naturally desire.

Though the ideal of renunciation does not appear to be a very pronounced feature of Islam, one can find in some of the teachings of the Prophet an undercurrent of the spirit of renunciation. We shall quote some of them:

"Teach me a work, such that when I perform it God and men will love me." Lord Mohammed said, 'Desire not the world, and God will love you; and desire not what men have, and they will love you.'

"It is difficult for a man laden with reaches to climb the steep path that leadeth to bliss."

"O Lord, keep me alive a poor man, and let me die poor; raise me among the poor."

"The world is as a prison and as a famine to Muslims; and when they leave it you may say they leave famine and a prison."

"A man came to Lord Mohammed and said, 'Verily, I love you.' He said 'Look to what you say.' And the man said, 'By God I love you,' and repeated the same thrice. Lord Mohammed said, 'If you are sincere

then prepare armour for poverty; for poverty reacheth him who loveth me quicker than a torrent to the sea."

#### THE THIRD RENAISSANCE OF RENUNCIATION

We go back to India. We had left India in the hey-days of Buddhism. By the time Islam rose to heights of achievements in the neighbouring states of Arabia, about a thousand years after the death of Buddha, the degeneration of Buddhism was complete. India was in a greater mess than what she was in at the time of the birth of Buddha. Depicting the times Swami Vivekananda says:

"The mobs, the masses, and various races had been converted to Buddhism; naturally the teachings of the Buddha became in time degenerated, because most of the people were very ignorant. Buddhism taught no God, no Ruler of the universe, so gradually the masses brought their gods, and devils, and hobgoblins, out again and a tremendous hotchpotch was made of Buddhism in India. Again materialism came to the fore, taking the form of licence with the higher classes and superstition with the lower. Then Sankaracharya arose, and once more revived the Vedānta philosophy. He made it a rationalistic philosophy. In the Upanishads the arguments are often very obscure. By Buddha the moral side of the philosophy was laid stress upon, by Sankaracharya, the intellectual side. He worked out, rationalized and placed before men the wonderful coherent system of history."

Sankara is a marvel of history. From him flowed forth the third renaissance of renunciation. Humanity has yet to value the supreme worth of his contribution to the future of human civilization. By the power of his forensic might, realizations and the inspiration of his exalted life of renunciation Sankara pulled out the *Sanātana Dharma* from the morass of ineffectuality in which eventually it had got stuck and determined more than any body else the future course of Hinduism. What would seem incredible, in those days of ninth century when there were hardly any travelling

facilities, this young blazing Sannyasin roamed like a wild fire over the length and breadth of India purifying the life, mind and soul of the entire country. He gave back the nation its *moksha*-mindedness, that sanity which is the fundamental life-force of a civilization. He established four monasteries in four corners of India as the regents of the four directions as it were, to guard the spiritual health of the nation. He determined the character of the future Hindu monasticism. By his unique and laborious literary work he opened up unexcelled avenues of understanding the ancient wisdom of the land as embedded in the Hindu Sastras. As has been pointed out, 'It is to Sankara's everlasting glory that he points out, through unimpeachable reasoning, the spiritual nature of the world and the individual soul. Sankara takes every opportunity to insist that the true essence of man and the universe is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. It is only when the individual sees a difference between Brahman and himself and the universe that he becomes a victim of fear, suffering and misery.'\*

This great philosophy is the greatest contribution of Sankara to the future of civilization, for there he gives the basic rationale of all progressive and beneficent thought-movements of the world. It may be truly said of him that he is sustaining us from behind and showing our path ahead. And renunciation is the very breath of Sankara's life and teachings.

Such saints, acharyas and prophets of the post-Sankara history of India as Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhva, Ramananda, Tulsidas, Sri Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Ramdas, the impact of whose lives still flow as live power-currents through the fundamental history of India, were all products and preachers of renunciation.

#### WHEN CAME THE FOURTH RENAISSANCE OF RENUNCIATION?

We shall move on in history by rapid strides. Next came two very forceful factors in the history of India, the Muslim and the British rules. During about ten centuries of their rule in India every thing imaginable was done to eclipse the ancient religion of the land and withal its hoary civilization. If India has been saved any wider Islamization and Christianization than what we find today it is only because of the power of a number of mystics, saints and sannyasins of the land. It was to no little extent the work of Sankara kept alive by his followers, and the other sannyasins. Islam and Christianity themselves suffered liberalization due to the contact with the power of *Sanatana Dharma* and the result found expression in Sufism and Indo-Christianity.

Centuries rolled down the grey path of Time. Empires arose and empires fell. Civilizations came and went. Ideals and ideas held sway and were swept away.

But through the very heart of these centuries kept humming one unchanging ancient note—seers, sages, saints and prophets sang past in different climes and times that perennial song of renunciation. What has been the purpose of Time, the all-eater, in carefully keeping up this ancient fire through the most adverse vicissitudes of history? Wonderful indeed had been its role in the affairs of men. What role is it going to play in the future of humanity? Such question naturally arise in the mind. Can it really help humanity out of its modern problems, miseries and futilities?

The answer has been given. We have only to cleanse ourselves to understand it.

\* Vide. Preface, *Adhva* of Sri Sankara, translated and annotated by Swami Nikhilananda.

To take up the thread. Ultimately we come to that surging confluence where the torrential spiritual currents of the ages merged in each other and there swelled up one high impetuous wave of spirituality the like of which had never occurred in history. This was the fourth renaissance of renunciation. This was Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna was renunciation itself. In him we have the very essence of Time, the very crush of the souls of all the religions. Swami Vivekananda reveals the heart of Sri Ramakrishna as 'Renunciation and Service'. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna the ideal of renunciation attains new heights and horizons, new meaning and usefulness and a new dynamism. In this great house of renunciation that Sri Ramakrishna was, met the gods of diverse pantheons and

from that happy inter communion has been born a new spiritual power which keeps busking over this demented world of ours. The future of the humanity depends upon how it learns to open itself up to the potent and silent impacts of that beneficent power.

The entire life-work of Swami Vivekananda was devoted towards harnessing that power for the good of the world. That power can course to man's aid only through the portals of renunciation and service. This was why Swami Vivekananda was so untiring in expounding these two ideas in the light of the New Light. In him we have the most authentic and helpful exponent of renunciation for the modern times.

We shall next come to consider: *Renunciation as expounded by Swami Vivekananda.*

## REALITY OF REALITIES

*By* SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

The manifold universe we experience, howsoever real it may appear to be, does not appeal to us as the ultimate or ideal Reality. Even though we try to be content with it and make the best of it, ignoring the beyond the actual never approximates the ideal. Invariably the ideal proves to be unattainable in the sensible world. Time and again there has prevailed in man's mind a misgiving as to the validity of this world of incessant change and interdependence, which does not answer to his innate vision of Reality, but seems to be a panorama of motley events, a medley of opposites, such as life and death, light and darkness, growth and decay, order and disorder, right and wrong, joy and sorrow, good and evil. From the

earliest days human thought has called into account the phenomenal experience and investigated into its true nature. It is perhaps his dissatisfaction with the sensible universe, rather than fancy, wonder, or curiosity, that has led man to religious enquiry as to philosophical speculation. Be this as it may, he conceives the ideal or supreme Reality, even though he may not believe in its actuality, as something that endures forever, that never fails that is undying, undecaying, unchanging, that is beyond duality, relativity, and dependence, that is limitless, flawless, all-free, all-pure, all-good. But his senses cannot reach nor thoughts grasp It. He simply imagines, or assumes, or infers the supreme Reality, but has no direct

perception of It. What he experiences is the perishable and not the Imperishable, the changeful and not the Changeless, the finite and not the Infinite, the conditioned and not the Unconditioned, the many and not the One. The supreme Reality is beyond his ken.

Consequently, there have been among men doubts and disputes about the Supreme Being. The theists and the deists hold that It is apart from the world of experience. The pantheists identify It with the manifold universe. The agnostics acknowledge It as the underlying existence, unknown and unknowable. The positivists ignore It. The atheists deny It. The sceptics neither affirm nor deny It. Vedanta, however, upholds none of these views. It affirms the supreme Reality as absolutely one. Multiplicity has only an apparent existence but no ultimate reality. The Supreme One exists transcendently exclusive of all multiplicity, duality, and relativity. Beyond time and space is the one undivided absolute Being without difference or distinction of any kind. That One is perceived as manifold by the unilluminated through ignorance (*ajnana*). So this multiform universe, physical and mental, is essentially That. It is real not as it appears but as the Supreme Being. The One undifferentiated absolute Being (Brahman) is the reality of all these ever changing names and forms. It is said in the *Mundaka Upanishad*,

"That eternal Brahman is before, that Brahman is behind, that Brahman is to the right, that Brahman is to the left. That Brahman permeates all above and below; this universe is that absolute Brahman alone".<sup>1</sup>

Brahman is the reality of all that appears to be real. Vedantism should not

however be confused with pantheism, as is often done in the west. The difference between the two has been very well pointed out by Swami Vivekananda:

"The Vedantist says, the universe is not real, it is only apparent. Nature is God seen through nescience. The pantheists say, God has become nature or this world; the Advaitists affirm that God is appearing as this world, but He is not this world."<sup>2</sup>

Whether a man acknowledges the Supreme Being or not, he has a natural tendency to seek the permanent in the impermanent, the unlimited in the limited, the perfect in the imperfect. This is the intrinsic urge that motivates his thoughts and activities. So he cannot rest satisfied with anything finite, however great or grand it may be. Knowingly or unknowingly, rightly or wrongly, he is ever in the quest of the eternal, the infinite, the perfect, the divine. Of all his pursuits this is the one ultimate goal. Religion provides the direct means to its attainment. It is the sole approach to the highest good, the absolute value. Other pursuits of life are directly concerned with the relative values. The essential purpose of every true religion is to lead man to the Supreme Being, the ideal Reality. Spiritual life begins with the deliberate search for the supreme Reality as the highest end. Deep within the heart of man there is a cry for the Real, the Perfect. His innermost feeling has found expression in the following prayer:

"Lead me from the unreal to the Real, lead me from darkness to Light, lead me from death to immortal bliss."

Is man's vision of eternal existence, un-failing light and unending bliss an idle

dream? Or, is his search for the Ideal, the Perfect, the Divine, a hopeless adventure even though the Goal be real?<sup>2a</sup>

The most illustrious of the world's great personages—Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Laotse, Buddha, Christ and others—have been the seekers and discoverers of the Supreme Being. Their teachings are the most valued treasure of mankind. Their message of enlightenment, of complete freedom from darkness, delusion, misery, and death is the beacon light of the benighted world. Their exemplary lives radiant with divine wisdom, purity, power, love, and bliss have provided humanity with the sublimest ideals. Indeed, they are the greatest benefactors of mankind.<sup>3</sup> They declare in one voice that to seek and reach the Supreme Being is the highest purpose of human life, because this is the only way to freedom, peace and blessedness. Throughout the ages the same message has been proclaimed by the seers and saints of the world, who realized the self-existent, self-luminous Divine Being and became free from errors, bondages, and sufferings. Rolling down the course of time comes the clarion call of an ancient seer echoed and re-echoed in countless human hearts:

"Hearken, O ye, the children of immortal bliss and ye that dwell in celestial regions...I have realized this Great One, effulgent as the sun, beyond all darkness. By knowing Him only man overcomes death. There is no other way

of escape from the cycle of births and deaths."<sup>4</sup>

The seers' pronouncements on the reality of the Divine Being have been substantiated by their whole-souled devotion to, and dependence on Him, by their marvelous self-sacrifice for His sake, and their spontaneous joyousness at the very thought of Him. Not only did they realize the Truth themselves, but also laid definite courses for the unilluminated to attain Illumination. The greatest explorer into the unknown Beyond in the present age was Sri Ramakrishna. He rent asunder the veil of ignorance and saw the Light. The ever shining bed-rock of Reality, Supreme Consciousness, the Light of all lights, the purest of the pure, the fountainhead of all blessedness, was revealed to Him. His powerful, blissful, pure and illuminative life testifies to the validity of his super-conscious experiences.

If the manifold universe characterized by difference and duality were all that exists, if there were no ideal existence beyond, then man's innermost longing for perfection, his constant struggle for freedom, his aspiration after true knowledge must have remained unfulfilled. Not only that; there would have been in that case no escape for a sentient being from the round of birth and death, rise and decline, hope and fear, pleasure and pain, and so forth, except total annihilation or loss of

<sup>2a</sup> cf. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, pp. 267, 268, "Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach: something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest."

<sup>3</sup> cf. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, p. 56, (Oxford University Press, New York): "Now who are the individuals, who are the greatest benefactors of the living generation of mankind? I should say: 'Confucius and Laotse, the Buddha; the prophets of Israel and Judah: Zoroaster, Jesus Muhammad, and Socrates.'"

<sup>4</sup> *Sv. Up.* II: 5 III: 8.

consciousness. Moreover even though there be the transcendent Reality, if it be beyond reach, unknown and unknowable, still man would be in the same predicament. Vedanta not only affirms the Supreme Being but also proclaims This as quite attainable. It stresses the fact that the supreme Reality is the very being of the world of experience. It should not be conceived as apart from or external to anything. It is the one Self (Atman) of all that appears to exist. Being the very Self of the experiencer, It cannot be an object of experience. But the experiencer can realize his inmost self as That. Truly speaking, the Self is ever attained. But, as we are not aware of Its true nature due to ignorance, It is unattained to all intents and purposes. The attainment of the Self therefore means only the recognition of the Self, which attends the removal of ignorance (*ajñana*). That the realization of Brahman is the only access to eternal life, peace and bliss has been unreservedly declared by Vedanta.

"There is the One Supreme Ruler, the innermost Self of all, who makes the One Being manifold. Eternal happiness belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves, and not to others. He who is the Eternal in the midst of the non-eternal, who is the consciousness of all conscious beings, who though One, dispenses the fruits of actions of many, eternal peace belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves, and not others."<sup>5</sup>

There is the One destroyer of ignorance in the universe. He alone is the fire dwelling in water. By knowing Him alone one overcomes death."<sup>6</sup>

When men shall roll up the sky like leather, then only there will be the end of misery for them without realizing the effulgent Being."<sup>7</sup>

As long as a man ignores the supreme

one and holds to multiplicity as real in itself he remains in bondage. Life and death, growth and decay, weal and woe, joy and sorrow, betide him as a matter of course. Since differences are quite real to him, he cannot help being seriously affected by such opposites as beauty and ugliness, plenty and poverty, gain and loss, friendship and enmity, love and hatred, honor and dishonor. Led by attachment and aversion he continues to be tossing on the waves of duality in the death-bound ocean of multiplicity. Neither by wealth, nor by scholarship, nor by rank, nor by fame can he get rid of "the dual throng." Try howsoever he may, he cannot find true rest, security, or peace in the region of the finite, the perishable. Like a weather-beaten bird fluttering its broken wings he makes vain efforts to soar into the realm of enduring light, joy, and freedom. There is no escape from the bondage of duality in the multiform world marked by endless differences. The monarch in his royal mansion is no less subject to it than the peasant in his humble cottage. Whoever recognizes differences must have dual experiences, no matter how glorious and prosperous he may be. Because in every new situation, as there will be a change in his standard of valuation, he will find ugliness and beauty, good and ill, the agreeable and the disagreeable.

On the other hand, the man who recognizes the Imperishable one to be the supreme Reality becomes free from attachment to the perishable. So he remains unperturbed under the varying conditions of life. With whole-souled devotion he seeks the Supreme Being as the one goal and abode. So says Sri Krishna,

"I am the origin of all, from Me everything proceeds; knowing this the wise worship Me with ardent devotion."<sup>8</sup>

Though in the world, the seeker of supreme Reality is not of the world. He cares for worldly power and possessions not for their own sake but for the sake of God-realization. Yet he makes the best use of everything because he lives for the highest and the best. Since he sees the all-pervasive one as the sole Reality, he is above the plane of duality. He faces the pairs of opposites with complete self-possession. He finds peace and security in life because his mind rests on the Imperishable Being and not the perishable. Being free from worldliness he lives safely in the world like a boat that floats in water but does not allow water to get into it. When he realizes the ultimate one he becomes completely free. As the Upanishad says:

"A man becomes free from all fetters on realizing the blissful and effulgent One who pervades the whole universe and is hidden in all beings as the extreme subtle essence finer than cream."<sup>9</sup>

An illumined person, although he sees the falsity of manifoldness, is not in any way callous to the weal and the woe of mankind. He works for the guidance and the enlightenment of the unillumined, since he can view things from their standpoint as well. An adult, although he does not require toys himself, takes interest in them for the sake of the children, who value them and need them. It is through the use of the toys that the children outgrow their necessity. Similarly, until a person attains illumination the world is real to him, he has to work his way through this 'real' world to Enlightenment to realize its

unreality. The point is, the dream-experience is real to the dreamer as long as he dreams; he can see its falsity only when he wakes up.

To find the ultimate One is the goal of human knowledge. There is no gainsaying the fact that with all our knowledge of the manifold universe we are groping in darkness. The mysteries of life and death, of the physical and the psychological nature, of the real self of man, of the eternal Being are hidden from us. The more we know the more we realize our ignorance. With the extent of the known, the extent of the unknown expands. Howsoever varied, extensive, or deep our knowledge of the phenomenal existence may be, we cannot get out of darkness and delusion, we cannot gain complete knowledge, until we can find the ultimate one, which undiversified comprehends all diversities, unchanging sustains and integrates all changing forms, unmoving becomes the origin, the support, and the goal of the universe. The knowledge of the many must culminate in the knowledge of the One. When we know the all-pervasive Being, the one Self of all, then we know everything.

"The Self being known, all this is known,"

saya Yajnavalkya.<sup>10</sup> Because then the essential nature of everything becomes known. The One that penetrates everything through and through must be all in all. Nothing exists beyond the Self (Atman). So it is said in the *Mundaka Upanishad*,

"Know that non-dual Atman alone and give up all other talk."<sup>11</sup>

Until we know the supreme One we are in ignorance.

<sup>5</sup> *Ka. Up.* V: 12, 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Sv. Up.* VI: 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* VI: 20.

<sup>8</sup> *B. G.* X: 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Sv. Up.* IV: 16.

<sup>10</sup> *Br. Up.* II: 4. 5; IV: 5. 6.

<sup>11</sup> II: 2. 6.

"To know many things is ignorance. To know that God dwells in all beings is knowledge," says Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>12</sup>

Human intellect is ever tending towards the One. In every sphere of life the explanation of the many is in the one. To understand diversity anywhere we have to find unity in it. Until we can do that we say, "What is all this about?" In his thirst for knowledge man is constantly seeking unity in plurality, identity in difference, harmony in disharmony, relation in the apparently unrelated. Knowledge implies classification, generalization. All sciences, all branches of knowledge, seek unities in their respective fields. Science means ordered knowledge. Laws of nature are but uniformities or regularities discerned in natural phenomena. It is the function of philosophy, the science of sciences, to find the unity of all unities. Philosophical enquiry attains fulfilment only when it reaches the ultimate one, the common ground of all. Without the oneness of existence no universal knowledge would be possible, metaphysical investigation would be meaningless. The One which is the culmination of human knowledge, the one which the human mind invariably seeks, the one in which human aspirations attain fulfilment cannot but be the fundamental Reality.

We see the many, but not the One. Yet, for various facts stated above, we cannot deny the One. How can the many and the one be harmonized? Both cannot be real in the same sense. Because even the vastest of the co ordinate existences can be only one of the many and not the non-dual, absolute one. So, if the fundamental

Reality be absolutely one, then multiplicity must be apparent and hence unreal. Or, if multiplicity be ultimately real, then oneness of existence being mere aggregate of separate entities must be false. Nor can many be the parts of the supreme Reality. Because anything that is composed of parts must be liable to change, decay, and disintegration like all other compounds. Then again, the parts of an organic whole must be similar in nature, despite their differences, otherwise there can be no interrelation and no unity is possible, so multiplicity will result. If there be essential unity among them, then the unifying principle must be the basic reality, the differences being only in name and form. According to Vedanta the supreme Reality is simple, homogeneous existence. It has no component parts. It is not a system. It is not a process. It is flawless, stainless.<sup>13</sup> It excludes dependence. Therefore many cannot belong to the absolute Being even as dependent existences. Further, if multiplicity be the effects or actual modifications of the one cause, then oneness of existence no longer persists. Vedanta views multiplicity only as apparent modification of the One Being. The supreme One without undergoing any change whatsoever appears as multifarious to those who are under the spell of ignorance (ajnana). In reality there is one undiversified, immutable Being. It is not the synthesis of the changeful and the changeless:

"The changefulness and the changelessness of the same Brahman cannot be maintained,"

says Shankara.<sup>14</sup> The order of becoming rests in Brahman from the empirical standpoint, but does not inhere in It. Apart

from the question of logical consistency, no synthesis of opposites, comprehensive though it may be, can be viewed by the human mind as the ideal Reality or the perfection of existence.

The fact that the senses present to us only the appearances of Reality and not the Reality Itself is acknowledged by modern science as well. The nature of the ultimate Reality is truly speaking beyond its province. So the physical science is conscious of its own limitation.

"The frank realization that the physical Science is concerned with a world of shadows is one of the most significant of recent advances,"

observes Eddington.<sup>15</sup> This trend of modern science is recognized by Needham,—

"The world as seen by science is not the world as it really is."<sup>16</sup>

This however does not falsify science. Because the world exists to all appearance. It is not as false as 'the son of a barren woman' or 'the horns of a hare'. It is real for all practical purposes until the vision of the supreme Reality is attained. Vedanta denies the absolute reality of multiplicity but not its empirical reality, which persists for all but the illumined.

While the knowledge of multiplicity keeps man in bondage, the knowledge of the One makes him free. The reason is, the former is the false and the latter the right perception. As delusion creates bondage, so enlightenment leads to Freedom. To see

the apparent as real is delusion; to see the real as real is enlightenment or right knowledge. Hence multiplicity is only apparently real, the One Being is the supreme Reality. As the absolute One is realized, multiplicity disappears. So the Upanishads say:

"By the purified mind alone the Supreme Being is to be realized, then one does not see in it any multiplicity, whatsoever. He goes from death to death who sees in It multiplicity, which is a mere appearance."<sup>17</sup>

It is said in the *Bhagavad-Gita*,

"That (Supreme Reality) which is night to ordinary beings is as clear as day to the awakened sage. That (multiplicity) in which ordinary beings are awake is the night to the sage who sees."<sup>18</sup>

The truth is that the manifold universe is real to the unillumined; but to the illumined the non-dual Being alone shines. The sun, which is ever stationary and ever resplendent, appears as rising or setting, as bright or dim, to those who are on the earth, but from the position of the sun all these movements and changes have no meaning, there being all along the same glorious, stable sun. Just as the mirage cannot moisten a single grain of sand in the desert, just as to mistake a rope for a snake produces no change in the rope, just as the apparent movements of the sun do not affect the sun in any way, even so the manifold universe perceived through ignorance (ajnana) makes no difference in the absolute One. Truly, That alone shines in full glory ever the same.

"The phenomenal world belongs to that very Reality to which the Absolute belongs; again, the Absolute belongs to that very Reality to which the phenomenal world belongs. He who is realized as God has also become the universe and its living beings."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

<sup>12</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 911, (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, 1942)

<sup>13</sup> *Sr. Up.* VI: 19.

<sup>14</sup> *Br. Su.* II: 1. 14. Com.

<sup>15</sup> A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (1928), Introduction.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Needham, *The Sceptical Biologist*, P. 245.

<sup>17</sup> *Ka. Up.* IV, 11; *Br. Up.* IV: 4. 19.

<sup>18</sup> *B. G.* II: 69.

## "UNLESS THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE...."

By THE REV. SAMUEL H. GOLDENSON

*Address delivered at the unveiling of the bronze portrait of Swami Vivekananda on June 14, 1950 at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York.*

It is in no perfunctory sense that I say that I am very grateful for the opportunity to be in your midst this evening, and to participate in the celebration, to associate myself with you in reviving the memory of a great teacher of mankind. The Scripture says it is good to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praises unto the Most High, for praise is becoming and pleasant. It is also good, I am sure you will agree, to give thanks unto men and to sing their praises. It is becoming that we should do so, and it is certainly pleasant. It is becoming because in doing so there is an expression of the better part of our own natures. Whatever there is good in us expresses itself in the appreciation of the good of others. So I am happy to be in your midst and to take part in recalling the services of a great teacher of mankind.

In the letter in which your spiritual leader here invited me to take part in this evening's exercises, he said among other things the following: "Perhaps you would like to say something about the need of a spiritual revival on a broad ethical and rational basis." I should like to address myself to that need for a little while: the need of a spiritual revival on a broad ethical and rational basis. My first word is a negative one relative to the topic assigned, and that is this: that we must not take too seriously the phrase "spiritual revival." For the phrase itself hides within itself, it seems to me, an unwarranted assumption. That unwarranted assumption is in the word *revival*. The assumption seems to be that in former days, a few generations ago, or a century or so ago, the spirituality of

mankind was real, dynamic, fruitful, and effectual, and then something happened which brought about a deterioration of spirituality in our midst. Therefore, we must revive something that lost its strength and its potency. One comment I can make is this: if in former days spirituality were really alive (and if it were alive it necessarily would have been effectual and fruitful), then the period of deterioration would not have followed. The fact is that we ascribe to former ages spirituality which to my mind it doesn't wholly deserve. All the prophets of mankind from the earliest days unto the very latest, knew this as a fact. Spirituality never prospered enough because of the difficulties inherent in spirituality itself. Because it is so difficult to be spiritual, men have also had to grapple with substitutes for religion, substitutes for spirituality. I say frankly to you after being in active ministry within the temple or within the church, that the temple religion, the church religion, is one thing, and the religion of God-consciousness is quite another thing. And the latter religion is the difficult one. It isn't very difficult to go to the church or to the synagogue and listen to prayers and songs about the good life. What is difficult is to carry from the church and from the synagogue the things said about the good life, and to exemplify these things in daily behavior.

Now what about the attempt to call into being a greater measure of spirituality in our midst? There is an utterance in the 127th Psalm, that I believe gives a suggestion of an answer. It is this: "Unless the Lord build the house, they who build it

1950 |

"UNLESS THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE..."

261

labor in vain." That's the suggestion, the prescription for spiritualizing human life and human society. "Unless the Lord build the house, they who build it labor in vain." You see the simile. Let's look inside of it. The simile is to the erection of a house, a physical structure. Two kinds of instruments are required. One the regulative instrumentalities or tools. The other the operative instruments. The regulative tools have to do with the laws of nature, the laws of the Universe, the laws of the mechanical structure of things. I shall mention four of those: the plumb line, by which the masons and the carpenters make sure that the building when erected will be upright, the vertical lines upright. The level, by which they make sure that the horizontal lines will be wholly horizontal. The square, by which one side is related correctly to another side. And the rule, the measuring rule to see that each part is of the correct size. Now these are the regulative instruments. In order to erect the building you must use the operative ones, such as the hammer, the saw, the chisel and the plane.

Now in the building of human society, the suggestion is that you must also apply certain regulative instrumentalities, and those regulative instrumentalities, the scriptural writer suggests, must be in line with God's nature and God's will. I shall mention four of these. These are the principles of conduct in order to establish human society and to maintain it. They are mutuality, which springs from the realization that human beings, all of them, are related one to the other. There are no essential differences between races, matters of origin; they belong to the same family. The recognition of this means mutuality. Then there is the principle of

cooperation, which rests upon the realization that no single man in the world is so able, so capable as to be entirely self-sufficient, needs not the aid or the help of another. He must cooperate with his fellow man. And then there is the principle of stewardship, which recognizes human differences in endowment and quality. Some are more richly endowed, some are more fortunate than others. This spells an opportunity and a challenge for usefulness and helpfulness. The richer, the more powerful, the more richly endowed, must act as a trustee, a big brother to the one in greater need. And finally there is the principle of accountability unto Him who is the ultimate source of all that we have and all that we are, the infinite author and giver of all things. That is what I believe is at the bottom of this phrase, "Unless the Lord build the house, they who build it labor in vain."

I have given you the two ways of building. Why is it, now, that we do not build better the human structure? Assume that these principles are right, as you know the principles of measurement in the regulative processes of building a home are correct. Why is it that we do not build better? The answer is this, friends: that in the application of the regulative principles by which the carpenter or the mason builds a house, there is no resistance, there is no temptation to do otherwise than to use the level and to use the rule. But when it comes to the principles of regulation of human affairs, unfortunately there is the temptation to do otherwise, because here regulation means self-regulation; self-regulation means self-discipline, it means self-denial, and there is the explanation of our difficulty.

We will never, never, have a better world, no matter how much we talk about

a better world, no matter how finely we describe it, no matter how much we glorify it, unless we learn to pay our own individual price, each man and each woman in his or her own way, for this better world. Do we need the principle of mutuality? Then we must be ready, ready to shut out of ourselves every prejudice against others who appear to be less cultured, less refined less worthy than we are. Are we to cooperate? We can't cooperate unless, along with our pride of opinion and pride of power, we really understand the interdependence of men, that with all our power and our mastery we need others. Stewardship. Who can be a trustee of the principle of stewardship unless he has a feeling of the unfortunate in our midst, the underprivileged? A terrible word to us here, underprivileged. Why should there be privilege, why should some be over-privileged and others under-privileged? And in

the end, of course, we'll never, never, have a better world unless we carry within us constantly the consciousness of God's presence, God's love, and God's will, and express that consciousness in accountability to Him for every word that we speak and every deed that we do.

So you ask me to say something about a spiritual revival along rational and ethical lines. My answer is, "Unless the lord build the house, they who build it labor in vain," and will always labor in vain. May God build the house, the God within us build the house, and when He does, we'll have more and more reason to be grateful for this evening when we have come together to think of a great spiritual leader of mankind. And what was his service? Mainly this, that he so exemplified the God within him as to inspire others to build a better world in keeping with God's purpose, God's will and God's love.

## BUDDHA CAME TO FULFIL AND NOT TO DESTROY

By N. SUBRAMANIAN B.A., L.T.

### I

Siddhartha Gautama Buddha was born on a Vaisakha Purnima two thousand five hundred years ago. The Lamp of his life continues to light our path today, shining undimmed across the centuries. He was born a prince but if he had ruled his little kingdom and died like other princes, how great would have been the loss to the world!

His mother died when he was but seven days old. He was made Yuvaraja in his fifteenth year. He was married in his nineteenth and he led the life of a prince till his twenty-ninth when he had a son. He felt then the inrush of a cosmic urge in himself and he knew instinctively that he

had come to the parting of ways on life's journey and that he must take a decisive step breaking with all that was near and dear to him. Oneday at dead of night he left hearth and home. On the bank of the river Anoma, the next morning, he put away his royal robes shaved off his hair and became a wondering monk.

Six years passed in stern ascetic life. He then became mere skin and bone. He discarded severe penance and entered the middle path of yoga which is the same as is taught in the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

"Yoga is not for him who eats too much or too little, nor for him who sleeps too much or too little. To him who is temperate in eating and recreation, in his effort for work, and in

sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery."<sup>1</sup>

When he was well advanced in Yoga, he came to Gaya and sat there one day under the Bo-tree, hungry and tired. A girl came there to offer milk and rice to the Tree-god. It was also a Vaisakha Purnima day, the lunar day of Buddha's birth, by coincidence. The girl was attracted by his worshipful presence and offered to him the milk and rice. In the evening as he sat in meditation under the tree, he made a firm resolve and said to himself:

इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरं त्वगस्थि मांसानि रुचं प्रयांतु।  
अप्राप्य बोधि बहुकल्पदुर्लभां नैवासनात्कायमिदं चलिष्यति ॥

"Let my body dry up on this seat, let my skin and bone and flesh be resolved and go back to the elemental state. Without attaining the enlightenment which is unattainable through ages this body of mine shall not stir from this seat."<sup>2</sup>

True to his resolve he became the enlightened. When one has such determination realization of the Truth cannot be far from him.

From Gaya, he now proceeded to the Deer Park near Benares where he met some of his former companions in ascetic life. He taught them the truth and they became his first disciples. From there he went to Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha, where King Bimbisara with a large number of his people entered his fold. The conversion of a mighty king had a great effect. Hundreds of learned men came to him and accepted his teaching. He insisted on moral perfection as the *sine qua non* of religious life and the giving of one's own self in utter love and service to all beings as the way and goal of life. It is not the original discovery of some previously unknown truth or formulation of an intricate philosophy that won for him a large following, but his cent percent sincere and continual practice and teaching of an all-embracing and pro-

found love and compassion, *Mahamaitri* and *Mahakaruna*.

### II

Buddha's old father at Kapilavastu heard of his son's fame. He sent him messenger after messenger inviting him to the kingdom. Buddha came atlast to Kapilavastu and stopped with his disciples in a grove outside the city. He did not accept royal hospitality but walked the streets asking alms. The king with tears in his eyes asked Buddha,

"Why do you go abegging?" "O King, such is the custom of our race," he replied. "You may claim descent from kings, but my descent is from the prophets of old, and they, begging their food, have lived on alms."

The king could make no answer.

During his sojourn here, many of the royal family joined the Sangha. When his own son Rajulu came to him, he told his disciple Sariputta to shave his head and initiate him into the Sangha, to the great chagrin of the old King. Then he returned to the spot where he first renounced. Here many Sakya princes came seeking conversion and among them was his cousin Ananda who became his favourite disciple.

Later on, women also came to be admitted into the Order. The old King, his father, was now dead. His wife, Yasodhara made bold to approach him, along with Ananda's wife and other women seeking to be initiated and taken into the Order. At first, he refused. He gave way at last, but it was with reluctance. He said to Ananda:

"Under whatever doctrine and discipline women are allowed to go out from the household life into the homeless state, that religion will not last long. And just as, Ananda, when the disease called mildew falls upon a field of rice in fine condition, that field of rice does not continue long, just so Ananda, that religion will not last long."

### III

Buddha continued his ministrations till his eightieth year. By the mildest of means,

<sup>1</sup> *Gita*, 6. 16-17

<sup>2</sup> *Lalitavistara*.

sympathy, kindness and love he raised from the dust large numbers of mankind.

Towards the close of his days we see him at Vaisali accepting the invitation to dinner from Ambapali, a courtesan, in preference to the hospitality of nobles. Then we see him at Beluva, seriously ill. He tells Ananda that he would die at the end of three months.

When Ananda asks him with tears in his eyes how, when he was gone, the order was to conduct itself, he says,

"What does the Order expect of me Ananda? I have preached the Truth I have no closed fist and have kept nothing back. I am now grown old and full of years, my journey is drawing to its close. I am turning eighty years of age. Therefore, O, Ananda, be yollamps unto yourselves. Hold fast to the Truth and whosoever, Ananda, shall be a lamp unto themselves, it is they who shall reach the very topmost height, but they must be anxious to learn."

When he had recovered, he proceeded to Pava with his disciples, where he accepted the invitation of a blacksmith to a meal. After this, Buddha suffered from acute dysentery. He reached Kusinara with utmost difficulty and rested in a grove of Sal trees, on a couch prepared by Ananda.

The end was coming quickly. Ananda and other disciples stood by weeping bitterly. Buddha said:

"Enough! Weep no more. All things must perish. We must be separated from things we hold dear. You have done well. You have acquired much merit. Continue to strive and you will soon be free from the great evils. Think not when I am gone, 'The word of the Master is no more, we have a Master no more' Think not thus. The Truth, the Law which I have taught you, that shall be your Master, when I am gone."

Saying so, he passed into the great silence.

Buddha lives in the Dharma and the Dharma lives in the Sangha. The formula of *Saranagati* is:

बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि  
धम्मं शरणं गच्छामि ।  
संघं शरणं गच्छामि ॥

I take refuge in Buddha!  
I take refuge in Dharma!  
I take refuge in Sangha!

#### IV

From an unbiassed study of the life of Buddha and his teachings, it will be seen that Buddha is in the line of the great Hindu seers of old and that his teaching is only a protestant form of Hinduism. It is not an alien religion. The orthodox view which considers Buddha as an enemy of Hinduism while giving him an honoured place in the Hindu fold as an Avatar of Vishnu stultifies itself. When it is conceded that he is an Avatar, as he truly is, it should not be difficult to realise that he came to fulfil and not to destroy.

Says Swami Vivekananda:

"Show me in history, one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character, such high philosophy such wide sympathy. This great philosopher, preaching the highest philosophy, yet had the deepest sympathy for the lowest of animals and never put forth any claims for himself. He is the ideal karma-yogi acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul power, that has ever been manifested. He is the first great reformer the world has seen. He was the first who dared to say 'Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it from your childhood, but reason it all out and after you have analysed it then if you find that it will do good to one and all, believe it, live up to it and help others to live up to it'."

Buddha's silence about the ultimate reality cannot be equated with atheism or *anat-mavada*. When a wandering monk asked:

"How does the matter stand, venerable Gautama? Is there the ego?"

Silence.

"How does the matter stand? Is there not the ego?"

Silence.

Questioned by Ananda, Buddha said,

"If I had said there is an ego, it would have confirmed the false belief in the permanence of what is transient. If I had said there is no ego, it would have confirmed the belief in annihilation."

He would countenance neither belief. The *Sunyavada* attributed to Buddha is not therefore a theory of annihilation. Buddha himself would perhaps have blushed to hear of what is attributed to him by his interpreters. According to Buddhist terminology, *Sunya* is nothing but *grahya-grahaka bhava rahitata*, the absence of subject object relation. This vision dawns on the consciousness when there are no impediments to obstruct it. This realization cannot be expressed by words, but is only to be realized by oneself. Did not the Seers of old declare the same truth, long before Buddha?

"We do not know, we do not understand how one can teach it. It is different from the known, it is also above the unknown, thus have we heard from those of old who taught us this".<sup>4</sup>

When Buddha explained that the notion of 'I' and 'mine' was the cause of bondage and as such it must be shaken off, he taught the same thing as the Vedantins did. The *Vijnana-matrata* of the Vijnanavadins is not very different from the *Brahmabhava* of the Vedantins. When the Vijnana does not perceive any object whatsoever it rests only in itself. This is *Mukti* according to Vijnanavadins. Compare what Gaudapada says:

"When the *Chitta* does not fall into a state of oblivion nor is distracted again, nor is unsteady, nor has any sense image, then it becomes Brahman."<sup>5</sup>

The *Prapanchopasama* of the Buddhist phraseology refers to the same state as the

one described in the *Mandukya-Upanishad*. *Nirvana* of Buddhism and *Brahma-Nirvana* of Vedanta connote the same idea. It is the recognition of this close parallelism in thought that perhaps earned for Sankara from his opponents the title of "crypto-Buddhist."

Again Buddha preached nothing new when he spoke about the futility of elaborate rituals in leading man to the state of illumination. He said:

"Do not deem, O Brahmana that purity comes by merely laying wood in fire, for it is external. Having therefore left the course, I kindle my fire only within, which burns for ever and on that I have my mind rightly fixed forever.... Here in this sacrifice the tongue is the sacrificial spoon and the heart is the altar of the fire."

The *Narayana-Upanisad* says that for the wise man, in the performance of *Jnana-yajna*, the heart is the sacrificial post, desire is ghee, anger is the animal to be sacrificed, austerity is the fire and so on. Or, compare the saying of the *Mundaka-Upanishad*:

"Unsteady verily are these boats of the eighteen sacrificial forms, which are declared to be inferior *karma*. Those misguided men who acclaim this with superior joy fall again and again into old age and death."<sup>6</sup> "When the desires in the heart cease then at once the mortal becomes immortal."<sup>7</sup>

One who is a devout follower of Buddha wants cessation of suffering not for himself first, but for others. Until every living being is delivered, he does not desire his own deliverance. A Bodhisattva says:

"May I be a help to the helpless, a guide to the travellers, a boat or a dike or a bridge for those who want to go the other side. May I be a lamp to those who want it, a bed for those who require it, a servant of all. May I have the power to dispose myself in various ways so that all living beings in space may live upon me until they are liberated."

The same idea was voiced by Ranti Deva in olden times and by Swami Vivekananda in our own day.

<sup>4</sup> Kena Up. 1. 3

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ch. Up. 7. 24. 1—2

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gita 2. 42—44; 9, 20—21

<sup>7</sup> Katha Up. 6. 14

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Sri Ramakrishna: "Accept me only after testing me as a money-changer tests the coins".

"I do not aspire for the state of the gods who rule the world, nor do I want the attainment of the eight wonderful powers or freedom from rebirth; I want to undergo the sufferings of all beings, being in them, so that they may become free from misery."

Thus it will be seen from all aspects that the teaching of Buddha is complementary and not contradictory to Vedantic thought.

Buddha's philosophy stated in one word is the philosophy of *Samya*. To arrive at *Samya*, the mind must be emptied of all preconceived notions and dogmas. It demands the stripping, denuding of one's egocentric personality. To say "*Idam eva satyam, mogham anyat*"; "What I affirm or assert is the only thing which is correct and tenable and everything else is incorrect and untenable", is a line of thought which can never lead to the realization of the truth. The seeker of truth should take up a transcendental position, viewing from which, "each dogma will appear as a limited procession of thought traversing a certain ground of knowledge and experience."

This is the process of *Samya* and by this means all thoughts are brought to a focus and the point at which all of them converge

like the radii of the circle is the *Madhya*. *Samya* and *Madhya* are keywords in Buddhism. The *Bhagavad-Gita* holds up the practice of this ideal of *samya* or *samadhi* for resolving all conflicts of thought and in our own time Sri Ramakrishna was an embodiment of this ideal. Looking through the eyes of Sri Ramakrishna, we see Buddha occupying a high place in the long procession of seers who have directed and moulded through the centuries the evolution of thought, morals and spiritual culture in this ancient land.

सच्छायः स्थिरधर्ममूलवलयः पुण्यालवालस्थितिः

धर्मविद्याकरुणाभसा हि विलसद्विस्तारंशाखान्वितः ।

संतोषोज्ज्वलपल्लवः शुचियशःपुष्पः सदा सत्फलः

सर्वाशापरिपूर्को विजयते श्रीबुद्धकल्पद्रुमः ॥

With goodness as its shade, firm Dharma as the fence round its root, Punya as the bed on which it stands, contentment as its tender leaves, the fame of a pure life as its flower, Truth as its fruit wisdom and learning as its widespreading branches, compassion as its nourishing water, shines for ever this eternal Kalpaka tree called Buddha, fulfilling all desires."

## MAVALIPURAM

By ELIOT C. CLARK

Mr. Eliot C. Clark, as has already been introduced in the July issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, is a well-known painter in America. The impressions recorded here is the outcome of his sojourn in India in 1938.—Ed.

At Chingleput I leave the train. I have become accustomed to the leisure of time and am not a victim of its imperative necessity. I meditate on appearance and am immersed in its continuity. The "lila" of life is but the sport of its creator. It comes and goes; not knowing, yet ever knowing.

The bus is still a strange vehicle to the village Indian. Modern magic! His quietness seems like fatalism in its faith.... I sit with poverty but enjoy its peace.

Toward noon we reach the terminus, a

little village of name unremembered. There is a temple of many pillars. I am supposed to be curious of its interest. A persistent youth stretches his imagination and his ignorance in meaningless chatter; but his mind is on his tip. Above the town a conical hill rises abruptly. In the country of the plains, a promontory is always imbued with a mythological meaning. It is the abode of the God who overlooks the way of man. On the top of the hill there is a chapel. Each day at noon, from time immemorial, the priest, in meditation, calls

to the heavenly spirit and each day two long-winged birds fly down to be fed. As I look, it being noon, there are the two birds, two only, descending from a cloudless sky.

I still must go some distance and hire a pony cart to take me on my way. In this, the most populous section of the earth there are no cities; nor is there hectic or overcrowded life. Caste has its meaning for there is little competition. Man is related to the cosmos and the seasons tell the time. Now it is time for rice planting and the land is irrigated from countless wells. There are no large villages. Huts are scattered here and there. Each family must be self-sustaining; but it is a large family. Several generations gather together in a clan. The girls marry almost as children, to prevent promiscuity. The family is responsible for the individual; but the individual has his responsibilities. The aged are always cared for. A dark figure climbs the palm tree and fruit refreshes thirst. All growth in arid lands preserves moisture from the ground.

As we near the sea-coast the earth becomes sterile and life thins out for want of nourishment. Now I can see the distant dunes. The pony also sees the end and finishes in a spurt, while a small boy, appearing suddenly, runs eagerly after.

I am quite innocent of the way, but it is just as well as if I had been guided. There is no necessity of chatter. The end is clearly marked, for we have come to an inland water and must continue by boat. The little boy who has followed will be the guide.

On the other side of the bay one trudges along in deep sand. Somewhere in this waste are the temples and monolithic memorials of Mavalipuram. The little boy who has me entirely in his charge can lead me where he will.

Southern India during the middle ages was divided into several great kingdoms. Often at war and conflicting in power, they were nevertheless united by the underlying forces that live in the substrata of tradi-

tional consciousness and are expressed in the religious and cultural manifestations of the people. This period marks the decline of Buddhism and the rise of Hinduism, that Hinduism which has left its light and also its shadow on modern times.

The three most prominent spheres of activity radiate from the Maratha territory of the west under the dynasties of the Chalukyas (550-757) and the Rashtrakutas (757-937); the Carnatic kingdoms of the east centring about what is now Madras under the rule of the Pallavas (400-750) and the country of Orissa, the principal centres of which are at Puri and Bhuvaneshwar.

Whereas the rulers gave their names to these periods, the artists, unknown by name, carried on the living continuity of its culture and the traditions of the craft. Thus there is no definite stylistic demarcation. Just as Buddhism took over the art of its predecessors and impregnated its content with a new leaven, so in the rise of medieval Hinduism, Buddhism leaves its seed and continues in another flowering.

This culture springs from the very soul of India and is quite uninfluenced by the Persian and later Mohammedan infiltration in the north. The arch and the dome are almost unknown. Architecturally the ideological content grows from the Stupa, which enshrined the relics of the saint, and later was replaced by the emblem of the earlier Siva. From the simple pyramidal form, the temple evolves in ascending steps crowned by the emblems of sacred meaning, and then in Orissa loses something of its architectural character in the curvilinear truncated form, encrusted with multitudinous sculpture.

The temples at Mavalipuram are sometimes spoken of as the Seven Pagodas. Perfect in architectural completeness and conception they are carved from the isolated rock facing the sea. The site was thus indicated by nature. Now an unpeopled waste, Mavalipuram was once the centre of religious Hinduism, its many shrines growing from the imagination of man, and like human Gods, embellishing

<sup>8</sup> *Srimad-Bhagavata* IX. 21. 12

<sup>9</sup> *Avadana Kalpalata*

with the "lila" of creation the insensate stone of eternity.

To the modern mind, which makes a blueprint of its fancy, the scattered shrines and sculptured forms at Mavalipuram have no interrelated or homogeneous plan. But the Hindu had another blueprint, not made on paper. Less material in its purpose, it is more living in its manifestation. The seeming chance of nature is made the material of a spiritual revelation. The sculptured rocks are not made for adornment, but for adoration. The Greek pattern of static perfection finds no echo in the mind of the Hindu master. His conception is dynamic and grows like life itself, as a living emanation from the unhewn rock.

The little boy leads with a smile. He knows only a few words of English, but we do not need words. He is showing me something beyond words. We pass from one monolithic wonder to another. Ahead there is a huge granite boulder, its grey unspeaking surface smoothed by time and weather. As we near, I notice a cave-like opening facing the eastern sun. Entering the overhanging arch, the eye is at first unseeing in its shade. Then I become aware of a seated figure. He wears a shawl thrown loosely over the shoulders, his bronzed body attuned to the sun, a garland of beads hanging low over his chest. His soft black hair frames a radiant face, not a smile but a benediction. The fingers of his hands are touched in unison. No words are spoken, but there seems to be no offense at intrusion. A drinking cup is placed before him and a few objects of worship. On the wall which forms the sculptured background I pass to another world, a world immortalized in living stone. Here is no static hierarchy, no priest-imposed emblems, but other symbols of a life more living; no measured ruler or architectural fixity, but the fragrance of the Over-Soul blending with the people. The cow is placid in happy composure, her head bending to her calf, as the peasant, seated, draws the milk; rural realism and enchantment combined. Above, a diminutive monkey watches. The form of a nude

figure, with full-blown breasts, repeats the encircling curve. Colossal figures rise in rhythmic contour, the melody of form and line like the paradise of a mythical world, yet here made living and continuous, just as the cow gives milk, forever there.

It is this naive spontaneity, sometimes called inspiration, combined with unlettered knowledge, and absolute mastery of the craft, that gives to the sculpture at Mavalipuram its life-giving poetry and its vital command. Here in unison we have the manifestation of will, knowledge and love. How was this work possible? How was youth trained? Certainly not in the manner or method of today. The artist-artisan was born as a member of a caste and also a specialized guild. His right to his work was hereditary. He was, therefore, trained from childhood in the calling of his father. He was a craftsman before he became self-conscious. It was as natural for him to chisel as it was for him to walk. Even today in the little known villages of India one sees the hereditary artist at work, producing with natural ease objects of great beauty. The youthful artist did not have to waste his way in a hostile world; or flatter the vanity of a patron. Nor did he aspire to be the patron. He was content with his calling and its way of life. Work was co-operative rather than competitive. This assured its continuity and competence. There was little wasteful rivalry. Collective consciousness imbued the individual with creative spontaneity. The master took his natural place in ripened maturity; his the inspired vision, the novice his arms and legs. It is precisely the complete absence of egocentric individuality that brings to Hindu sculpture its elemental universality. It is a sculpture, however, not conceived in the unattached roundness of a single form. Its relief is at its best against a background of which it forms a part. (It was not until a later period that bronze was developed, possibly from diminutive objects of worship, enlarged in endless repetition.) The uncarved rock, like the dormant Siva, comes to life in the imagination of the artist, and is

figured with the fabulous story of God and man.

Nowhere in Hindu art is this spirit more fully manifested than in the great monumental monolith at Mavalipuram picturing the "Descent of the Ganges." Selected for the perpendicular flatness of its surface, and taking advantage of its natural form and crevices, this great block measuring about twenty-five feet high and one hundred feet long, is a living story of medieval Hinduism. Here it is idle to talk of progenitors and archaeological inferences. It is a sublime inspiration immortalized in stone; of mind and matter unified in a living body.

The central composition is hewn up the perpendicular crevice of the rock, dividing it thus in two principal sections. The theme is assumed to tell the story of the descent of the Ganges, rising in heaven-crowned Himalaya and flowing downward to nourish the life of earth.

The spectator stands on the rock level of the base, and the scale is measured by the natural height of man. On the right, two life-size elephants stand under a shadowed ledge in worshipful obeisance before the descending spirits of the serpentine nagas and the water-nymphs. A giant cobra uncoils at the base; an ascetic cat stands entranced, its forelegs raised above its head; mice are playing at its feet; monkeys look on in wonderment. Above the elephants, auspicious spirits are flying in the air; lions decorate natural niches; two geese, perhaps of Buddhist memory, come as messengers of good tidings. The naturalness, and the particular characteristics of the animal world, are illustrated with an extraordinary knowledge of their kind and habits. Man is but a part of a larger cosmos.

There was probably no fixed preliminary plan to be servilely followed; but there is nevertheless a dynamic interrelated rhythm uniting this multitude of figures, animal and human.

Single figures have telling significance.

The yogi in meditative trance and postured "mudra" tells of austere rites and revelation. One standing above, his left limb straight, his right limb bent against his knee, is enwrapt in ecstatic trance as he looks heavenward. Another, below, sits before a temple, lost in the Nirvana of the unknown; while others are in worshipful attitude. Here abstraction, as an Absolute, can have no meaning. It is the concrete representation of living forms that gives significance to the theme. In the shadow of a chiselled ledge two deer recline, the stag leisurely scratching its nose with its hind leg, quite unconscious of any outward happening.

Standing separately on a neighbouring ledge, carved in full round, yet an integral part of the rock structure, is an amazingly life-like family of monkeys. Seated on the natural pedestal, the husband is meticulously picking fleas from the head of his mate, looking with that wise absorption and serene placidity so characteristic of this act. The wife is enjoying this tender affection in complete relaxation, while her two newly born ones suckle avidly at her breasts. This unaffected naturalism without any preconceived stylization or deliberate purpose is, in the living simplicity of its expression, unsurpassed in animal sculpture. Unknown master of an anonymous past, how you have cheated the critics who depend upon the authority of name! With a name you would be immortalized in words. Wise master, living in your work, and so, without words, for ever living.

The little boy has been standing by utterly unaware of images or the lure of art, but quite pleased in his role as guide. Leaving the way of the temples we return along the inland water. The sun is lowering, its brilliant rays reflected in the bay. Palms emphasize the nakedness of the land; the low horizon recedes in endless distance. The past vanishes in the temple of the mind; the future in the destiny of the gods.

control over himself, Ramanuja followed Mahapurna. Shortly they came near the shrine of the body of Alavandar encircled by the disciples. They saw the noble one lost in eternal sleep. Mahapurna fell at his feet and began to wash them with his tears. Struck dumb with wonder Ramanuja stood there like one painted on a canvas. Incessant flow of tears began to run down from his eyes.

After a while grief abated a little in both. With fixed gaze Ramanuja began to see that supremely pure and blessed form of the greatest among the Vaishnavas. On the face of the eternally sleeping one, there was the full amount of gravity and beauty. The black shadow of death which robs all beauty had not fallen on that pure body. Ramanuja, his eyes transfixed, kept gazing on that great one, as if the two were exchanging thoughts. All were motionless; no one in that great crowd uttered a word. With wonder did all look at the two figures: they were beholding the communion of the living with the dead.

After a while Ramanuja asked, "I find the three fingers of the Maharshi's right hand are clinched. Did they use to be like that during his life-time? The disciples who were close by said, "No, his fingers used to remain in the natural form like all others'. We cannot find out why they are so now." On hearing this Ramanuja declared aloud:

“अहं विष्णुमते स्थित्वा जनानज्ञानमोहितान् ।  
पञ्चसंस्कारसम्पन्नान् द्राविडान्नायपारगान् ।  
प्रपत्तिधर्मेनिरतान् कृत्वा रक्षामि सर्वदा ॥”

"Remaining always in the fold of Vaishnavism, I shall protect the people deluded by ignorance bestowing upon them the five *Samskaras*, making them versed in the Dravida Vedas, and by making them refugees in Narayana".

As soon as he declared like that one of the fingers became straight. Ramanuja declared again:

“संगृह्य निखिलानर्थान् तत्त्वज्ञानपरं शुभम् ।  
श्रीभाष्यञ्च करिष्यामि जनरक्षणहेतुना ॥”

"Taking into consideration all the interpretations, I shall, for the well-being of the people write the *Sri-Bhashya* which will usher in good and establish the knowledge of Reality."

As soon as he said so another finger opened and grew straight. Ramanuja said again:

जीवेश्वरादीन् लोकेभ्यः कृपया यः पराशरः ।  
सन्दर्शयन् तत्स्वभावान् तदुपायगतीस्तथा ।  
पुराणरत्नं संचक्रे मुनिवर्यः कृपानिधिः ।  
तस्य नाम्ना महाप्राज्ञ वैष्णवस्य च कस्यचित् ।  
अभिधानं करिष्यामि निष्कयार्थं मुनेरहम् ॥

"In order to pay off the debt to that gracious Muni Parasara, who out of compassion wrote the gem among the Puranas (The Vishnu Purana) in which he clearly lays down the nature of the Isvara, jivas, the world, and the way of their progress—I shall name one greatly learned Vaishnava after him".

No sooner had he said so than the remaining finger opened and became straight. All were very much amazed to see this. None had any more doubt that this young man was going to hold the position of Alavandar in times to come.

Before the body was interred within the bowels of the earth, Sri Ramanuja set out for Kanchipura. When the disciples of Alavandar requested him to visit Sri Ranganatha he replied in tears and pique, "I don't want to see that cruel God Who did not fulfil my cherished desire; Who has robbed off the idol of my heart for all times to come." After saying so, Ramanuja, engaged in his own thoughts started towards his own place without casting his look towards any one, and without heeding

to any request from any one. From that day on, that lingering smile of his naturally bright face disappeared. He reached Kanchipura in due time. The boyish fickleness left him and in its stead, seriousness and thoughtfulness of a grown-up man came

over him. He began to pass most of his time in loneliness. He would not speak any more with his wife so open-heartedly, always trying his best to avoid her company. He would feel any joy only in the company of Kanchipurna.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### REVIVAL OF THE INDIAN CONCEPTION OF ART

"Art must be reborn", said Sister Nivedita four decades back. "Not the miserable travesty of would-be Europeanism that we at present know. There is no voice like that of art to reach the people. A song, a picture, may be the fiery cross that reached all the tribes and makes them one. And art will be reborn, for she has found a new subject,—India herself".

This prophesy of Sister Nivedita has come true to a considerable extent. She herself had worked as an inspirer among the young artists who afterwards enriched India and the world with their supreme works of art. The great Tagore family of Bengal gave the lead to the right direction. If the revived Indian Art has any character of its own today, India has to be grateful to Rabindranath Tagore and his worthy associates. The noble inspiration of Santiniketan, more than any other institution in India has helped served in perpetuating the upward aspiration of Indian art.

We are happy to note, in the field of Indian art there are growing number of people who are determined to do dedicated work for keeping up the ancient spirit of India.

Delivering the T.-R. Venkatarama Sastri Endowment Lecture under the auspices of the South Indian National Association and Ranade Library, Srimati Rukmini Devi of Kalakhetra, Adyar, Madras, is reported (July 24, 1950) to have spoken as follows: "Somehow or other art had evaded definition. It was not a definable subject. It was a subject which was of the spirit and anything that was of the spirit could not be defined. .... Art was a divine gift and a merciful act of heaven and

given to humanity to understand the true divinity in anything. It was not sectarian and narrow. It was a search for the Divine and an expression of consciousness and could be manifested in a variety of ways. Art had the quality of soul and therefore there could be no art which did not have something of the Divine in it, and which could not awaken our mind and expand our consciousness. This had been deeply realized in India.

"There could never be revival of art without a revival of devotion to Divinity which connoted selflessness and sacrifice of the highest order. The conceptions of Siva and Nataraja were wonderful conceptions of their ancient seers and sages. Then again there were the ancient pieces of architecture which were things of beauty and which inspired all. A broken piece of ancient image found in a ruined temple inspired them in a bigger way than a modern piece of architecture and sculpture. It was because they sensed the spirit of ancient India and the spiritual quality of the artists in them.

"The essence of Indian art was spirituality. Through art they gained unity and they could also get the world together. Art knew no boundaries of and difference of races and religions. India's conception of art must be revived. They must work with the spirit of dedication and spread the divine message. The true spirit of art lay in its wonderful divine grace."

The speaker deplored that when they thought of Bharata Natya they forgot Bharat from whom the great art came. The real spirit of the art had been forgotten. She felt that art has been

enthusiastically taken up but was applied ignorantly. This was the greatest danger to the country and to Indian art and culture. "Today the ancient temples were being painted and repaired in the name of renovation. This was a national crime. These temples and works of art in them had been there for centuries giving them inspiration and it would be a great loss to the country if those monuments were disfigured. If they should revive ancient art they should enter into the spirit with which they were created."

These words of the renowned artist which bear a stamp of conviction and mature thought hardly require any comment. We should however like to stress upon certain points which are inseparably connected with Art.

Art always faces two danger, the first from the artist himself and the second from the patron of art. Unless the artist is fundamentally spiritual, austere, wakeful and alert, his work degenerates in no time into most loathsome vulgarity, so much so, that you do not know how to distinguish art from dirt. The one way of getting rid of the first danger is to take care of the personal life through regular spiritual practices which may take varying forms with different persons of different temperaments. It is no secret, many artists live immoral lives of the most revolting type. Some even seem to equate immorality with inspiration. And how can it be expected that such people should be able to revive the true spirit of Indian art which is essentially spiritual? But nobody but the artist himself can help himself in this matter.

Art have always thrived everywhere in the world under benevolent patronage. But though unrecorded, we can imagine how much of art might have been destroyed due to whims of the patrons. Wealth and power, are not synonymous with

understanding. And if under the duress of the patron's whims and idiosyncrasies the artist had to compromise his independence that art is bound to degenerate. Artists cannot be tailors though tailoring also can by a stroke of genius be raised to the level of art. And it is not always practically possible for the artist to eschew all concern about the bias of the patron. Thus almost consciously art takes a wrong turn. And when the wheel is come full circle, to know what happens you have just to see some of the Indian films; and why not some foreign films also? How then can the serious and true artists save their art? It is only by avoiding going after patronage and by preserving an intelligent and cautious autonomy. This means the true artist must be ready for a life of divine poverty and exalted thinking. Patronage must seek out the artist and not the artist the patronage. In fine the true artist will have to live a life of renunciation.

Today in India the second danger to art is rather very real. The quintessence of India art, as Srimati Rukmini Devi has ably pointed out is nothing but spiritual. But the newly born state of India, which with all sincere good intentions is only too anxious to patronise Indian art, is by determination secular. Now, how will it be spiritually possible for the secular hands to always patronise correctly a thing which is essentially divine? Substantial blunders are bound to occur. This is a serious problem before art in India. Art will have to walk on this razor's edge. Are all the artists awake? And it also must be realized that the problems of art are very different from those of politics. Almost nothing can be achieved in this field by agitation. It is only when all agitations are overcome that art rises to gain its empire.

5-9-50

#### BERTRAND RUSSELL'S THREE-POINT PLAN FOR INDIA

While flying back homeward from Australia Bertrand Russell, the British Philosopher is reported (Calcutta, Aug. 26, 1950) to have air-dropped, if we might say so, at Dum Dum a three-point plan for India.

The philosopher felt very strongly that India was over populated and birth-control was absolutely necessary as a remedy. 'I firmly hold to it that you cannot even begin to solve your economic problems until you diminish your birth-rate' he said.

He underlined three things for India's prosperity. "You are to industrialize, you are to spread education and encourage doctors to spread birth-control information as widely as possible. If these three are fulfilled, there will be profound change in India within thirty years."

None of the points mentioned above is extremely new. The first two points are by now platitudes with the nation. Even the third point has been before the nation for over several years, and seem to be gathering a growing number of devotees about it as years roll by.

We however consider the third point as a hasty and unhelpful suggestion. At the outset it is not quite clear how people just rush to the conclusion that India is over-populated. Is high birth-rate alone enough to authorise a person to come to this conclusion? India has no adequate statistics uptil now. Then sources of production, both agricultural and industrial have remained untapped. Thousands of acres of soil have yet to be brought under plough perhaps for the first time. Industrialization, as is well-known, is in its infancy. Then the question of ideal distribution by judicious welfare planning has yet to be achieved. Can India be really responsibly declared to be over-populated before all these measures have been adequately taken?

Even taking for granted that the birth-rate has to be brought down in India, why should it necessarily be done through introduction of questionable remedies like 'birth-control' and not by sober self-determination? Can the path of self-improvement ever be through self-indulgence? When philosophers uphold such unethical, unphilosophical, unpsychological and unspiritual ideas it is indeed a grave tragedy.

According to Indian conception of values self-conquest is the highest end of life. And this self-conquest has to be attained by an intelligent planned living, by gradually getting mastery over the senses. It is not for the sex that man will live. It is not also that sex has been ignored. Our seers have been realists. Therefore in their scheme of life *kama* has been given an honoured place among the four *purusharthas* or values of life.

It has even been insisted that the generality of mankind should not live lives without pleasures. But *kama* has got to be transcended altogether and as quickly as possible, for *moksha* is the ultimate end of life, which is not attainable without complete self-mastery.

It is not for India to throw away this her ancient scheme and adopt new-fangled sexy schemes of life, but it is for the philosophers of other countries, if they would, to discover the solutions of some world-problems in this Indian scheme of life, which is balanced and perspicacious, which gives every dog its days, the devil its due and does not deprive God who stands anxious to get back his wards.

India must beware of patent problem-cures which are so often so generously offered to her. We hope at least the thinking section of the people, whose consciousness are rooted in the essentials of the hoary Indian culture, will not be deluged away by these waves of dehumanising gospels. All ideas that are modern are not necessarily intelligent. All ideas that are hoary are not necessarily unhelpful. Slaves, either political or sexual, never enjoy life. Our ancients knew this. Therefore, while they never denied the necessity of sensual pleasures for the generality of mankind, they were never tired of dinning into the ears of humanity that self-mastery was the only manly ideal for man. Have your little joy of life in this terrible *samsara*, but beware of sex-imperialism. Those enthusiastic captives of birth-control have yet to learn what is life for. Shake up your brains and examine things for yourself. Know him to be your true friend who has told you the secret of becoming the ruler of your senses. He is your enemy who speaks to you pleasantly of the wonderful efficacies of scientific slavery. Remember, the wisdom of a Yayati is far more reliable than the erudition of a Bertrand Russell. And withal Yayati was not an inexperienced lad. He spoke out the experience of a thousand years of continued sex-life. Then, men need not begin all over again and learn by being burnt and scorched. Wisdom born of experimental experience need not be set aside only because it was ancient. Or if you are so

averse to wise counsel, wide is the world, go, pay and learn.

It will be a great misfortune of tremendous dimension if the nation rejects the sanity of Mahatma Gandhi for favouring a fad of a fettered philosopher, who notwithstanding his goodness and good wishes for India, evidently could not understand Indian problems in the context of the hoary national ideals of India. Bertrand Russell is a very good man, but he is not as good enough to equally understand the depths of India's soul and the flight of her aspirations, as the Mahatma is.

In order to remind the nation of the views of the Mahatma in the matter we are quoting below a relevant writing of his from the *Harijan* :

#### "FAMINES AND BIRTH RATE

Major Gen. Sir John McGaw, President, India Office Medical Board, is reported by a correspondent to have said :

'Famines in India will recur; in fact India is today facing perpetual famine. Unless something is done to decrease the birth-rate in India the country will be leading straight for a calamity.'

The correspondent asks what I have to say on this grave issue.

For me, this and some other ways of explaining away famines in India is to divert the attention from the only cause of recurring famines in this benighted land. I have stated and repeat here that famines of India are not a calamity descended upon us from nature but a calamity created by the rulers—whether through ignorant indifference or

whether consciously or otherwise does not matter. Prevention against drought is not beyond human effort and ingenuity. Such effort has not proved ineffective in other countries. In India a sustained intelligent effort has never been made.

The bogey of increasing birth rate is not a new thing. It has been often trotted out. Increase in population is not and ought not to be regarded as a calamity to be avoided. Its regulation or restriction by artificial methods is a calamity of the first grade whether we know it or not. It is bound to degrade the race, if it becomes universal which, thank God, it is never likely to be. Pestilence, wars and famines are cursed antidotes against cursed lust which is responsible for unwanted children. If we would avoid this three-fold curse we would avoid too the curse of unwanted children by the sovereign remedy of self-control. The evil consequences of artificial methods are being seen by discerning men even now. Without however encroaching upon the moral domain, let me say that propagation of the race rabbitwise must undoubtedly be stopped; but not so as to bring greater evils in its train. It should be stopped by methods which in themselves ennoble the race. In other words, it is all a matter of proper education which would embrace every department of life; and dealing with one curse will take in its orbit all the others. A way is not to be avoided because it is upward and therefore uphill. Man's upward progress necessarily means ever increasing difficulty, which is to be welcomed. POONA, 19-3-'46 \*\*\* 5-9-50.

#### WORDS OF EXPERIENCE

"Verily, not by satisfying desires, is craving ever appeased: No, it only grows and becomes stronger, as fire by ghee poured into it. Even the whole earth, filled with treasures, gold and cattle and women, *they are not enough for one man*: Considering this, seek calmness of mind. Only he, who never injures any being by deeds or thoughts or words,—become one with Brahman. He who fears nothing, and of whom no being is ever afraid, he who desires nothing, and knows no hatred,—becomes one with Brahman."

YAYATI

(\* Harijan. March 31, 1946.)

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BUDDHIST MEDITATION IN THE SOUTHERN SCHOOL: THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR BEGINNERS. BY CONSTANT LOUNSBERY. PUBLISHED BY LUZAC & COMPANY LTD, 46 GREAT RUSSEL STREET, LONDON. W.C.1. PRICE IN CLOTH BINDING 6/- PAGES XVII+177.

The Religion based upon the doctrine originally taught by Gautama the Buddha and the later developments of it embracing many sects prevalent in central, eastern, and south-eastern Asia and Ceylon are now known as Buddhism. The oldest canonical texts in Pali are the evidence for the original teachings of the Buddha, and they are believed to contain the historic kernel of Buddhism nearly in the very words of the founder. In the last century European and American savants studied this great religion in the sources, published texts in reliable editions, translated them into modern European languages and interpreted the thoughts embedded in these ancient texts with scholarly thoroughness and scientific accuracy. This has made way for the revival of its popularity in the West. A considerable number of men and women, whose interest in this great eastern religion is not of the painstaking academic orientalist, but of spiritual aspirants, have been attracted to it by its commanding moral worth and appealing simplicity incidental to its rational creed with the minimum of dogmas and assumptions. Practical handbooks like the present one are produced to help the admiring seeker in grasping the essential ideas of Buddhism as a way of spiritual endeavour, bereft of racial and local superstitions, as the author herself rightly puts it.

Meditation is defined as mental planing or exercising the mind in contemplation. In religious practice, deep continued reflection of some religious theme is what is understood by meditation; and all religions accept it as the most efficient means of realizing Truth. The present book which aims at being a practical guide for western aspirants who are desirous of practising meditation in its Buddhist form, is not without interest for others also, as some part of the method and technic

presented in it is of a nature common to other oriental faiths also. "...right living is absolutely necessary for the practice of right meditation." (p. 3) "By giving freely of one's possession one is liberated from attachment and from the desire for perishable things. In practising Dana, one purifies oneself, renders service to others, and becomes conscious of the solidarity of all life." (p. 50) "...life is so short that it is foolish to waste the days, or to be dominated by greed and grasping. It is well to cultivate pure thoughts and higher states of consciousness. Pure thoughts and pure actions are said to ensure rebirth under favourable conditions." (p.52) "One should not begin meditation too soon after eating." (p.74) "It is essential to keep the spinal column straight and the head erect. The student should learn to focus his attention at a point between the eyes; let him imagine that his thought is concentrated in his forehead at a point just between the eyebrows." (p.85) "Do not let the mind be caught up in the play of this pair of opposites." (p.40) These and several other instructions given here are not peculiarly Buddhist, as they are common knowledge for religious students in India. That the Supreme Knowledge is latent in each man and all Life is one (p.12) is a statement applicable to other Asiatic religions also. To say that Yoga to the Hindu means 'union with Brahma' and to a Buddhist 'a method of discipline helpful for obtaining Nibbana' is to make an unreal and unnecessary distinction. Patanjali clearly states that yoga is *chittavrittinirodha* or suppression of the modifications of the mind. The word is derived from the root *Yuj* "to concentrate," according to authoritative texts. Another meaning of the term Yoga is *upaya*, in Hinduism; it means, method, or plan. Even that particular school of Hinduism which maintains that liberation consists in the identity of the Atman, or Individual Soul with Brahman, or the Universal Soul, does not say that these are kept apart for a time and subsequently united; but only states that through delusion the Individual Soul for a time thinks that it is different from Brahman, and that when knowledge dawns it realizes that from the view-point

of the fully enlightened, Brahman alone is true and that the individual self never existed as a really separated entity to be united later on with Brahman. The Hindu term *moksha* literally means liberation and not union.

Miss Lounsbury's book is constructed in two parts, the earlier part dealing with the theory of meditation and the latter with practice. The fundamentals of Buddhist ontology and ethics are stated briefly and simply in the first part. *Pativ-casamutpada* or dependent origination is the pivot on which the whole system of Buddhist ethics and redemption turns. Thought being the pre-condition of deed, control and purification of thought through concentration is the only method to overcome suffering and obtain Supreme Knowledge. Control of mind and senses, elimination of the separate self, developing the habit of impersonal thinking, careful observation of oneself and one's environment, eradication of blind attachments and selfish desires, cultivation of intelligence and compassion, practising concentration of thought on suitable subjects, exclusion and neglect of alien thoughts when they intrude, developing active good will and kindness to all beings who suffer—these essential ideas are clearly and lucidly set forth in the first part. The four noble truths, the eight steps of the path, nature of mundane existence and deliverance through Nirvana are also explained with just the details necessary to grasp their significance and implications for Buddhist meditation. Logomachy can never decide whether Hindu Nirvana and Buddhist Nirvana are the same or several and different; only one who has realized both can give a decisive answer.

The chapter on concentration is helpful to all meditators. The habit of keen attentiveness or alertness in every mental process and physical event (called *apramada* by Vedantists) prepares the ground for *samma-samadhi* or Right Concentration which in turn leads to *Samadhi-Bhavana* or meditation-development. *Bhavana* or meditation is a practice in two stages: *Samadhi-Bhavana* and *Vipassana-Bhavana*, the former being preliminary and the latter advanced. *Samadhi-Bhavana* is a

state in which the meditator is unaffected by the stimuli born of sensuous objects and in it fixity of mind is attained. The early stage of this practice is called *Upachara-Samadhi* or preliminary concentration which approaches the first *Jhana*; and full concentration or a *Appana-samadhi* is the concentration present in the four *Jhanas*, which are described as profound states of meditation and ecstasy resulting from long training in purity and concentration. At the higher level of meditation when intuitive thinking starts functioning, the meditator discards all verbal thinking and enters the 'plane of Pure Thought'. *The meditator and the subject of meditation become identified.* (p. 9) This state of *Tripitilaya* is in no way different from the same phenomenon described in Hindu yoga books. According to that school of Buddhism on which the present book is based, even these stages of full concentration only serve to inhibit evil tendencies of the mind temporarily; only *Vipassana-Bhavana* or Insight-Development annihilate the passions completely. According to the monistic school of Vedanta also *Samadhi* is not the goal, but *Samak-darsana* engendered in a mind purified by *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

The chapter on Character prescribes the method known to Patanjali as *Pratipakshabhavana* for subduing undesirable tendencies that hinder meditation. The 40 subjects for meditation given next are peculiarly Buddhist, though *Maitri*, *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upeksha* are themes esteemed by Hindu yogis also. Reflection on the impurity and foulness of the physical body with a view to remove desire for sensual pleasures which is advised specially in Buddhism, in the view of the author, is unsuitable for the western students as it 'would be likely to awaken an aesthetic disgust or to seem grotesque'. The analytical chapter on *Jhana* is Buddhist essentially. The second part of the book gives several practice-plans with full details of training and attitude. Here the author cites the opinion of modern expositions as well as ancient texts, perhaps to make the subject clear to the beginner for whom it is intended.

Before concluding this review we would like to draw the attention of all interested in meditation

to the following valuable suggestions of the author. "Meditation is a very personal affair." (P. 48) "Every one does not possess an aptitude for meditation. The aptitude is the result of spiritual evolution depending upon the character of the person..." (p. 34) Scientists, artists, and mystics also, often practise concentration unconsciously, but their motives are usually selfish and so in opposition to the right concentration (*samma-samadhi*) of the Buddhist (P. 26.) "...it is obviously illogical for a Buddhist to be carnivorous;...he who is training for meditation should abstain from meat." (p. 74)

Although there is bound to be something vague and remote in a book of meditations based on ancient charts and plans the author has tried to make the subject lucid and logical in presentation by her method and style, and we are confident that any one desiring to know about Buddhist meditation is sure to be profited by this nice handbook on Buddhist meditation. S. V.

TIRUKKURAL OF TIRUVALLUVAR.  
WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY PROF.  
V. R. RAMACHANDRAN M.A., PUBLISHED  
BY THE ADYAR LIBRARY, THE THEO-  
SOPICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR, MADRAS 20.  
Pp 271 PRICE Rs. 3/-

The immortal classics of Kamban and Tiruvalluvar—the two great bards of epic and didactic poetry—shine like gems of transcendent lustre in the diadem of the Tamil Muse. They are endowed with a perennial charm that never languishes with age and are a challenge and a feast to the power of appreciation of every age with its new method of approach and angle of vision. Of these *Tirukkural*, the more ancient dealing apparently with the three-fold objects of human life,—Dharma, Artha, and Kama—in extenso, but in reality with *Moksha* also as their eternal basis and natural sequence is 'friend, philosopher and guide' in one to all human beings irrespective of distinctions of caste, colour or creed. The perfume of universality in respect of matter and manner emanating from its teachings has made it not only one of the

foremost of the world's classics but also the Book of books in Tamil literature.

The author of the work, a scholar of repute deserves our heartiest congratulations for the signal services rendered by him to lovers of both English and Tamil literature. He has placed before the reading public two volumes one containing the text in Roman transliteration and the other in Tamil script, both containing an excellent and reliable English translation. It is no easy task to translate the aphorisms of *Tirukkural*, each of which contains a wealth of ideas compressed within the smallest word-space; and yet the author has succeeded largely in making his translation convey the spirit of the original and at the same time reflecting its accuracy, terseness, lucidity and vigour.

However while reading the translation, we are constrained to make the observation that in some places undue anxiety for ease and grace of expression, brevity and literary merit has led the author to over-shoot the mark to the detriment of accuracy and force. We do not know whether the deviation from the original in these places is intentional or otherwise. To give just a few instances: *Kural*, 34 mentions 4 characteristics of Dharmic conduct but the translation mentions only 3 of them. Is the word 'every' a misprint for "envy"? The omission of essential portions of the text like comparisons and qualifying clauses in the translation of verses 527, 457, 460, 312, 328, 909 is hardly justifiable. The addition of 'even when done out of malice' in 312; of 'even though sacrifices crown a man with countless blessings' in 328; of 'all riches unto the man who is pure of mind' in 457; of 'the crow beckons to its kind to share a common prey' in 527; and of 'virtue and wealth' to 'the pleasures of life' in 909 will certainly conduce to the effectiveness and accuracy of the translation. The flaw of inaccuracy mars the translation in verses 47 and 153 also.

An index of the verses in the alphabetical order at the end of the book will undoubtedly enhance the value and usefulness of the work. The printing and get-up of the book leave nothing to be desired.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, VRINDAVAN

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1949

This branch centre of the Mission completing the fortythird year of its career has from a very modest beginning with arrangement for a very small number of indoor patients, now grown into an up-to-date hospital with 55 beds and is furnished with most modern equipments. The eye Department, is a prominent feature of the Sevashram, giving relief to thousands of patients.

The total number of cases (including eye cases) admitted during the year was 1,355 and the total number of surgical cases (including eye cases) was 1905, in the Indoor Hospital. At the outdoor dispensary, the total number of new cases treated during the year was 31,083 and the total number of surgical cases including those of the Eye Department was 1,414. Pecuniary help was rendered to some helpless men and widows of respectable families. On the side of the Refugee relief, the total number of refugees admitted into the Indoor Hospital was 18 and in the Outdoor department 15,875 patients were treated.

On the financial side only a small closing balance of Rs. 878-1-6 was left and at the beginning of every year. The authorities had to take a loan of Rs 10,000/- for the transactions during the year. It is therefore essential that the General Fund should have a permanent fund of Rs. 10,000/. Further, the Sevashram being situated on the bank of the Yamuna is threatened every year with floods and therefore it has been decided to shift the same to a more prominent and safe site. The shifting and construction of the new buildings will involve a very heavy expenditure and the authorities therefore appeal to the generous public to kindly contribute for the above purposes. The Permanent fund of the Ashram has also to be strengthened. Contributions either in cash or in

kind, however small will be gratefully received and acknowledged by:

(1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal. (2) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Vrindavan, Mathura, U. P.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR, BIHAR

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1949

In 1949 there were 194 students inclusive of 17 day-scholars most of whom were East Bengal refugees. The school consists of seven classes from Class IV. Hindi is taught as a compulsory subject upto Class VIII. Religious education was given by maintaining a spiritual atmosphere. Secondary education was supplemented by various types of, extra-curricular activities as the Pratinidhi Samity and Sevak Mandali, Literary Society, Night school for the cooks and servants, Vidyapith Bank and Co-operative Stores, etc. There are also a Library and Reading Room, a Charitable Dispensary and Publication Department being maintained by this centre. The dispensary rendered medical aid to about 878 patients.

The following are the immediate needs of the institution:

- |                                         |            |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. For extension of the school building | Rs. 30,000 |
| 2. For Laboratory equipments            | „ 10,000   |
| 3. For building to accommodate students | „ 25,000   |
| 4. For Water supply,                    | „ 15,000   |
| 5. For Lecture theatre.                 | „ 20,000   |
| 6. Office building.                     | „ 20,000   |
| 7. For endowments to poor students      | „ 12,500   |
| 8. Funds for maintaining teachers.      | „ 1,00,000 |

The authorities appeal to the generous public to contribute their mite for the above needs.

Second year of Publication . . .

## UNITED ASIA

international magazine of Asian affairs

**VOLUME TWO**

**NUMBER SIX**

★ *Focus: MALAYA*

Malaya—past and present  
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DECEMBER, 1950

### **CONTENTS**

|                                                                                 | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA - ...                                          | 281  |
| 2. RENUNCIATION AS EXPOUNDED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA<br>(Editorial) ...            | 282  |
| 3. HOLY MOTHER SARADA DEVI THE MYSTIC -<br>By Anthony Elenjimmittam ...         | 290  |
| 4. THE GATE IS OPEN - By Irene R. Ray ...                                       | 295  |
| 5. A DESCANT IN THE FORUM OF THE SOUL -<br>By The Rev. Wendell Phillips ...     | 298  |
| 6. SRI SADASIYA BRAHMENDRA'S <i>Atmavidyavilasa</i> -<br>By Dr. V. Raghavan ... | 301  |
| 7. LIFE OF SRI RAMANUJA - By Swami Ramakrishnananda ...                         | 305  |
| 8. NOTES AND COMMENTS - ...                                                     | 310  |
| 9. REVIEWS AND NOTICES - ...                                                    | 313  |
| 10. NEWS AND REPORTS - ...                                                      | 319  |

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. . . . Be bold, and face  
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease  
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free."

Swami Vivekananda

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXXVII

DECEMBER 1950

No. 8

## A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

*Sri Durga my Help*

ALMORA,  
3-9-15

MY DEAR GIRIJA,

After long a time I received day before yesterday a letter of yours and knew all the information. I am glad to know that you are keeping good health. My good wishes to Kalikananda.

It is a matter of great joy that you are going to do the Lord's work. The most important thing is that one must have *bhava*, the proper attitude. "As the *bhava*, so the gain," these are the words of Sri Ramakrishna.

How could one say that the sadhus at Rishikesh are not good? We have heard from the blessed mouth of the Master high praises of the sadhus of Rishikesh. He used to say that if there took place any transgression of justice in the society of the sadhus, whatever the sadhus of Rishikesh ordained were honoured. During his stay at Kankhal, Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) used to feed the sadhus of Rishikesh with great care and honour them. So how can I say that the sadhus at Rishikesh are not good?

Wherever you be, if you do not forget the Lord, you are safe. He alone is the only concern. What is there in a place? In Him is everything.

I do not at all know where we shall go or stay? This alone I know that whatever the Lord wills, will happen.

What again is that thing which could be called my command? If there is anything like that it is this: Make the Lord your prop. Make Him your own. Do not forget Him. Nothing else is there to say. If you can hold on to Him, there is no fear whatsoever. Even if you go about whirling round a pillar after clasping it tightly, there is no fear of falling down. *Sat-sang*, good company, is of course very essential but only because it serves to remind us of Him. Otherwise what else is the speciality of *Sat-sang*?

I have not much news of Kankhal. I have neither any much desire to know—let things happen as they would—only what the Lord wills happens and that alone is good.

Atul is keeping well. My health is cruising on—sometimes good and sometimes bad. Atul's elder brother has come here. Gopal Babu also has come. We were five here before. On the night of Panchami, Kanai came and joined us. So by the grace of the Lord this time we could rejoice in a group during the Pujas. At noon in the Navami day we had all sumptuous meals at Atul's place. The evening of the Vijaya day was observed here through long chanting of Mother's name, and taking *payasam* and sweets.

Blessed is the Lord. Blessed is his grace. To have joy on such a remote hill along with his devotees! Please convey my Vijaya pranams and greetings to Sriji Baburam Maharaj. My Vijaya greetings to you all.

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# THE SAVING ROLE OF 'RENUNCIATION AND SERVICE' IN THIS BENIGHTED WORLD

V

RENUNCIATION AS EXPOUNDED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

"One cannot realize God without renunciation. Who will accept my words?"

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

NO FREEDOM WITHOUT RENUNCIATION

When anyone anywhere in the world claiming to be a spiritual teacher tells you in delicious absurdity that you can realize God without renunciation, question his *bonafides* in polite resoluteness and ask him gently to define renunciation. If you are fortunate enough to find him give an answer, it will not be difficult for you to discover that he is a man without any spiritual experience, and as such not at all a genuine spiritual teacher and that his definition of renunciation is the very negation of it.

The question that has been asked the greatest number of times in the religious history of the world is not, 'How can I realize God?', but 'Why should I not be able to realize God while living in the world?' These two very questions at once reveal the difference between the two questioners' attitudes towards life. The former seeks to realize God alone. The latter seeks both God and the world, perhaps less of God and more of the world, probably all of the world, more and yet more of it, and none of God, not a whit of Him.

In one fundamental, the answer of the effective spiritual teacher to both the questioners will be the same. He will have to say to both, 'Yes my friend, by all means you can realize God,' because the birth-right of man cannot be denied to him. Having first said so, he will take care to handle the two situations differently, for

an effective spiritual teacher has always to be a supreme realist. He has to take in all sympathy and respect every individual exactly where he stands and gently guide him on his path to God.

In the case of the former the next step to be taken by him will be to see that the dispassion which by great good fortune the aspirant has already developed was safely consolidated and his love for God intensified all the more. In fact it is one and the same process viewed from two seeming ends of the world and God. In the case of the latter, without decrying the world, the teacher will see that the seeker's trifling lip-love for God can by patient nursing be slowly developed into anything like the love from the heart, as a result of which the spirit of renunciation could manifest itself at the other end. As long as the latter cannot possibly bring himself to ask in all earnestness the direct question, 'How can I realize God?', the world is the right place for him, he being hungry for those things which the world alone can supply. There is nothing wrong or mean for anyone to be in the world as long as he has the slightest desire left in him of enjoying the things of the world. Everybody has every right to take his own time and have his run. On the contrary, it is a diabolic spiritual blunder to force oneself or anybody into renunciation while he has yet a breastful of unmitigated desires. In such a case it is only honest and honourable to clasp the world in all vigour, squeeze its

DEC. 1950] RENUNCIATION AS EXPOUNDED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA 283

wine and drink it. Only one should not confuse it with God-realization and go about preaching that there was nothing higher in life to do. It is surely honest and honourable for a buffalo to graze but on that score we cannot possibly presume that it is doing something highly spiritual. So when a man grovels in the world without any conscious reference to the highest value of life, one can be only sorry that one is not given the grounds to think of him in any higher terms.

But when you have drunk to your fill, and known the terrible *maya* of it all from authentic personal experience, who is the man that can deny your right to awaken and declare that you are fed up, that you are tired of this ever-hungering business, and that you pine after that Something, attaining which you will experience peace within and peace without? When you have come to such a psychological pass do you think it will be any sense or justice to forcibly thrust upon you those very things in the very name of which you shudder in disgust? Surely your right of self-determination does not lapse when you just come to the right understanding of the world! At such a stage you will have to seek out such a new set of circumstances of life as suit the new orientation of your psychology of hankering after that 'Something'. Now your question will be, "How can I realize that 'Something' - God?" and not, 'Why should I not be able to realize God while living in the world?'

The soul-content of renunciation is the chaste and unviolated love for God. Is it fair for any good wife or husband to ask, 'What was the wrong in having a hundred husbands or wives?' When they are truly chaste the question has even no possibility of arising in their minds. Likewise when

we truly seek God, why, we seek God alone, and what else is there to ask for? When God alone comes to be the sole object of our life and being, that position itself comes to be known as renunciation. Therefore non-renunciation and genuine God-hunger cannot be correlated in any sense on any rational grounds or in practice. Like every effective teacher before him, Swami Vivekananda is absolutely categorical in pointing out that God-realization is unthinkable without reference to renunciation. Mark his words:

"It is renunciation, *tyaga* that is meant by religion and nothing else. It is the only path to religion. *Vairagya* is the only way to freedom. Without renunciation God can never be realized—यदि ब्रह्मा स्वयं वदेत्—even if Brahma himself enjoined otherwise. Renunciation and renunciation alone is the real secret, the *Mulamantra* of all realization. Always remember renunciation is the root idea. Unless one is initiated into this idea, not even Brahma, the world gods have any power to attain *Mukti*. There is no way, none whatsoever, to the solution of the profound mystery of this life except through renunciation. Without renunciation religion can never stand. Renunciation, renunciation and renunciation, let this be the only motto of your lives. सर्व वस्तु भयान्वितं भुवि नृणां—'For all things on earth are infested with fear.' *Vairagya* alone constitutes fearlessness."

"...For those who procrastinate saying, 'O not so soon! I shall do it when time comes,' Self-realization is far off. 'Let me realize the Truth this moment, in this very life!'—these are the words of a hero. Such heroes are ever ready to renounce the next moment, and to such the Scripture says, यदहरेव विरजेत् तदहरेव प्रव्रजेत्, 'The moment you feel disgust for the vanities of the world, leave it all and take to the life of a monk.'"

"त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानुषः—Through renunciation alone some attained immortality. 'Renunciation! Renunciation!—you must preach this above every thing else. There will be no spiritual strength unless one renounces the world...."

In this world of self-hypnosis there has always been down the ages a persistent

demand for a comfortable religion from the people who think that it is very clever to ask the question, 'Why should I not be able to realize God while living in the world?' Persistence of the demand did not go unanswered. There arose men calling themselves spiritual teachers who vociferously spoke about the utter futility of renunciation in the matter of realizing God. Genuine spiritual teachers had always to counteract such regressive and dangerous insinuations before they could do any fundamental work. Swami Vivekananda repudiates this harmful doctrine in fiery words:

"Do not listen to the words of those who say: 'We shall both live the worldly life and be knowers of Brahman.' That is the flattering self-consolation of the crypto-pleasure-seekers. He who has the slightest desire for the worldly pleasures, even a shred of some such craving, will be frightened at the thought of the path you are going to tread (the Swami was addressing some Brahmacharins who had just dedicated themselves for the life of renunciation), so to give himself some consolation he goes about preaching that impossible creed of harmonising *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *tyaga* (renunciation). That is all the raving of lunatics, the frothings of the demented—the idle theories contrary to the scriptures, contrary to the Vedas. No freedom without renunciation. Highest love for God can never be achieved without renunciation. Renun-

ciation is the word—नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अपन्थाय-  
'There is no other way than this'

"Nobody attains freedom without shaking off the coils of worldly worries. The very fact that somebody lives the worldly life proves that he is tied down to it as the bond slave of something or other. Why otherwise will he cling to that life at all? He is the slave either of lust or gold or position or of fame, of learning or of scholarship. It is only after freeing... oneself from all this thralldom that one can get on along the way of Freedom. ...until you get out of the wheel of *samsara*, until the slavery of desire is shaken off, you cannot attain Bhakti or Mukti."

Some people who deem themselves to be of a rare stock, do not directly question the importance of renunciation in spiritual life but they claim that their non-renunciations are just the cases of obedience to the law of God, which, it should be supposed, they are absolutely sure of. It is only for the sake of God that they remain in the world, for if all renounced\* the world how could God's will and purpose be fulfilled in the world!

#### RENUNCIATION DEFINED

If we aspire to have Jnana, Bhakti or Mukti, we must not only have an absolutely clear comprehension of renunciation but a well-defined possession of it also.

Some 'cultured' people who are proud of their modernity and 'culture' have

\* A very interesting and withal very much instructive conversation on the point takes place in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

"Ishan: 'If everybody renounced the world, they would be acting against God's will.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Why should everybody renounce? On the other hand can it be the will of God that all should revel in 'woman and gold' like dogs and jackals? Has He no other wish? Do you know what accords to His will and what is against it?

'You say God wants everybody to lead a worldly life. But why don't you see it as God's will when your wife and children die? Why don't you see His will in poverty, when you haven't a morsel to eat?'

.....

But why should everybody renounce? Is renunciation possible except in the fullness of time? The time for renunciation comes when one reaches the limit of enjoyment. Can anybody force himself into renunciation? There is a kind of renunciation known as 'monkey renunciation'. Only small-minded people cultivate it. Take the case of a fatherless boy. His poor widowed mother earns her livelihood by spinning. The boy loses his insignificant job and suddenly is seized with a fit of renunciation. He puts on the ochre cloth of a monk and goes to Benares. A few days later he writes home 'I have secured a job for ten rupees a month.' In the mean time he tries to buy a gold ring and beautiful clothes. How can he stifle his desire for enjoyment?"

a great fondness for quoting those lines of Tagore where the poet said that he did not want that *mukti* which comes through the practice of *vairagya*, but would like to relish the taste of that *mukti* of boundless joy which could be secured in a life of thousand bonds. Such people conveniently forget that what the poet wrote in the pride of his impetuous youth was not the limit of his wisdom. The same poet subsequently cried disconsolately:

"O Serene, O Free

in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness,  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of  
this earth.

*Thou giver of immortal gifts  
give us the power of renunciation  
and claim from us our pride.*

In the splendour of the new sunrise of wisdom  
let the blind get their sight

and let life come to the souls that are dead."

Nothing could be more helpful for a serious spiritual aspirant than to know from an Acharya, or a knower of Brahman what exactly makes for renunciation. It is only the knower of Brahman that can speak with authority in the matter and not those enthusiastic creatures of nescience, who while wallowing in the mire of the world, blurt out in muddy intoxication that renunciation was a rotten, crude, undynamic, cruel and antiquated idea of some irresponsible cowards who had not their heroic guts to bear the sacred burden of biological consequences. You cannot expect a lifelong tomato-seller to know much about diamonds, nor pleaders about surgery. You have to seek out the right man for guidance. You must beware of seeming friends, false prophets, ravening wolves and above all your own deluding mind. You have not to mortgage your brain before you go to a spiritual teacher. You are expected to be widely awake and thoroughly honest.

The whole life of Swami Vivekananda is in a sense a definition of renunciation. But that perhaps does not help us much, for it is very difficult to comprehend a life of such tremendous dimensions as a definition of an abstract idea. We should therefore do better to try to understand renunciation from his words:

"The Infinite is trying to express itself in the finite, but there will come a time when it will find that it is impossible, and then it will have to beat a retreat and this beating a retreat is renunciation which is the real beginning of religion.

"There comes a time when the mind awakes from this long and dreary dream; the child gives up its play and wants to go back to its mother.

"The fact being that the Lord is in us, we are He, the eternal subject, the real ego, never to be objectified, and that all this objectifying process is mere waste of time and talent, when the soul becomes aware of this it gives up objectifying and falls back more and more upon the subjective. This is the evolution, less and less in the body, and more and more in the mind—*man* the highest form, meaning in Sanskrit *manas*, thought,—the animal that thinks and not the animal that 'senses' only. This is what in theology is called renunciation. The formation of society, the institution of marriage, the love for children, our good works, morality and ethics are all different forms of renunciation.

".....our philosophers have from the very first declared that every manifestation, what you call evolution, is vain, a vain attempt of the unmanifested to manifest itself. Aye, you the Almighty cause of the universe trying to reflect yourself in the little mud-puddle! But after making an attempt for a time you find out that it is all in vain, and beat a retreat to a place from whence you came. This is *vairagya* or renunciation, and the very beginning of religion. How can religion or morality begin without renunciation itself? The Alpha and Omega is renunciation. "Give up", says the Vedas, "Give Up!" That is the one way. 'Give Up!' न धनेन न प्रजया त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानसु: 'Neither through wealth nor through progeny but by giving up alone that immortality is to be reached.'

# RENUNCIATION IS NOT DENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD

If you take to vegetarianism, do you think it will be a greatly sensible action on the part of the animal kingdom—fish, fowl, ox, goat, tortoise, pig and swan and what not—to come out with an indictment that you are guilty of the terrible crime of denouncing and insulting them? Likewise it is equally an impossible task to discover sense in the words of those who indict renouncers as denouncers. We do not however claim that wrong actions are not often done in the name of renunciation. In such cases it will be nonetheless incorrect to identify the particular wrong action with renunciation. If an ignorant doctor applies a wrong medicine to a patient how is medical science responsible for it? It is very important that we understand the essentially scientific nature of renunciation. Renunciation is not a motivated function of the mind for running down anything. Rather it is a motiveless impersonal power, to be capable of using which, is to become an instrument of doing good alone.

The true import of renunciation will be clear to us as soon as we properly understand the vedantic view of the world. We shall quote Swami Vivekananda on the point:

“The Vedanta does not in reality denounce the world. The ideal of renunciation no where attains such a height as in the teachings of the Vedanta. But at the same time dry suicidal advice is not intended; it really means deification of the world—giving up of the world as we think of it, as we know of it, as it appears to us—and to know what it really is. Deify it; it is God alone. We read at the commencement of one of the oldest Upanishads: ‘Whatever exists in the universe it is to be covered with the Lord!’”

“I always cling to the idea set forth with one voice by Christ, Buddha and Vedanta that we must all come to perfection by giving up this imperfection. ...We must go to reality.

Renunciation will take us to it. Renunciation is the very basis of our true life; every moment of goodness and real life that we enjoy is only when we do not think of ourselves. This little separate self must die.”

In a very comprehensive sentence Swami Vivekananda gives us the quintessence of renunciation as follows:

“O Sharman, may thine for thy good be Vairagya—the feel of which is love, which unites all inequalities, cures the disease of Samsara, removes the threefold misery inevitable in the world, reveals the true nature of all things, destroys the darkness of Maya, and which brings out the Selfhood of everything from Brahma to the blade of grass.”

## YOGA IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT RENUNCIATION

A large number of people are found in these days to suffer from the delusion that if they practise yoga they can attain liberation without renunciation. It is a triple ignorance that they are here objects of. They have equally absurd notions of the three—renunciation, yoga and liberation. Otherwise it should not have been difficult for them to see that the fundamental core of the three is one and the same—absolute dispassion for the world and love for God.

No yoga whatever is thinkable without renunciation. Whatever the name of the yoga, the inner content of it under all names has got to be—चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ‘restraining the mind-stuff (chitta) from taking various forms (vrittis)’. And this ‘restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms’ is attainable only अभ्यास-वैराग्याभ्यां—by practice and non-attachment. Argue throughout your whole life you will never be able to find out a path to yoga which has not passed through the portals of renunciation. No yogi worth the name from the early times to the present day ever attained anything genuinely spiritual in his life without thoroughly practising—formally or informally—renunciation. So if you truly aspire to be a

yogi reject as poison all such stuff of yoga-lore which surreptitiously gives a fillip to your natural desires by pleasantly saying that renunciation was not after all so important for yoga. They are the enemy of humanity who spread such sensualizing bacteria in the high name of spiritualizing society. Beware of them.

Do not for a moment imagine that a truth becomes ineffective simply because it is an ancient discovery. Truth is nothing if it is not *saswata*, eternal. Be not overwhelmed by the *maya* of the golden deer if you do not want Sita to be kidnapped. Be not hypnotized by the illusion of words and phrases, and hasten to reject your *terra-firma* for a hypothetical world of phantom and fantasy. You can never bypass renunciation and yet make any spiritual progress.

We like to repeat what we have mentioned previously, that people sometimes do incorrect, absurd, cruel, crude, unpsychological and unspiritual things in the name of renunciation. These are clear cases of wrong application which have unfortunately been a legion. But that does not in any way falsify the case of correct renunciation. How fantastic it will be for you to rush to claim dogmatically that because Christ was crucified along with the criminals he must have been a dangerous man, harmful for society. An ideal should never be judged by the lapses and wrong applications of some misguided or faulty practitioners. Look at any ideal renouncer or yogi of history and listen to what he has to say on the point. Take the words of Swami Vivekananda in the matter:

“The repetition of names, the rituals, the forms and the symbols, all these various things are for the purification of the soul. The greatest purifier among all such things, a purifier without which no one can enter the regions of this higher devotion (*para-bhakti*),

is renunciation. This frightens many; yet, without it there cannot be any spiritual growth. In all our yogas this renunciation is necessary. This is the stepping stone and the real center and the real heart of all spiritual culture—renunciation. This is religion—renunciation.

“When the human soul draws back from the things of the world and tries to go into deeper things; when man, the spirit which has here somehow become concretised and materialised, understands that he is thereby going to be destroyed and to be reduced almost into matter, and turns his face away from matter—then begins renunciation, then begins real spiritual growth.

*The Karma-yogin and Renunciation*: “The Karma-yogin’s renunciation is in the shape of giving up all the fruits of his action; he is not attached to the results of his labours; he does not care for any reward here or hereafter.”

*The Raja-yogin and Renunciation*: “The Raja-yogin knows that the whole of nature is intended for the soul to acquire experience, and that the result of all the experiences of the soul is for it to become aware of its eternal separateness from nature. The human soul has to understand and realize that it has been spirit, and not matter, through eternity, and that this conjunction of it with matter is and can be only for a time. The Raja-yogin learns the lesson of renunciation through his own experience of nature.

*The Jnana-yogin and Renunciation*: “The Jnana-yogin has the harshest of all renunciations to go through, as he has to realize from the very first that the whole of this solid-looking nature is an illusion. He has to understand that all that is any kind of manifestation of power in nature belongs to the soul and not to nature. He has to know from the very start, that all knowledge and all experience are in the soul, and not in the nature; so he has at once and by the sheer force of rational conviction to tear himself away from all bondage to nature. He lets nature and all that belongs to her go, he lets them vanish and tries to stand alone!”

*The Bhakti-yogin and Renunciation*: “Of all renunciation the most natural, so to say, is that of the Bhakti-yogin. Here, there is no violence, nothing to give up, nothing to tear off, as it were, from ourselves, nothing from which we have violently to separate ourselves. The Bhakta’s renunciation is easy, smooth, flowing and as natural as the things around us. We see the manifestation of this

sort of renunciation, although more or less in form of caricatures, everyday around us..... The renunciation necessary for the attainment of Bhakti is not obtained by killing anything, but just comes in as naturally as, in the presence of an increasingly stronger light, the less intense ones become dimmer and dimmer until they vanish away completely. So this love for the pleasures of the senses, and of intellect is all made dim, and thrown aside and cast into the shade by the love of God Himself.....So in this renunciation auxiliary to devotion, there is no harshness, no dryness, no struggle, nor repression nor suppression. The Bhakta has not to suppress any single one of his emotions, he only strives to intensify them and direct them to God.....Bhakti-yoga is the science of higher love. It shows us how to direct it; it shows us how to control it, how to manage it, how to use it, how to give it a new aim as it were, and from it obtain the highest and most glorious results, that is, how to make it lead us to spiritual blessedness. Bhakti-yoga does not say, 'Give up'; it only says 'Love; love the Highest!'—and everything low naturally falls off from him, the object of whose love is the Highest."

#### RENUNCIATION IS MAN'S HIGHEST RESPONSIBILITY

Whether we can comprehend it or not, whether we like it or not, renunciation is man's destiny. He is God-held and God-bound. Man is God-devoured. As far as man is concerned he is on an one-way traffic—man to God. The more a man is aware of this fact the more spiritual he is, the more responsible he is. The highest responsibility of man is therefore renunciation. The world is full of misery because we cannot bring ourselves to recognise this highest responsibility. On the contrary we counteract all such coming up with vigorous and determined obstinacy. Alas, we are so intelligent that we do not even know what constitutes our true self-interest! Unthinking people call the renouncer the escapist. But in fact it is not the renouncer who deserves that name, but the determined non-renouncer. Those who ostrich-fashion hide their heads under the sands of

the world turning their backs to this highest responsibility are the escapists. It is because people renounced in all the ages and renounce even today that the life on this planet is not all an unqualified darkness. The light that flickers from the crevices of solid darkness darts forth from the flames of renunciation. So if you seriously love the world, if you have any sincere feeling for humanity, you have only one way open before you—you must guard the fire of renunciation by renouncing. Mere frothy talks will not do. You must become the sacrifice to prove your bonafides. You must become the oblation—the invading fire to burn down the hell let loose in this world.

Therefore what is necessary is high purposiveness. Renunciation also can have its spine, its shoulder, its muscles, its heart and its brain. Swami Vivekananda wants that the pure waters of renunciation must not get wasted in dry deserts of futility. It must flow by the human habitations and nurse, sustain and transform the civilizations. Without renunciation there is no future for the world.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda:

"Vairagya may be of two kinds, with or without purpose. If the latter, none but the worm-eaten brains will try for it. But if the other is referred to, then renunciation would mean the withdrawal of the mind from other things and concentrating it on God or Atman. Serving the Jiva and loving God mean the same thing. One possessing vairagya does not understand by Atman the individual ego but the all-pervading Lord, residing as the self and the internal ruler of all. He is perceivable by us as the sum total. This being so, as Jiva and Isvara are in essence the same, serving the jivas and loving God must mean one and the same thing. For the Advaitist the notion of jiva as distinct from God is the cause of bondage. Our principle therefore should be love and not compassion.

"The ordinary *sannyasin* goes out of the world and thinks of God. The real *sannyasin* lives in the world, but is not of it.

"Jnana teaches that the world should be renounced but not on that account abandoned. To live in the world and be not of it, is the true test of renunciation."

It is important that we should observe in the passages just quoted, how naturally the torrential river of Swami Vivekananda's exposition of renunciation overflows the expanses of the fields of service. We have but taken here a few handfuls of that life-giving water just to taste its vivifying sweetness. It has not at all been our aspiration here to try to weigh the tonnage of the waters of the river that flows and flows and flows.

#### VIEW THE EVEREST

On some later occasion when we come to meditate on Swami Vivekananda's conception of 'service' we shall see how inextricable is his conception of renunciation from that of service. With him in a very real sense renunciation is service and service is renunciation, though one has to renounce to serve and serve to renounce. Renunciation lives in service while service breathes renunciation.

In fact the Everest of Swami Vivekananda's exposition of renunciation stands in the regions of service. Renunciation does not reach the highest point so long as the concern for the personal salvation is not totally transcended and a harrowing anxiety for the salvation of others does not devour the soul. It is grand to strive for personal salvation but nothing is so incomparable as the total self-immolation for the salvation of others. When a man transcends his body-boundedness and realizes the unity of all existence he becomes the Individual. Then the concern for the salvation of the creatures becomes his, they being peopled in that Individual. The toy of 'personal salvation' has lost all meaning for this grown

up Impersonal Individual though it has retained all its value, meaning and charm for the personal individual.

Though perhaps very few rare souls can ever aspire to rise to that height of renunciation, Swami Vivekananda made it a point to din the idea into ears of the aspirants for, if the highest ideal is not always kept vivid and burning before the eyes, the motive of going ahead is lost and men founder and ere long get buried in the snow of ineffectuality. So rise up and hearken the words of Vivekananda:

"Throughout the history of the world you find great men make great sacrifices and the mass of mankind enjoy the benefit. If you want to give up everything for your own salvation, it is nothing. Do you want to forgo even your own salvation for the good of the world? You are God, think of that."

Swami Vivekananda was not always very sweet. Specially when he spoke out the highest truths he was sometimes terrifying. His words came dancing like the all-destroying Kali. What a thunder is this:

"You will go to hell if you seek your own salvation! Seek the salvation of others if you want to reach the highest! Kill out the desire for personal Mukti! That is the greatest of all Sadhanas."

From one point upwards the destiny of humanity is indivisible. You must carry the world with you. Where could you run away with your little salvation, friend? You are foredoomed to renounce, and renounce and renounce. So come, give your hand in great cooperation, for Swami Vivekananda says:

"One must learn, sooner or later, that one can not get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of one's brothers!"

\* \* \*

Every man is expected to be interested in his destiny. We have told that renunciation is everyman's destiny. Our next caption therefore naturally comes to be: *Can renunciation be systematically practised by everyone in daily life?*

# HOLY MOTHER SARADA DEVI THE MYSTIC

By ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

Samkhya system of Indian philosophy, Chinese Taoism, Persian Sufi mysticism and the esoteric core of Jewish and Christian religions as well as the historical idealistic schools of philosophy throughout the world have exhaustively analysed and propounded the truth about sex far more deeply and intuitively than the pragmatic psychologists like Freud, Jung, and Adler. Man is the image of God who is "Our Father who is in Heaven", woman is the image of the "Mother of the universe". It may be that the man—who in his ontological essence is one with the Father—sinks lower than an animal, forgets his pristine glory, his inborn divinity and revel in filth and folly. But man he remains, the child of God, image of God—nay the substance of God—*Tattvamasi*. A woman may forget her divine Motherhood, her inner divinity and sink low, fall astray. But woman she remains, the Mother of God, the Madonna, the Mother of Grace and Love.

Man is mind; man is thought; man is intellect. Woman is heart, she is love, she is emotion. Man creates, woman preserves. Man is the bread-winner, woman is the nest-builder, the queen of home. Children are nearer the mother than the father, for woman is Nature, Mother Nature, the Queen of creation. Man is nearer the Unmanifest Absolute, woman is nearer the personal God, the manifest and tangible expression of the Real.

Whereas the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God needs reasoning process of intellect to be understood and established, the doctrine of the Motherhood of God, of God's Divine Mother, Madonna, we need more heart, love and devotion than mere speculation and logic.

Intuition, devotion, emotion, mysticism, music, romance and similar expressions of human experience are basically feminine, womanly, motherly. Mysticism is intuitive while philosophy and theology are discursive. Mystic bent of mind, poetic inspiration, creative genius for Fine Arts are all the gifts of Mother Nature. Mysticism is not the vague musings and irrational outpourings of an emotional heart—as some pragmatists and positivistic rationalists think. Mysticism is as scientific and demonstrable as the positive sciences like physics, chemistry, or medical sciences. Mysticism is not a morbid and pathological stage of mind, it is the stage where individual soul becomes consciously united with the Over-Soul, the relative gets united with the Absolute, the shadow is got merged into the Substance, and foam, bubbles and waves get lost in the Ocean of Being. *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*, individual soul and the Universal Over-Soul, become one and in that perfect knowledge and love the last traces of egotism are destroyed, the shackles of *maya* are torn asunder and man becomes free. In this field there is no more sex or race differences. There is no sex in soul. Soul is one, one without a second. When the many are reduced to the One and the *maya* wheels are broken, then man gains freedom, the goal of life.

यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते हृदयस्येह ग्रन्थयः ।

अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्येतावदनुशासनम् ॥

(Kata Up. VI. 15)

When all the fetters of the heart are torn asunder then alone the mortal becomes immortal. Such the instruction.

It is such a Mother and Mystic that we see in the person of Sri Sarada Devi. the

DEC. 1950]

HOLY MOTHER SARADA DEVI THE MYSTIC

291

immaculate 'wife' of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Spiritual Father and Mother are those who become instrumental in the second birth—*dwijahood*—of human beings. Ordinarily those are fathers and mothers who become instrumental in begetting children, the first-borns. But saints, mystics, prophets and *rishis* are parents, fathers and mothers, in so far as they help the first-borns to be re-born in Truth and Love that is God. What is born of flesh and blood is flesh and blood, what is born of mind and spirit is mind and spirit. God is Spirit. God is Cosmic consciousness. The spiritual Fathers and Mothers of history have had direct, personal, immediate access to the Ultimate Reality, they entered the Holy of Holies, and administered to the spiritual wants of agonised humanity.

What is so astonishing and awe-striking in the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi is the palpable fact of their unfathomable mystical depths of vision and experience of God realized in such a simple, chaste, devoted life. Mother Sarada Devi was as much the unsullied child of Mother Nature as Sri Ramakrishna, the illiterate temple-priest of Dakshineswar. The God-intoxicated priest slowly entered into the *sanctum sanctorum* of God whom he worshipped as the Mother. Bhavatarini Kali whom he worshipped faded into mere shadow as the face of the Divine Mother, God, began to unfold her face to this pure, simple, chaste, devotee. Ramakrishna realized God as the Mother of the Universe and hence forward every woman is mother to him. Sri Sarada Devi was there as his God-appointed partner, the living embodiment of motherly grace and love. The realization of God as Mother through human form reached the climax

when, on the new moon day of May 1872, the temple priest, Sri Ramakrishna, worshipped Sarada Devi, the Goddess, and both went into *samadhi*, the two pure angel-souls lost and merged in the life of the Universal Self.

The life of Sri Sarada Devi is again the most convincing argument that married life is at least equally good as solitary pilgrimage to reach the Goal, to reach the highest peaks of spiritual perfection and mystic experiences. From the early childhood under her paternal roof at Jayarambati hamlet of Bankura District, Bengal, till she was married to the "mad" son of Chandra of Kamarpukur, from the long years of training and discipline the Mother received from her "husband" down to the years Sarada Devi became the Mother of the Ramakrishna Order, after the passing away of the Master, the "*Sangha-Janani*" of the new monastic Order of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement, one can trace the gradual unfolding of the simple, but majestic growth of this wonderful and mystic soul.

Through the gradual unfoldments of inner Divinity, Sarada Devi outgrew all bounds and bondages of ceremonialism, stereotyped orthodox walls and her life became a challenge to the learned bigotry of official priests and ignorant narrow-mindedness of the uninitiated. This wonderful Mother, through the closest association with Sri Ramakrishna, through constant practice and discipline, reached heights which few women, specially among the married, can aspire to reach. Like Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi also developed that mystic path, that direct, intuitional path of reaching straight into the inner chambers of divine life, into the esoteric depths of Love Divine that she

could teach and illustrate these great spiritual truths in simple, lucid parables like the Master.

At Koalpara the disciple says to the Mother:

"Mother, the mind is very restless. I cannot steady it in any away."

Holy Mother replied:

"As wind removes the cloud, so the holy name of God destroys the cloud of worldliness".

Simple, terse, straight answer to question is acknowledged as one of the tests of higher degrees of mysticism. Prophets and seers teach lofty truths, subtle metaphysics of the problems of the One and the many, Absolute and relative, in simple homely parables. The sayings and teachings of Sarada Devi reflect the mind and method of the Master very much indeed.

Of the transcendental love and oneness of the Holy Mother and the Master was reborn Naren into Vivekananda and to this re-birth is attributed the birth of the Ramakrishna Order, the vehicle to carry the message and mission of these prophets of Modern India. The torch of the Master was continued to be held by the Holy Mother and, after the passing away of this Madonna of modern India, the light is kept up by the Mission, the New Dispensation for the spiritual regeneration of Mother India with ambitious eyes fixed for the spiritual transformation of the entire Mankind.

St. Bernard, the poet and theologian of the Madonna worship, has written:

\*"Vergine madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,  
Umile ed alta piu che creatura,  
Termine fisso d'eterno consiglio,  
Tu se' colei che l'umana natura  
Nobilitasti sì, che il suo Fattore  
Non disdegno di farsi sua fattura."

—Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia, Paradiso, Canto XXXIII*—16

"God is high up in the inaccessible realms of Purity and Truth, man is sunk so low below, rolling in the filth of sin and agony. Hence the intermediary link has become the Mother, the Mother of Grace and Life and Pure Love—may the Mother of God, who is our hope and guide, strength and power."

This is true of every Virgin Mother, who by performing the duties of life, has reached the heights of Self-realization and social service - *Atmano mokshartham, jagat hitaya cha*.

Dante Alighieri, in the last canto of the *Paradiso* of his *Divine Comedy*, bursts into this lyric\* about the Madonna, which may be freely translated as follows:

Virgin Mother, Daughter of your son,  
Humble and exalted, more than a creature,  
The predestined target of the Divine Will.  
You are the one who raised Humanity so great  
That the fruit of your love scorned not to become  
As though— your own creature, (your son).

These thoughts, translated into Indian terminology, according to the best of our magnificent and age old Indian traditions, mean that *Mahamaya, Kali, or Durga*, is the Mother of the universe, *Viswajanani*, and that man is to seek freedom through the grace of the Mother. Now the parallelism that runs between Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, the Madonna of the West and the Mother of the Oriental Christ on the one side and that of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother lies in this plain fact that the mystic reality of woman as the Mother, Mother of Universe and Mother of God is

realized in their lives, a perpetual challenge to those hedonists and utilitarians who do not find anything in woman but biological sex. But woman is Goddess—Mother of God.

The highest ideal of man is not his biological sex but Thought. The highest ideal of woman is not sex but Love, Beauty, Grace. In the lives of such holy virgin mothers like the blessed Virgin Mary and Holy Mother Sarada Devi the highest ideal of humanity are exemplified, embodied, and transmitted to posterity, to the discerning few, thinking few, God-thirsty few, whose struggles do not end, whose ordeals are not finished until they have attained their Goal, Freedom, Self-realization.

Says the Holy Mother, Sarada Devi, after reaching the mystic heights of "*Brahma satyam jaganmithya*", the pinnacle of Vedantic and Upanishadic mysticism:

"The boy whom you have seen is none other than *Mahamaya*, the great cosmic Illusionist. She took you across the water of the world in that form. Everything, husband, wife or even the body, is only illusory. Unless you can free yourself from these bondages, you will never be able to go to the other shore of the world. Even this attachment to the body, the identification of the self with the body must go".

Repeating the words of her Master and 'husband', Sri Sarada Devi continues:

"Musk forms in the navel of the deer. Being fascinated with its smell, the deer run hither and thither. They do not know where the fragrance comes from. Likewise God resides in human body, and man does not know it. Therefore he searches everywhere for bliss, not knowing that it is already in him. God alone is real, all else is false. What do you say my child?"

This is the core of the highest mysticism. Super-consciousness which was so clear in the life of the Holy Mother, specially

after she had been metamorphosed by the touch of her Master, held her captivated by the trance of bliss of the vision, relish and realization of the Lord. The world was her *Vrindavan* and she referred the ordinary events of life to that God whom to see and realize the angelic couple strived and struggled. Mysticism being the kernel of religious experience, and religious experience being the development, growth and manifestation of the godliness in us, the "awakening of the lion of Divinity asleep in man" the lives and teachings of the Holy Mother reveal that her mysticism was essentially a life-affirming and dynamic type, something new and original imprinted by her virgin and chaste personality on the ancient and eternal mystical philosophy of the seers of India, of the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita, the mines of Indian mystical literature. Hers was a mysticism that went straight deep into Divinity realized in Sacrifice and service of the fellow-humans.

Devotion, purity and intense yearning of the mystic finally open the closed door of *maya* and reach the throne of God. Mysticism needs no reasoning, no elaborate philosophy, but a clean heart, devotion, chaste love. Says the Mother:

"Narendra once told me, 'Mother, the knowledge that explains away the lotus feet of the Guru is nothing but ignorance. What is the validity of the knowledge if it proves that Guru is nought?' Give up this dry discussion, this hodge-podge of philosophy. Who has been able to know God by reasoning? Even sages like Suka and Vyasa are at best like big ants trying to carry away a few grains of sugar from a large heap".

Here is a virgin soul, virgin Mother, chaste nun, who journeyed along the entire path of spiritual life, ascended all the mansions to Mount Carmel, and has freely and generously taught the secret of spiritual life, the easier and safer path

of mystic devotion. Sri Sarada Devi lived throughout her life intensely active in the society, in the order of monks that was born of the love and grace of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, in the service of the country of her birth and love. In other words her mysticism was not a dried-up morbidity of the isolationist, but of genuine virgin-mother who placed the fruits of her realizations and sacrifices at the service of her fellow-men whom she helped to cross the ocean of worldliness, *samsara*.

Womanhood is consecrated anew at the temple of the Mother of the Universe. The delicate beauty and infinite grace that are made manifest in that simple, chaste, devotional and redeeming life of the Holy Mother is the mirror in which the Eternal Soul of India reflects. This is India, the mysticism of the Upanishads, Vedas and Gita as embodied in the lives of her saints, virgins, monks and nuns. Neither orthodox Muslims nor exotic Christians have understood that,—and for that matter, not even the caste-ridden Hindus, the stereotyped communalists of the “Hindu” society have understood this transparent, eternal soul of Indian civilization, the Perennial philosophy of the Vedanta and the Upanishads, the mysticism and devotion of the Gita

and Mahanirvana Tantra. But the lives of Kabir and Nanak, of Mira Bai and Tulsi and of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother Sarada Devi—in our own days—is the vindication of the Eternal Soul of India re-asserting itself in its purest form, Indian mysticism and spiritual life alive and as solid as the Himalayan range, as pure as the white snows resplendent on it.

The lives of saints, of heroes and heroines, of mystics and prophets, they who through God-realization have transcended the superficial difference of sex, colour, race, creed and nationality, are not only lessons, but also a perpetual challenge to all forms of sins and arrogance that divide man from man, race from race in the name of God and religion. The dynamic mysticism of the Vedantic realization as the type represented in the life of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, compels all the dutiful citizens of Free India to work for the social regeneration of the Motherland, break artificial barriers between children of the same soil, emancipate India's womenfolk from the social evils and raise her to her divinized Humanity, the nearest approximation of the Virgin-Mother, Mother-Nun and Nun-Goddess of which Sri Sarada Devi was both the symbol and the substance.

### THE MEANING OF MISERY

“Everybody says regretfully, ‘There is so much misery in the world. We have prayed so much to God, but still there is no end of misery.’ But misery is only the gift of God. It is the symbol of His compassion. Is it not so?”

“Who has not suffered from the misery of the world? Brinde, the woman devotee of Krishna, said to him, ‘Who says that you are compassionate? In your incarnation as Rama you made Sita weep for you all through her life. And in the incarnation of Krishna, Radha has been weeping on your account. Your parents suffered extreme agony in the prison of Kamsa and cried day and night uttering your name. Then why do I repeat your name? It is because your name removes all fear of death....’”

THE HOLY MOTHER.

## THE GATE IS OPEN

By IRENE R. RAY

*Our readers, we are sure, will be happy to welcome Mrs. Irene R. Ray as a new contributor to this journal. An English by birth, living in this land for over many years, she esteems India as her spiritual home. The natural sequence is that she believes in maintaining a world-outlook and as a means to this end here advocates fuller communication between East and West.—Ed.*

In national life, as in individual life, there is a tendency to be carried away by short term issues so that other issues, although no less vitally important are neglected. Under the stress and strain of urgent immediate problems, those problems which are more subtle and of wider significance, are easily overlooked.

### A WIDER HORIZON

In India today our minds are engrossed with problems of national reconstruction—and rightly so, for who would have it otherwise? Who does not feel a thrill of joy and pride at the sight of an awakened India rising to her feet? Yet these are urgent times we live in; a world grown small in size and big in power is in danger and distress. Has India no responsibility there, no contribution to make towards the solution of world problems? Indeed she has. And she must act now. She cannot say, “Wait until we have solved our educational problem, our health problem, our industrial problem, our refugee problem, and the problems of our relationship with Pakistan.” She cannot say, “Let us first solve these problems, then we shall pay attention to world problems.” No, these are urgent times and all problems must be dealt with simultaneously; none can wait.

In numerous specialized fields Indians now hold positions of world importance and have achieved international recognition. But this is not enough, although it may be regarded as a good beginning. India's real and ultimate role among the nations of

the world is a spiritual one. Those who are aware, even vaguely aware, of the fact of the different roles played by different nations, will have no difficulty in admitting this. The ideological differences which form the basis of the growing world tension can only be solved on a spiritual level. And India holds the key. Not in any narrow or restricted sense is this assertion made, not from pride or a sense of superiority, but as a plain statement of fact. India holds the key that can admit the nations to the domain where contradictions and incompatibles meet. Therefore a special responsibility rests upon all those in this country who are in a position to act as some form of mediary between India and the rest of the world, particularly the Western countries. Individuals and organizations alike must be awake to the trends of modern thought elsewhere in the world. And being awake to those trends, they must then be ready to supply the link which will connect them with Indian thought. The first great necessity is that writers and publishers and leaders of thought in this country should be conscious of the need to provide these links. At present this consciousness is largely lacking, in spite of the fact that Swami Vivekananda made it one of the most important aspects of his life's work.

### ARE WESTERNERS CHRISTIANS?

With the help of journals and, where possible, personal contacts, it is not difficult to assess the trends of thought in a foreign

country. And in this all levels of literature should be used. The monthly magazine issued by an unimportant provincial church can be as enlightening and helpful as a journal whose contributors are all leading scholars. And a daily newspaper can be equally instructive. A London newspaper, *The News Chronicle*, recently held a Gallup Poll in which one of the questions was, "Can you name any of the four Gospels?" The result was startling. Only three people in five could name them all, and one person in four could name none. The proportion of ignorance increased steadily among younger people. *Peace News*, the weekly organ of the Peace Pledge Union, made interesting comment on this phenomenon which is described as "another of those regular disclosures of the widespread public ignorance of the Bible." Seeking for the cause of this "undeniable decline of interest in religious literature", the *Peace News* commentator puts forward the opinion that the archaic language of the Bible, although very beautiful, no longer teaches or inspires. It only lulls; and only the earnest student can fathom its meaning.

Continuing, the commentator says, "There are parts of the Gospel narrative which make some sense to the uninitiated even as they are written. But when it comes to the very centre and core of the whole story, the code of Christian behaviour, the guide to eternal life, the statement of the natural law by which God and His universe hang together—the Beatitudes—we are confronted with meaningless abracadabra. What, after all, does the ordinary priest or minister today really believe is the reaction upon a congregation of average half-educated people of such fantastic assertions as—'Blessed are the poor in spirit', or 'The meek shall inherit the earth'? Those whose religion consists of nothing but an escapist sentimentality are doubtless soothed by the familiar repetition of exclusively Sunday language. Other people are simply left cold. For they

know that, applied to everyday life and according to the commonly accepted use of words, both those statements are palpably untrue...

"Those who, by study or fortunate accident, have discovered the meaning of the Gospels beneath their archaic verbiage, must continue to wonder why the greatest and most powerful utterances of history should remain buried in verbal obscurity.

"It is unreasonable to talk of public lack of interest in the Christian Gospel until someone has told them what that Gospel is. At present they simply don't know."

Did not Swami Vivekananda say that "the most profound and noble ideas of Christianity were never understood in Europe"?

The fact that English people no longer read the Bible may, perhaps, be said to be a negative symptom. What positive signs are there to show the trends of modern Western thought? *The Inquirer*, the weekly organ of Unitarian Christianity, in its issue of January 28, 1950, deals in its editorial, with what it describes as "probably one of the most important facts of our time." The problem presented is "the division between conscious Christianity and the world in which it lives." "It has yet to be proved that any society can exist without a religion and the society that used to call itself Christendom is doing its best to get on without one."

Again, seeking for the cause, the Editor finds that "many intelligent people cannot believe that God existed in the mystic Christ, or that Christ existed in God in the manner declared, for instance, by Paul." There is conflict in people's minds between the historical Jesus, the Jesus who actually lived in the flesh, and the "Living Christ" who is not man, but God.

"If the traditional Christian interpretation of the experience of the New Testament is correct, the Christ of the New Testament is God. This is the 'New Teaching' of the traditional church today."

The Editor then shows why this "New

Teaching" cannot be widely accepted today. Jesus, he says, was a man of his time. He thought, acted, and on the whole believed in the manner of his time. "He could not therefore have been God in the manner declared by traditional Christianity." Furthermore, says the Editor, the man of today is world conscious as never before. The West respects the East and no longer wishes to impose its own values upon the people of Asia. Large numbers of people now refuse to believe "that the West and the West alone holds the secret of God's existence in the nature of the Risen Christ, and that no man can know God as he should be known save through this experience. The whole experience of truth of large numbers of intelligent people in the West denies this."

#### WESTERN VEDANTA THE ANSWER

The issue of *The Inquirer* which contained this editorial was "an Indian number" containing three articles of Indian interest, including one which gave an account of the Ramakrishna Mission and its activities. The time has come when writers in this country must take an active part in the religious discussions in the Press of the West. There are innumerable people in India who, if they were awake to their responsibility and the opportunities that await them, could very easily make a most vital and valuable contribution to current Western thought. The editorial quoted above provides an excellent example of

these opportunities. Indian thought, properly presented, could throw revealing light on both sides of the question discussed by the Editor. Vedanta, the simple and practical philosophy of the Upanishads, is the solution. It alone can provide the point of reconciliation between the historical Jesus and the mystic Christ. It alone reconciles the Impersonal God with the Personal God, and the *Avatar*, or Incarnation, with man. Vedanta never jars with reason and is therefore completely acceptable to the scientific mind of the West which demands first and foremost the satisfaction of reason. One of the major intellectual difficulties of the Westerner today is to reconcile science with so much in life that seems incompatible with it. Therefore let the science of Vedanta flow to the West and perform that reconciliation.

Gerald Heard, writing in *Prabuddha Bharata* in the January, 1950, issue, claimed that Western Vedanta is now a fact. And he made the very important and significant observation that Vedanta in the West will take on definite characteristics of its own; it will "pick (those) Asiatic forms and from them make ones of its own which best express for it by symbol that which all agree is in its Essence inexpressible."

Let India, therefore, supply the principles and the West will supply the forms. The gate is open. Shall we not enter?

#### WHEN COMETH THE SON OF MAN

"Let your lions be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

JESUS CHRIST  
(S. Luke 12. 35-40)

## A DESCANT IN THE FORUM OF THE SOUL

By THE REV. WENDELL PHILLIPS

*Address of the Rev. Wendell Phillips at the Unveiling of the Bronze Portrait of Swami Vivekananda on June 14, 1950 at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York.*

We meet at a time when anyone should feel honored to speak to a group of people who are concerned about God in a world that's pretty God-less. The last time we were together was in 1933. The world looked fairly simple at that point. There was something of a depression, but think what was happened since then! The God-people have taken up forces in opposition to the God-less people. The men and women in the world who believe in eternal values, divine values, are in opposition to those who believe in no values except the values of the human being at his lowest. And not only that, but there is a battle today between the God-people and those who don't even have enough interest in religion to fight them.

I listened on the radio driving down tonight to a friend of mine who was giving some advice on what to say at convocation talks. It's good advice as far as it goes; maybe you heard it. He said something about: Go out and tell the young people to develop character, virtue, and so on. Go out and tell the young people to take up their public responsibilities, civic responsibilities, doing things for somebody else, and so on. But never a word as to why anyone should do these things. Why should anyone be virtuous, or good, or generous or self-sacrificing, or do something for the state or the city or the country or society? Why indeed, when very often it takes something out of the individual in time and life and blood, when it's never appreciated by society or by anybody else? Why should a man do those things? Only because he feels

that it is God's will. And there's no use talking about a better country or a better world or better character or more public service unless behind it there's God. Because there's nothing else big enough. Oh, you can get along for a while doing these things for recognition, because it makes you feel good, because you have time, because you like to do this or that, but when it comes down to paying the price, only, I believe, God is big enough to say to a man, "Yes, this is terrible. You may have to die on a cross, you may be stoned, you may be ignored, you may be starved, but this is what you've got to do because I, God, want you to do it." And so I say first of all, therefore, I am glad to be here to talk to a group of people who are interested in something bigger than character and virtue and public service, and some state or other.

Secondly, I am glad to be here because I am considered a friend of the Swami, and, I hope, a friend of those who are interested in his work. I am a Protestant Episcopal minister, and it may seem strange to see a Protestant Episcopal minister speaking to you on such an occasion. I hope it won't be bad taste if I venture to say that many ministers would be too busy to accept such a kind invitation as was extended to me. Many a rabbi would have other obligations to fulfil on such an evening. Some of my friends will say to me, "Don't you have enough to do in your own church without wandering around seeing what's being done in other faiths?"

I was a foreign missionary once; I

1950]

A DESCANT IN THE FORUM OF THE SOUL

299

never converted anybody that I know of. I was working in a Mohammedan country, in Egypt, and Mohammedans just don't convert. But during those years, we were always very happy when some Mohammedan dignitary or government official or educational supervisor or some noble would open up his home or his heart or his time to our little missionary enterprise. Or if we were giving a function, we were just so happy if somebody from the country who stood for something would come down to it. We would say, "Isn't such—and—such a wonderful, generous, Godly person?" But when the thing is reversed, and somebody comes to our country from a Mohammedan land, or India, or China, or Africa, we all run the other way and say, "What are these strange people coming around here for anyhow?"

Now perhaps that's not a very polite thought to express, but each one of you know what I'm talking about. I am speaking to those who are born in America and who look pale in color...colorless I like to think of it. When you go to some place tomorrow, and say where you've been tonight, your friends will say, "Why? Why and how?" and so on. I think we should all be very happy to be here because, in a very real way, we are reciprocating. We are doing the thing that we would have others do unto us; we are sharing our insights and our strengths and our weaknesses with others from other lands; and in a world that needs new relationships, all over, there is no place like starting with the relationship of friendship. No subterfuge, nothing hidden, open and above board.

Finally I am glad to be here because we are joining together, we who are here, a group of people, I believe, in a search for

truth and a search for God. Now for me in my profession, and in my position, Christianity is the truth. However, even Christians will say there are different interpretations of what we consider to be the truth. In my own church, the Episcopal Church, for instance, we have a book called *Doctrine in the Church of England*. We are a part of the British Church in tradition and in practice. Note that title, "*Doctrine in the Church of England*," note that it does not say "The Doctrine of the Church of England." It says "Doctrine in the Church of England." And in that little book which outlines our orthodoxy, there is the report of the committee on every conceivable point of doctrine, theology and so on. But appended to each little section there is the minority report of the rest of the committee that did not quite agree with the orthodox conservative scholars. My Roman Catholic friends can't understand how you can run a church on such a basis, but we are doing it fairly successfully.

Now, we also in our Christian Church, in our search for truth, have various denominations. They agree for the most part in many things, but there are divergences; and there are certain Christian churches which say that my church is heretical and has no truth whatsoever. Therefore, my point is this, that we are still, I believe, all of us, searching for more truth. Nobody has the complete truth. And I have a feeling that this great leader (pointing to the statue of Swami Vivekananda) has something to give each one of us. Something more about the unseen. We in our scientific world have seen too much. Ernest Fremont Tittle puts it this way. He said,

"We have lost sight of the end for which we were born, and have become immersed in money-getting and pleasure-seeking. We have

considered it important to acquire material goods, economic privilege, social prestige, and thus to achieve what in our time has been regarded as success. We have considered it important to play golf or bridge or to seek diversion in taverns, in night clubs, in motion picture houses. We have not considered it important to gain insight into the meaning, the goal, and the true glory of life." The unseen ideals, the Absolute, God, purposes, why we're here at all, where we're going, what it's all about, these things are important.

I don't see why we've made such a fuss about science in our age. Many of the things we see are hardly there at all, anyhow, if you get down and analyse it. Look at me. I came in tonight and the Swami didn't recognize me after these years. He said, "My, you've put on a little weight". I've put on about forty pounds. I got on the scale this morning at 222 pounds, which is very bad for my heart, I understand. And yet, even though I look fairly substantial, I am told that if the solid matter in me were concentrated, it would occupy a remarkably small space. I am mostly space. I used to have a hard job understanding that, but after having it explained to me a few times, I have thought up a way of expressing it. This thing you see here looks pretty solid, but as I understand it, I'm made up of neutrons and electrons and protons and so on. And these things are going around so fast that whenever you touch me it seems as though I'm solid. Now that never made much sense to me until I thought this up. Take a revolving door. It's mostly space divided by four partitions. Actually the smaller the partitions the better the revolving door because it gives you more space in which to

walk. Now, you take that revolving door which is mostly space, and revolve it very fast. Several thousand million times a second, I think, is the speed at which these little things are going around. If you revolve that revolving door several thousand millions of times a second, and you try to put your head in it, it would feel pretty solid, wouldn't it? And yet, it wouldn't be any more solid than just four sections of space divided by very thin partitions. Now that's what happens in us. These things are running around so fast that if you took the solid matter in the human body, the little electrons and neutrons, and got them down into one compact mass, you and I would be about the size of a piece of dust visible in a microscope. The rest is space.

So that when we in the West make such a fuss over material things and gadgets and all that, it seems we're getting a little out of perspective, because those who deal in the unseen are dealing with reality.

I'd like to just end with a line from Kipling. The one that's so often quoted, you know, is, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, till earth and sky stand presently at God's great judgement seat". But what is not so often quoted are the lines beyond that, "But there's neither East nor West, border nor breed nor birth, when two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth". And here we stand, in our strength, or in our weakness. We face a strong man, from the ends of the earth, and at that point there is no East or West. There is only you and I and God.

*Disciple:* "Mother, I have practised austerities and japa so much, but I have not achieved anything."

*The Holy Mother:* "God is not like fish or vegetable that you can buy Him for a price."

## SRI SADASIVA BRAHMENDRA'S ATMAVIDYAVILASA\*

By DR. V. RAGHAVAN

Who has not heard over this Radio the songs of *Manasa Sanchara Re*, *Bruhi Mukundeti* and *Piba Re Ramarasam*? Their composer is one no less renowned than celebrated composers like Tyagaraja. If Tyagaraja and Dikshitar sang of the personal divinity, Saguna Brahman, the Sannyasin-author of these songs sang of the impersonal Absolute, the Nirguna Brahman, in the fullness of his realization of the one Godhead, beyond all names and forms and of the very nature of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda*. He was the bard of Advaita.

Sadasiva Brahmendra Sarasvati, this composer, who was roaming as an Avadhuta on the banks of the Cauvery, is a memory still fresh in the minds of all truth seekers; in the intellectual and devotional life of the Cauvery delta, he is still a force.

Sadasivendra, before he renounced life, was a native of the well-known village, Tiruvisanallur on the Cauvery near Kumbhakonam, which Shahaji the Maharatta king of Tanjore, A.D. 1684-1712, gave away as Sahajirajapuram to fortysix scholars. Among the scholars of this village was one Moksham Somasundara Avadhani who was the father of our author whose civil name was Sivarama. Sivarama as a student was in the company of three outstanding personalities of the time, Ramabhadra Dikshitar, Sridhara Venkatesa Ayyaval and Gopalakrishna Sastri, the last of whom later became, at Sadasivendra's instance, the preceptor of the Tondaman chief of Pudukottah. A vexatious delay at his father-in-law's house on a festive occasion produced a sudden revulsion in the

keen mind of young Sivarama; an excuse, as it were, suddenly marked a predestined turn in life; the scales fell; awakening beamed forth, and according to the dictum 'यदहरेव विरजेत् तदहरेव प्रव्रजेत्' Sivarama renounced life, sought the feet of the Sannyasin Paramasivendra Sarasvati, and himself entered the order as Sadasivendra Sarasvati.

To Brahmendra, as we now reverentially mention him, success on the spiritual path came rapidly. A redoubtable dialectician, he used to submit every scholar-visitor to his Guru to severe cross-examination; when reports reached the Guru of Sadasivendra thus hauling up the scholars, the Guru chided him, "When are you going to control your tongue?" From that moment, Sadasivendra gave up speech and became a Mauna-Yogin. Another time a farmer passing across the open field where Sadasivendra was lying made a remark against him for demonstrating his Yogic power. With this the lingering infirmities of vanity of scholarship or of Yogic power were completely removed and his Brahmanhood reached its untainted fullness.

Dumb, deaf to everything, clad in ether, mad-like and certainly mad with the delight of Brahman, native of no roof, eating off his palm whatever fell therein by chance, the Brahmendra roamed about, exemplifying the great state of the Jivanmukta which he himself later sang in the *Atma-vidyavilasa*:

आन्तरमेकं किञ्चित्सन्ततमनुसन्दधन्महामौनी ।

करपुटमिक्षामभन् भटति हि वीथ्यां जडाकृतिः कोऽपि ॥

As the late Nrisimha Bharati Swami of Sringeri said in his hymn on Sadasivendra,

\* A Talk delivered at Madras A.I.R. Station on 22-6-50; published with the permission of the A. I. R.

the Guru Paramasivendra heard of his pupil's high siddhi and bemoaned his own failure to reach those heights:

उन्मत्तवत्सञ्चरति हि क्षिप्य-

स्तचेति लोकस्य वचंसि शृण्वन् ।

स्वियन्नुवाचास्य गुरुः पुराहो

ह्युन्मत्ता मे न हि तादृशंति ॥

While wandering in this state, he got once hurried in the sands of the river near Kodumudi and when four months later, the floods subsided, a digger's spade found him still in samadhi; his arm was once severed but he went his way unconcerned. Is not Atman with which he had become one अच्छेद्योऽयमदाहोऽयमच्छेद्योऽशेष एव च ! His final disappearance was, according to an announcement made by himself, at Nerur near Karur where even now his shrine and festival are kept up by the Pudukkottah state whose the then ruler, Sadasivendra had blessed during his wanderings. His Mahasamadhi--Jyestha-Suddha-dasami—is just three days from today.

Sadasiva Brahmendra is an equally distinguished name in the literary history of Advaita. He has left brief pointed glosses on some Upanishads and the *Brahma-Sutras*. On the *Yoga-sutras* of Patanjali, he commented, and the ramified material in Appayya Dikshita's *Siddhanta-sangraha*, he summarised in his *Siddhanta Kalpavalli*. His Guru Paramasivendra made a valuable compilation of words expressive of Brahman found in the Upanishads, the *Vedanta-nama-sahasra-vyakhya*; Sadasivendra abridged this in 36 verses under the title *Atmanusandhana*, which along with a homage to his Guru called the *Navamani-mala*, I had the good fortune to bring to light first. Another interesting work of his which I am trying to piece together from scattered manuscript fragments is a

compilation of advaitic passages from all the Puranas. Of the other philosophical minor works that he wrote, the most well-known is the *Atmavidyavilasa*. In fact, the Vani Vilas Press has published in the same booklet two minor works of Sadasivendra of this name; the second is in 43 Vasantatilaka verses, more scholastic in style and partly cast as a *guru-sishya-samvada*. The first is in 65 Arya verses and is couched in a considerably more felicitous diction and forms a regular poem on Atman and Brahman-realization. It is this text which is more famous as the *Atmavidyavilasa*. Indeed it is this text to which some historical importance also attaches, as can be gathered from the informing postscript in one of its mss. in the Tanjore Library. When once our Saint was sojourning at the village of Dipambapura, a Sarvamanya of the Tanjore Queen Mother, Malhari Pandita, a friend of King Shahaji's next brother, Serfoji I, performed three Bhikshas to Sadasivendra and conveyed the King's request to bless him with progeny; our Saint sent to the King his *Atmavidyavilasa* as his blessings not long after which Serfoji was blessed with a son.

सदाशिवब्रह्मरूपं ब्रह्माद्राक्षं चिरेत्सितम् ।

आत्मविद्याविलासाख्यः स्वीयो ग्रन्थः प्रसादितः ।

According to Advaita on which the *Atmavidyavilasa* is based, the only reality is the Brahman sung of in the Upanishads as being of the nature of Sat, Chit and Ananda, Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss. The world of name and form, *Nama-rupa*, is only its appearance, Maya, i.e. ultimately unreal but tentatively real; the various individual souls are only the reflections of the one Brahman. The perishable phenomenal realities of name and form are mere

transfigurations, Vivartas, of Brahman even as waves are of the water of the sea. Owing to our ignorance, *Avidya*, we superimpose an erroneous reality, later sublated by correct knowledge, *Adhyasa*, even as we imagine a snake in a rope and run away. The removal of this error or *Bhrama* is achieved by the help of a Guru, the cultivation of the four kinds of requisite self-discipline, *Sadhana Chatusthaya*, and by listening to, ratiocinating about and contemplation upon, *Shravana*, *Manana* and *Nididhyasana* of Brahman and its true nature.

When this knowledge of Brahman dawns, one becomes released though yet embodied and moving amidst us; he becomes a *Jivan-mukta*, an ideal as glorious as that of the *Bodhisattava* of Buddhism. Texts of the Upanishads and the Gita glorify this state in which the realized souls, owing to the remnants of the traces of the un-burnt Karmic legacy that has begun to fructify, still move amidst us and work for our salvation. There is controversy and diversity of opinion on the Jivanmukta doctrine among Advaitic writers themselves but Sankara definitely says in his *Sutra-Bhashya* that it is a matter of one's experience and is not to be questioned at all. The life and doings of Sadasivendra form a further testimony on the Jivanmukta. The *Atmavidyavilasa* is a panegyric on this great state.

After paying obeisance to the divine Guru Dakshinamurti and his near Guru Paramasivendra, Sadasivendra opens with a description of the Supreme Soul, pure and always enlightened, incomparable, eternal and devoid of parts, attributes or forms.

निरुपमनित्यनिरीहो निष्कलनिर्मायनिर्गुणाकारः ।

विगतस्तत्सर्वविकल्पः शुद्धो शुद्धव्यक्तस्ति परमात्मा ॥

The next two verses show how, involved in its own illusory extension, it begins to delude itself and act, but at the end, by the grace of a teacher, realizes its delusion and regains its pristine state. Five verses which follow emphasise the important role played by the Guru in helping the bound soul to regain its lost freedom. On the attainment of this realization, he is rid of the invidious distinction of You and I—त्वमहमभिमानहीनः, goes about care-free like a boy—विहरति बालवत्, immersed in the ocean of unalloyed bliss—विमलमुखाम्मोनिधौ मग्नः । The Avadhuta state in which the author himself was roaming is then described:

अवधूतकर्मजालो जडबधिरान्धोपमः कोऽपि ।

आत्मारामो यतिराह् अटवीकोणेऽष्टदशास्ते ॥

The quarters are his garments; desirelessness his ornaments; palms, his vessels; foot of trees his abode; as he lies on the soft sand dunes of river beds, Vayu fans him and the full moon holds the lamp.

आशावासो मौनी नेत्राद्यालङ्कृतः शान्तः ।

करतलभिक्षापात्रः तरुतलनिलयो मुनिर्जयति ॥

विजयन्दीकुञ्जगृहे मञ्जुशुलिनैकमञ्जुतरतले ।

शेते कोऽपि यतः—द्रः— ॥

भूतलमुत्तरशय्यः शेतलवातैकचामः शान्तः ।

राकाहिमकरदीपो राजति यतिराजशेखरः कोऽपि ॥

In a series of poetic fancies, the ecstatic state of Brahman-realization is then described, depicting the soul as a lover in spiritual nuptials with the spouse of peace, as the King ruling over the kingdom of *Svarajya*, as the intellectual hero who has slain the foes of nescience, as the effulgent sun on the horizon of knowledge, as the cloud raining the nectar of immortality and removing all the heat of inner ills, as the refreshing breeze from the park of bliss, as

the swan sporting in the lake of wisdom, as the cuckoo perched on the boughs of the Upanishads and warbling sweetest notes. He is beyond praise and blame; he has transcended learning and left all activity behind: संत्यज्य शास्त्रजालं संव्यवहारं च सर्वतस्त्वक्त्वा । is full and shines like a steady flame; आश्रित्य पूर्णपदं मास्ते निष्कम्पदोषवद्योगो । unassailed by any sense-objects, he stands like a log of wood in its own incomparable plenitude. तिष्ठति निरुपमभूमिनि निष्णामालम्ब्य काष्ठवद्योगो । He makes no distinction between being and being, seeing everywhere the full Brahman जात्यभिमानविहीनो जन्तुषु सर्वत्र पूर्णतां पश्यन् । He rejects none, accepts none; knowing the play of Avidya, he is supremely indifferent to everything; न निषेधति दोषधिया गुणबुद्ध्या वा न किञ्चिदादत्ते । आविद्यकमखिलमिति ज्ञात्वोदात्ते मुनिः कोऽपि ॥ in the fullness of his knowledge, there is no retrospection on a past nor a prospecting of the future; भूतं किमपि न मनुते भावि च किञ्चिन्न चिन्तयत्यन्तः । a great beggar, yet the king of all the passionless, आस्ते भिक्षुक एकः \* \* \* राजाखिलवोतरागाणाम् । A rhapsody of four verses on the Brahman which now end the poem sweeps us off the feet and deposits us on that summit of Sat-chid-ananda,—

that equanimity which has no limitation and wherein all fear is completely ended—  
समरसमभयमपारम्, that unequalled fearless Truth—निरुपम-निर्भय-तत्त्वम् ।

Not satisfied with these poems of his on the Advaitic-Brahman, Sadasivendra, who pursued also the time-honoured Sadhana of Nada-Vidya sang musical pieces on the same theme. When he sang

खेलति ब्रह्माण्डे भगवान् खेलति विष्णुण्डे  
हंसस्त्वोऽहं हंसस्त्वोऽहं हंसस्त्वोऽहं सोऽहमिति ।  
परमात्माहं परिपूर्णोऽहं ब्रह्मैवाहमहं ब्रह्मेति --- ॥

he was singing only in tune with the Sruti which declares that the realized soul is the supreme poet of the universe and the singer of Brahman—

एतत् साम गायन् आस्ते । हाऽबु हाऽबु हाऽबु । अहमन्न-  
महमन्नमहमन्नम् । अहमन्नादोऽहं अहमन्नादोऽहं अहमन्नादः ।  
अहं श्लोककृत् अहं श्लोककृत् अहं श्लोककृत् । अहमस्मि  
प्रथमजा कृताऽस्य पूर्वं देवेभ्यो अमृतस्य नाऽभायि ।

"This is the symphony of Brahman that He is singing: 'Ah! I am the enjoyed and the enjoyer; I am the poet-author of the whole universe; I am elder to the world, I am earlier than the very gods, I am the hub of Immortality.'"

#### HOW DOES ONE REALIZE GOD?

*Disciple:* Mother, how does one realize God? Worship, japa, meditation—do these help one?

*Holy Mother:* None of these can help.

*Disciple:* Then how does one get the vision of God?

*Holy Mother:* It is only through His grace. But one must practise meditation and japa. That removes impurities of mind. One must practise spiritual disciplines such as worship and so forth. As one gets the fragrance of a flower by handling it, or as one gets the smell of sandalwood by rubbing it against a stone, in the same way one gets spiritual awakening by constantly thinking of God. But you can realize Him right now, if you become desireless."

## LIFE OF SRI RAMANUJA

By SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

Translated from original Bengali

(continued from the previous issue)

### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

#### INITIATION

About six months before this mishap Ramanuja had to undergo another severe mental agony. Kantimati the devoted wife and the doting mother had taken refuge at the feet of her husband severing the cords of affection for her son. Rakshakamba, wife of Ramanuja was now the house-wife. She was extremely beautiful to look at. Though she was naturally devoted to her husband, she had greater devotion to the observances of external customs, physical purity, and elegance. Her self-interest untouched, she would take care to please her husband as far as possible by service and attendance.

Rakshakamba was not so very happy at heart with the complete callousness of Ramanuja towards his household duties, since his return from Srirangam. But she would try hard to keep her inner-most feelings a secret. Though anger would be flaming in her heart, she would not give any expression to it.

Most of his time Ramanuja would be with Kanchipurna; his face always pale, his mind unhappy. Seeing his plight Kanchipurna once told him consolingly, "My child, be not afflicted in mind. Be devoted to Sri Varadaraja. Go on serving as you have been doing in the shape of fetching water for His worship. Through His grace great good will follow. The work of Alavandar was over; so he at-

tained eternal peace at the lotus feet of Sri Vishnu. Now be up and doing to fulfil those works you undertook before him". At this Ramanuja said, "You please make me your disciple. Allow me to take rest in the shadow of your feet". So saying he prostrated himself to the full length on the ground. Kanchipurna picked him up and said, "Don't you be so restless. You are a Brahmana. I am a Sudra. A Sudra has no right to initiate a Brahmana. You don't prostrate before me in future like this. The blessed Narayana will before long send the Guru for you. Don't you feel concerned for that". After he had said so, Kanchipurna proceeded towards the temple.

Ramanuja thought within himself: "He is not bestowing his grace upon me thinking that I am unfit. However, I shall purify my soul taking the leavings of his meals. What is caste or sect to him who communes with Sri Varadaraja day and night? A glance of his and a Pariah can be transformed into one greater than a Brahmana." So thinking he called on Kanchipurna in the evening and after much importunities persuaded him to take the noon-meals the next day at his house. Kanchipurna accepted the invitation and said, "Tomorrow shall I sunder the veil of *rajas* and *tamas* by taking food from a great devotee like you. Ah me! My great good luck!"

Returning home, Ramanuja asked his

wife to cook nice things the next morning. He had invited Mahatma Kanchipurna. After getting up very early in the morning Rakshakamba finished her bath and began cooking. Before the sun was quite up Rakshakamba finished cooking rice and various curries. Ramanuja was very pleased to see this, and set out towards the Ashrama of Kanchipurna.

What happened on the other hand, Kanchipurna, the servant of Varadaraja, coming to know of the intentions of Ramanuja's mind, reached his home by another way and said, addressing Rakshakamba "Mother, I am to go to the temple very quickly. So please give me, your son, whatever you have cooked by this time. I can't tarry a moment. Where is your husband?". "Mahatma, he has just gone in search of you alone. He will return now; please wait a little," said Rakshakamba on hearing him. Kanchipurna said, "No mother, I can't wait a moment. I can't neglect the service of the Lord in order to fill my stomach". Hearing this Rakshakamba arranged a seat and drinking water without any word lest the guest should go away unserved; and then by serving item after item from what she had already cooked, fed him with great care. After he had finished his meals Kanchipurna himself threw away the leaf-plate to a great distance, cleaned the place with cowdung water, took some spices, and after prostrating himself on the ground before Rakshakamba took leave. The housewife gave away the remaining portion of the food to some Sudra, had the cooking vessels cleansed and after cleaning the kitchen started cooking afresh for her husband.

Ramanuja returned home and found that his wife had started cooking afresh after

just taking bath for the second time and that not a particle of what was cooked already was left. He asked in surprise, "Did Sri Kanchipurna come? Why are you cooking again? Where are those things you cooked in the morning?" Rakshakamba replied, "Mahatma Kanchipurna came. I requested him to wait for you; but he did not agree to wait for a moment as he was to go to the temple very soon for the service of the Lord. So, without waiting for you, I served him with all what I had cooked. After his meals were over he himself cleaned the place and I gave away the remaining cooked things to the neighbouring Sudra woman and am cooking for you again after taking ablutions. How can I serve you with the remains of what was served to a Sudra?" Ramanuja was sorely wounded at this. Expressing great annoyance he said, "Ah, you foolish one, you cannot discriminate between what is to be done and what is not to be done. By behaving towards Mahatma Kanchipurna as you would towards a Sudra, you have acted very meanly. I was not lucky to take the *prasad* of that great one. I am really very unfortunate". So saying he beat his head with his palms in despair and sat down at the foot of the tree outside the house.

On the other hand, Kanchipurna while fanning Varadaraja addressed the Deity, "O Lord, what kind of action is this of yours, pray? While I should be left to pass my life in serving you and your devotees, contrariwise, you are making a 'great man' of me! Ramanuja, the incarnation of Lakshmana, the younger brother of Sri Ramachandra, himself prostrates before me to the full length. Eager to take the leavings of mine, he invited

me today to his place. While I should worship you and your devotees incessantly, I myself am going to be made worthy of worship! Permit me to go to Tirupati and serve the Baby-image of Thine". Varadaraja gave His mandate. Kanchipurna went to Tirupati and spent six months there in serving the Baby-Deity. Afterwards, one day Lord Narayana communicated to him, "I am suffering sorely from the extreme heat of Kanchipurna. You go there and fan me". At this Kanchipurna came back to Kanchipurna.

In the meantime, on one oil-bath day when the Sudra servant who was emaciated due to want of food came to smear oil on Ramanuja's body, he was moved with pity to look at the servant. He said to his wife, "You see, if you have any rice left of yesterday, you please give this poor servant. It looks as though he has not taken anything for the last three or four days". The wife replied, "There is no rice left. Wherefrom am I to get rice at this early hour of the morning?" So saying she left for taking bath. Being suspicious of her words Ramanuja went into the kitchen and found that there was a large quantity of cooked rice left. He at once gave the servant all the rice and asked him to smear oil on his body after he had pacified his hunger.

On hearing that Kanchipurna had returned from Tirupati Ramanuja went to see him. He was extremely glad to see his great friend after such a long time. Both of them experienced supreme peace of mind at the sight of each other. After various conversations Ramanuja said to the servant of Varadaraja, "O noble one, a few doubts have been agitating my mind for long. If you will please remove those doubts after asking Varadaraja, I shall

attain peace. Otherwise I will continue to be very miserable. To whom but you shall I tell the tale of my woes?" "I shall apprise the Lord of this", replied Kanchipurna.

When Ramanuja went to Kanchipurna the next day, the latter said, 'My child, last night Sri Varadaraja told about you like this:

“अहमेव परं ब्रह्म जगत्कारणकारणम्।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रयोर्भेदः सिद्ध एव महामते ॥

मोक्षोगयो न्यास एव जनानां मुक्तिमिच्छताम्।

मद्भक्तानां जनानाञ्च नान्तिमस्मृतिरिष्यते ॥

देहावसाने भक्तानां ददामि परमं पदम्।

पूर्वाचार्यं महात्मानं समाश्रय गुणश्रयम्।

इति रामानुजार्याय मयोक्तं वद सत्वरम् ॥”

"1. I am the Absolute Brahman, the cause of Prakriti which is the cause of the universe. 2. O large-minded one, the distinction between Jiva and Isvara is axiomatic. 3 The only liberation for those who seek it is the resignation at the lotus feet of God. 4. The liberation of the devotees of Mine, even though they fail to remember Me at the last moment of their life is sure to take place. 5. As soon as the devotees of Mine give up their body, they attain the supreme object. 6. Take refuge in Mahatma Mahapurna endowed with all virtues! You go very soon to Ramanuja and communicate to him that I have told you all these."

Ramanuja began to dance like a mad man on hearing this. He fell prostrate towards the temple of Varadaraja. The six doubts which had established the sovereignty of peacelessness in his heart were now uprooted altogether. He had not told anything of these doubts to Kanchipurna. This great man was really the voice of Varadaraja. Notwithstanding all remonstrances he lay prostrate at the feet of this Mahatma. And after getting up, without returning home, he straightway set out for Srirangam to have his initiation from Mahapurna.

It so happened that after the disappearance of Alavandar, no one else in the Math at Srirangam could explain the subtle meanings of the Sastras in such an exquisite way. Tiruvaranga was in charge of the Monastery. He was supremely pious and versed in many Sastras; but he had not that dexterity in expounding the Sastras. Most of his time would pass away in the worship of God. All would be captivated at his attitude of extreme servitude to the Lord. Let alone his ordering others to do his biddings, he was ever anxious to obey the biddings of others. His godly behaviour made all very obedient to him. Both married and unmarried devotees used to reside in the Math. The wives of the married ones used to reside outside the Monastery, in the city. Sometimes they would come to the Math to worship the devotees of the Lord. The devotees residing inside the Monastery used to pass the day in the worship of the Lord and in singing His name. Almost a year rolled off in this manner. Afterwards, one day when all the devotees had assembled at his request Tiruvaranga addressed them, "Friends it is one year today since Mahatma Yamunamuni who was our very life had attained the final beatitude. Since his disappearance we have been deprived of the singing of the glories of God in exquisite language and of the expositions of the subtle purports of the holy texts. Though that great one had given over the charge of looking after you to this insignificant servant of his, and so it is to be borne, yet I now realize that it is extremely difficult for one of so meagre strength like me to bear the burden. Perhaps you may remember that before giving up his body Maharshi wanted to see Sri Ramanuja of

Kanchipura and sent Mahapurna there for the same purpose. According to my opinion that great man of pure *Satva*, erudite, beloved of Kanchipurna and chosen by Yamunamuni himself, is alone fit to bear this responsibility. Let any one among us go there and after initiating him with the five purificatory rites bring him here. It is he who will propagate the doctrines of Yamunacharya throughout entire India. Even now I do clearly visualise his taking vows and the slackening of the fingers of the Muni at the place of his Samadhi."

On hearing what all he said, the devotees assembled there approved of his proposals unanimously and sent Mahapurna to initiate Ramanuja and bring him there with these instructions, "If you find him reluctant to forgo the association of Kanchipurna, then do not press him in any way to come here. By the will of Sri Ranganatha he has to come here sooner or later. For this reason you may have to remain there for about a year. We so wish you take your wife along with you. See that he may not know that we are sending you there to bring him here."

So instructed, Mahapurna accompanied by his wife started for Kanchipura. After travelling for four days they reached the city of Madhurantakam. In front of the Vishnu temple of that city there is a very big lake. When he and his wife were taking rest on the banks of that lake, Mahapurna found that the very Ramanuja for whom he was going to Kanchipura leaving the Math, and to see whom his heart grew eager, came and worshipped his feet. He was beside himself with joy to suddenly find the dear one so near him. Presently he embraced Ramanuja very

warmly and said, "My child, I did not expect that I could see you here. All is but the grace of Sriman Narayana. May I know why you are come here?" Ramanuja said, "Indeed it is the supreme grace of Narayana. It is remembering your lotus feet alone that I left Kanchipura. Varadaraja Himself selected you as my Guru. You do kindly purify me by giving me initiation without any delay." Mahapurna replied, "Let us go to Kanchipura and perform the sacred ceremony in front of Varadaraja." "Noble one, even a moment's delay I am unable to bear," submitted Ramanuja.

स्वपन्तमपि भुञ्जानं गच्छतमपि वर्त्मनि ।

युवानमपि बालंवा स्ववशे कुरुते विधिः ॥

"You know death has no sense of time and untime. A man may be asleep, at meals, moving on the road; he may be young or a boy, death brings him under its control under all circumstances."

With what expectations I went to see Yamunamuni! But alas! the blighted Ordainer did not fulfil my hopes. How to have faith in Him, on this occasion too? So do you kindly grant me refuge at the shade of your feet even at this moment."

Mahapurna was supremely glad to hear these sweet utterances full with the spirit of renunciation. He lighted a sacrificial

fire under the spreading, flowering and delightfully fragrant *vakula* tree on the bank of the lake in front of Lord Vishnu, and placed two *metallic seals* within that. One of them was inscribed with the sign of the discus and the other with that of the conch. When the two *seals* got heated, Mahapurna while uttering the Vedic Mantras *impressed* Ramanuja's right hand with the insignia of the disc and the left one with that of the conch. And at last after meditating upon the feet of Alavandar he uttered the Vaishnava Mantra in his right ear. Thus initiated, after worshipping Lord Vishnu, Ramanuja, his Guru and the wife of the Guru all proceeded to Kanchipura.

When Kanchipurna heard of the advent of Mahapurna he went to see him. There was great joy in the assembly of the devotees. At the request of Ramanuja, Mahapurna impressed Ramanuja's wife Rakshakamba too with the insignia of the conch and the discus. Thus both the husband and the wife after being initiated by him took the leavings of Mahapurna's meals. Ramanuja gave half the portion of his dwelling place as the residence of Mahapurna. He continued himself to bear all his expenses and being seated at his feet every day, began to study the Tamil Prabandhas.

#### WHO IS FIT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

"And as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, I shall follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, The fox have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God. And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Something very refreshing and striking happened in the day to day routine life of the nation on Nov. 5, '50. At a time when 'liberation forces' of China had entered Tibet, UN forces were having reversals in North Korea, trouble was brewing in Nepal, and so his presence was most urgently needed in Delhi, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru flew away from the capital to have a joy-stroll in a *swapna-desh*. He went to Bombay solely to attend the silver jubilee celebrations of the Balkan-Ji-Bari.

Balkan-Ji-Bari, which may more rightly be called a movement than an organisation, was started 25 years ago with the object of bringing cheer and joy into the life of children, its motto being, 'Education and Entertainment.' The object behind the organisation of this movement as explained by Sri B. G. Kher, the Prime Minister of Bombay, is not only to bring much needed happiness into the life of the children but also to make them realize that they are all members of a great brotherhood which transcends all differences of caste, creed, colour, and social and economic status.

Sri B. G. Kher further spotlighted, "All those who have been associated with the study of the child's mind realize that the child in its earliest years, has no racial, social or religious prejudices. In fact it does not even distinguish between animate and inanimate objects. It is usually the uncongenial atmosphere and environment of the adult life which gradually imposes these unnatural prejudices on its mind and spoils the refreshing innocence and humaneness of its outlook." Sri Kher described the organisation as a contribution to the building up of a united and peaceful nation in 'this great land of ours.'

Amidst the encircling gloom of this world our light and hope are firstly in those who are unspoiled among us—the child and the saint, and next in those among us who though not unspoiled, resolutely keep growing. We are mostly frozen human matter incapable of growth and therefore we cannot outgrow our miseries and problems and are simply smashed by them. It is astonishing to observe with what diligence, and consistency we work out our own ruination in life by gradually freezing ourselves and freezing everything around us. We the denizens of the universe go self-condemned to

become the eternal prisoners of the pigeon-holes of limitations of our own making, where we systematically increase our number by faithful obedience to our animal impulses. Life becomes drab, dry choking, stinking.

Most of the problems around us are the outcome of the frozenness in the human. The solutions of the problems, therefore, can come only from having the know-how of keeping growing perpetually which is one of the secrets of Practical Vedanta.

One of the most important responsibility of any society in any age—and the responsibility is greater in this our gloomy age—is to keep the track of transient childhood of the babies open to the perpetual childhood of the saint. This one fundamental duty one in a million hardly knows how to carry out. To keep off our evil influence from contaminating and murdering the purity of the child is a tremendous task.

Vedanta believes man to be perfect and divine by birth-right. But divinity and perfection being potential, man has to reveal them by properly applying himself in life. But unfortunately in our colossal ignorance instead of helping the child to gradually reveal his innate divinity in all its magnificence, we strangle him day after day and are never satisfied until he is dead to be reborn. Our education has more often than not been simply a killing apparatus.

Unless you yourself know the secret of growing everyday in your life you simply cannot help your child to grow to his given spiritual destiny. An overwhelming majority of the parents have no knowledge about the fact that the child is the object of the greatest devotion and most wakeful service. They mostly take them as biological accidents on the path of life. They do not often have the slightest awareness—they themselves being already frozen stuff—of the fact that it is by carefully helping the child to gradually manifest its inherent divinity, they also can simultaneously help themselves on the path of spirituality.

It is a great good thing that the Prime Minister of India appears to have an awareness of this fact. His devotion to the child is now an attested fact. He is already the legendary 'Uncle Nehru' among the children of the world. It is worth observing

how imperceptibly Nehru has been forging a tender relation across the barbed frontiers of the world. Devotion to the child is one of the ways by which Nehru keeps growing. The top-priority which Sri Nehru has given to the Balkan-Ji-Bari celebrations by going to Bombay solely to attend childrens' functions testifies the creativity of Nehru's leadership, which though naturally not fault-free, nonetheless keeps growing.

The reports of the celebrations which appeared in the Press made a fascinating study, like a rare silver lining over the thick dark clouds of obstinate gloom. Some twenty thousand children appeared in the Azad Maidan for the celebrations. Sri Nehru stood with the crowd on the road side as the caravan of children passed in miles long procession, some children piping their tiny pipes and bugles. The childrens' caravan took some two hours before it reached the Maidan. Chubby faced toddlers, too young to keep pace with their grown ups were hoisted over and packed into a hundred trucks and buses. The motorised column formed the advanced guard of those that came on tricycle and on foot.

Just visualise this wonderful pageant! It was India indeed. Among the children some were dressed as generals of the army, and marshalls of the airforce. Some were just soldiers. They carried toy guns and unsheathed swords. There were others who turned out as maharajas and court people of yore. There were yet some in the sandy garb of sadhus and sannyasins.

When the children had assembled in the Azad Maidan Nehru appeared at the spot half an hour before the scheduled time baffling all the routine reception plans. As he came all on a sudden there surged up waves of joy in this ocean of children. With an agile acrobatic skill Nehru climbed up a 20 feet ladder, and the children were so happy. This is a precious experience in a nation's day to day life.

As could be expected Nehru spoke many beautiful, big and precious things most of which must have gone above the heads of a vast number of children. But it was not possibly all waste of breath, for Nehru perhaps did not speak those words so much to the children as to their parents, who dressed and sent their children to attend the celebrations.

One thing which must have struck the children

highly 'curiouser' and fictitious was the incredible information that even Mahatma Gandhi was some day a child like them! 'Absurd!' must have cried the children in an inaudible chorus. One day Nehru is going to receive a 'strongly-worded' letter from some Alice for such hopeless propaganda. He should not imagine that all his excesses will be long tolerated by children simply because he loved them or because he was the Prime Minister of India who was in the habit of 'intervening' in the course of debates in the Parliament.

Kids must have glowed in joy when Nehru spoke things more sensible: "India is indescribably a beautiful country. I would like to take you on the wings of imagination through the lovely valleys of Kashmir, the snow-clad tops of the Himalayas and of the Punjab, Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Malabar, Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.....The whole India is theirs."

It was indeed so unreally lovely to be told: "Each one of you should think that you are a little piece of your motherland just like the great mountains, rivers and the plains." Children were indeed all for Nehru when he said, they must all "set up more great monuments in India." They always actually try to do so wherever they find a heap of sands brought for some construction. So far so good.

There were many words which must have sounded very empty, strange and tyrannizing to the eager ears of the children. Even the Caterpillar of Alice's wonderland never spoke so impossibly as: "The life of a man is the unfolding of his individual history.....Or, Children should not identify themselves with any particular province or area they are born in. ....Or, Our ancient culture never taught us to differentiate between man and man. ....Or, Remember the pursuit of personal gain is not a worthwhile ambition. etc."

What did this all mean for the children? Good, sad, careworn Prime Minister could not forget his own problems and miseries and so thousands of children had to suffer perhaps for the first time in their lives on earth the burns of the words like 'particular province,' 'differentiate,' 'personal gain' etc. The evil that those words represent must have cast its depth-charge in a forging fashion over the innocent child-mind as soon as the Prime Minister released those words. Now it must be working on the sunny buoyancy of the child-spirit

like a haunting creeping ugly dream. Perhaps a very potent seed of misery was unconsciously put for the first time in soil of nascent human stuff. To know the sin is to sin. It is often in this fashion that we with the best thinkable motive press hard the iron mould of the making of our sin over the immaculate child-stuff and lo! soon they emerge to our great chagrin, faithfully in our own image. Who would be more sorry for it than Nehru himself if indeed he were aware of it? But all the same the work was done. And in the fullness of time the harvest will be ready, rains or no rains.

One should not enter a *swapna-desh* without the natural collyrium of *swapna*, dream, in his eyes. And we must know that there is a world of difference between a 'swapna' and a nightmare. It is so, so difficult a task to become a fit companion of Alice for a travel along with her in her wonderland. It is more difficult a task to serve the child correctly.

There was a real red point in Nehru's speech which we fell should be discussed here. He said to the children: 'We should have one national language and one national costume.' There is nothing wrong, in fact we have taken national decision, in having a national language, though we are not quite sure how it will be realistic and hygienically correct to have 'one national costume.' The point is not even in the debatability of these words. What seems to us to be a wrong thing is this tendency towards regimenting tender souls in a totalitarian grip, this sweeping indoctrination, without even making a pretence to ascertain the view of the child upon whom we hasten to ride

the choice of our fancy. We are not quite sure what right has any body to say rationally or nationally what dress a child should wear. The mother of the child will probably know far better than anybody else in the world what dress her darling would like and require.

How hedious and horrible it would have been the sight if all the 20,000 children appeared in the Azad Maidan in *achkan* and *chauridar*? How noble and assuring was this sight of the wonderful variety of attires the children appeared in. You simply cannot build a nation of character without respecting variety. It is only by respecting variety you can forge the inner unity even there where it seems to be lacking. Else you will sow the seeds of war which may come to take place after a century, you have left this world. One who wishes to have music out of a vina should not screw up the strings beyond a limit.

Those who handle children's movements cannot be too cautious of not only their words but even of their thoughts. We are full of poison and sin. We should take the utmost care to avoid conditioning the entire sky of a child's future with the same poison we suffer from, and that too in the name of 'education and entertainment.' We should see that we do not cripple the spontaneous growth of our children by locking them up in the well-painted prison-houses of our fears, fads and fancies. Children should be very cautiously helped to grow according to their inner law of growth gradually manifesting their potential divinity. They should not be forced into shapes according to the outer law of our own fancied necessity. 15-11-50

#### G. B. S. PASSES AWAY

George Bernard Shaw passed away on Nov. 2, 1950, at his homely home in Ayot St. Lawrence, Hertfordshire, England. It is said that he passed away blissfully. We should like to say that he passed away successfully.

No man but Shaw ever kept calling men fools for over half a century and yet kept his teeth in tact. He called them fools and men laughed. When he won't call men fools any more, they wept. Men wept on his death all over the world. Men wept in Washington And men wept in Moscow. Just imagine what actually happened! Men wept for Shaw everywhere in the world.

Why? Not only because Shaw was the citizen of the future metropolis of man which will be named Wascow, but also for the reason that men everywhere know intuitively that, here was a man who though perhaps always not as wise as he bullied men to believe, yet was all the time a man who tried to love men well.

Nothing so revealing and significant has happened in this dark world after the Mahatma's passing away. This is Shaw's last kick. He proved himself to be a point of twinkling non-darkness. 15-11-50

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

OUT OF MY LATER YEARS BY ALBERT EINSTEIN—A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS — Pp. 282. (PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY, NEW YORK)—\$ 4.75.

All these essays, some of them too short to be called such, were written by the eminent scientist after 1935. The purely scientific part of the book forms less than a third of its contents. The publisher's claim that "in several chapters the author explains his theory of relativity in such simple terms as to be understood by every intelligent person" is likely to make many readers diffident about their claims to intelligence. But the technically scientific part of the book is far from being its only valuable part. There are so many windows that open out from the savant's study that there is little risk of frowst. "I live in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity" he declares. But "solitude" is only his name for remoteness from the ephemeral and collective follies and passions of our period. He is too deeply concerned for humanity to shut out from his thoughts the troubles of the world of our own day or to rest as the specialist-recluse without seeking the nodal point from which have branched out all man's efforts through the ages. "One can have the clearest and most complete knowledge of what is, and yet not be able to deduct from that what should be the goal of our human aspirations..... Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind". "The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility". There have not been too many scientists who, like Einstein, have risen above the dialect of their region into speech of universal import. Comprehension, in the literal sense of "the grasping together" of all modes of experience is the purpose of his quest. Therefore, he has light to shed on the problems of education, on a world-state, on the Jewish problem—some of the topics touched on by him in this many-faceted book. To acquire the "encyclopaedic education" that H. G. Wells pleaded for is not merely to roam in all directions but to attempt the central height. The range of this book, along both axes, is great.

K. S.

THE GOSPEL OF HERMES—EDITED BY DUNCAN GREENLEES—THE WORLD GOSPEL SERIES—THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE, ADYAR, MADRAS. Pp. 1xiii+263—. Rs. 4/8/-

Many painstaking enterprises remain mere monuments of well-meant industry. This edition of the Gospel of Hermes carries a load of exegetical aid, but never so as to smother the core of the Gospel—which indeed claims to be the central truth and open secret of the universe. "If you can understand God, then you can understand the Beautiful and the Good, which are the radiance emanated by God.....You shall see it only when you have nothing to say about It, for the Gnosis of It is a divine silence and a suspension of all the senses... This, my son, is not taught, but it is recalled to memory by God when He so wills." These passages are enough to indicate the drift of the Gospel and Mr. Greenlees never allows himself or his readers to lose sight of it. All the editorial labours move along with this drift. The text is discussed, the manner of its collation is explained, the technical terms are elucidated and a digest (in the form of a catechism and a synopsis,) that closely follows the text is provided. There are notes at various levels; at the conclusion of each article; as an appendix, chapter-wise; as parallels from various other scriptures serially arranged. The index and the bibliography are thoroughly compiled. The editor has combined in himself the best of Mary and of Martha. He has laboured to the end that the one universal language of the Spirit may not be obscured by the dialectal variations of period and country and that the voice of Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus may be distinctly audible, though his figure will ever remain remote and legendary. K. S.

VEDANTA THROUGH STORIES BY SWAMI SAMBUDDHANANDA PAGES 178; PRICE Rs. 2-4-0 PUBLISHED BY RAMA-KRISHNA ASHRAMA, KHAR, BOMBAY 21.

Aldous Huxley once wrote, "He who sees all beings in the Self, and the self in all beings, hates none." The man who brings this constantly forgotten message out of the past, and who can show others how to see all beings in the Self, and the

Self in all beings, is performing an important service to society."

What we require most to day in this demented world of ours is the healing, unifying and sustaining wisdom. And this wisdom is the forte of Vedanta. So Vedanta is the one study, which is of highest importance today, as any day in any time of history. The services of those who strive to bring home Vedanta to the generality of mankind in the homeliest way possible, cannot therefore be over-estimated. We have many learned and confounding treatises on Vedanta but very few homely works. Here exactly is the importance of the work under review.

Swami Sambuddhamanda, the author of the "Message of the Himalayas", and "Vedic Prayers" again presents in this small book some of the Vedantic thoughts in a homely language and style. As the Dr. Syamaprasad Mookhorjee rightly remarks in the forward 'one thing which stood in the way of.....widespread dissemination of Vedanta knowledge is the lack of a popular, yet authentic version which can be understood

without difficulty by ordinary men and women. *Vedanta Through Stories* is such a popular version.'

The author after giving a short account of concept of Self in Vedanta by contrasting it with the systems of Indian Philosophy and of the practical means of Self-realization sums up the introduction with an analysis and the plan of the book. The book is divided into three sections namely, 1. Self-analysis including two sections, 'Ways of the world' and 'Ways of the Self-study.' 2. Self-unfoldment and 3. Self-fulfilment. The three items are illustrated in homely style by short stories, anecdotes and quotations. The author has chosen these stories mainly from the Upanishads, Mahabharata and from the lives and teachings of saints like Buddha, Shankara, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda. Specially the quotations from the Upanishads are excellent.

You will not be able to go through the book without learning, enjoying, and improving. We hope the book with its excellent printing and attractive get-up will serve the purpose of popularising the Vedantic tenets G. S. S.

#### PERIODICALS

### DO WE WANT PEACE?

GANDHI MEMORIAL PEACE NUMBER-VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY, EDITED BY KSHITISH ROY, SANTINIKETAN, WEST BENGAL, PP- 360, PRICE-Rs.10/-

From the background of the historic friendship of the two mighty men of the twentieth century--the 'Great Sentinel' and the 'Mahatma' the attractive Gandhi Memorial Peace Number of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* comes as the efflorescence of the feeling of reverence in the heart of the noble institution for the great man. Behind this volume lie high emotions and exalted remembrances. In order to appraise correctly the true significance of this impressive publication one has to view it in this tender perspective.

<sup>6</sup> The poet-seer, Rabindranath Tagore has given concrete expression to his deep anxiety for an all round regeneration of humanity in India and elsewhere in the shape of Santiniketan. Those who are conversant with the development of this far-famed institution from its small beginning, know that it is not so much an ivory tower for a

poet's unreal dream, as it is the life's laboratory of a master-builder. Rabindranath gave to the Visva-Bharati the best part of his life, his heart's blood. So it was in the fitness of things that the last World Pacifists Conference took place here and that this Number is also associated with that Conference. The great poet could not have thought of a better person than the Mahatma to transfer the charge of his cherished Institution before he was about to leave this world. A superficial observer might notice great disparity between the paragon patron of fine arts and music, the prince of aesthetics, the worshipper of the Beautiful, and the austere 'naked fakir', who was not known as a connoisseur of beauty, and who was by profession, considered by the Government, an agitator and a revolutionary. But under the mask of the great political agitator and the renowned technician of satyagraha was the true Gandhi, the votary of Ahimsa and Peace. At core the Mahatma was Santi, lived and loved Santi and a seer like Tagore, could see that committed to

him, Santiniketan is safe to maintain and increase the values for which it was started.

Rabindranath made him the guardian of his 'Home of Peace' and thinking people all over the world not only spontaneously associate his name with Peace but also esteem him to be one of the most helpful pioneers in the path of peace. To get across this anomaly one must have an apprehension of the inner manhood of the Mahatma.

Instead of talking theoretically about peace, most of the writers in this volume, who belong to different parts of the globe, therefore concern themselves in studying the different aspects of the Mahatma's life to show how throughout his whole life Gandhiji was fundamentally a heroic worker for that 'Peace,' which to quote Gandhiji's own words, 'you find embedded in the human breast which is exposed to the arrows of the whole world, but which is protected from all harm by the power of the Almighty God.' In the carefully selected pieces of Gandhiji's writings one is made aware of the content of peace of Gandhiji's comprehension. In his four-page article Rabindranath masterfully brings out 'Gandhi The Man,' who 'will always be remembered as one who made his life a lesson for all ages to come.'

The contents of the book next falls into six groups of articles of general affinity, each group being marked out by such a song or a poem as used to be loved by Gandhiji.

The first group contains six articles. J. B. Kripalani in his thoughtful article, 'Unity—Gandhiji's Conception,' shows how Gandhiji strove to work out a unity in his life to show that life was a synthetic whole. This conception cannot be claimed to be new. But Gandhiji's method of application is a tremendous lesson for humanity. In 'Gandhi and Gandhism' Nirmalkumar Bose points out that detachment was the one secret of the greatness of Gandhiji's life; it was also the philosophical foundation of true democracy. 'Gandhian Symbols' by Bharatan Kumarappa is a very interesting article. Those things associated with Gandhiji, which are called Gandhian fads by the sceptics, are proved by the writer to be symbols of high significance and spiritual import. Though laboured at places (such as when the writer sets out to prove that in the ultimate consideration the cow is more conducive to world

peace than the poor buffalo, for which Gandhiji had little sympathy) the article on the whole succeeds in giving an insight into the psychology and philosophy of Gandhiji, a sympathetic understanding of which will reveal to what an inspiring extent Gandhiji identified himself with the sorrows and aspirations of the famished millions, and how supremely he applied himself in working out their problems. A sustained burning sense of high idealism, a profound sympathy for the suffering millions, an intense sense of practicality and a superb original mind drove Gandhiji to programme his work and model the instrument of work in such a way that it became extremely difficult for the ordinary indifferent impatient people to understand him adequately. The author of this article has attempted to show how all the symbols of Gandhiji, namely, spinning wheel, cow, goat, loin cloth, watch and stick are inextricably connected with his search for peace. 'To be sure, all will not be convinced but there is enough to learn here. In 'What the West Owes to Gandhiji' E. L. Allen shows how powerful are the creative thought-waves that Gandhiji's life has released. In restoring the nearly lost but worthy values and in finding out a third path for the hopeless political tangles of the world, Gandhiji stands out as a guide of humanity, whom the world can ignore only at its utter peril. But the illogic of history seems to be as defiant as ever. Roy Walker stresses the supreme importance of Gandhiji's message in this bewildered world of our times when 'atomic and bacteriological warfare threaten all with annihilation.'

The next four articles by Sophia Wadia, Satis Chandra Mukerji, Ralf Richard Keithahn and S. K. George, which are devoted to considering Gandhiji in relation to religion cumulatively bring him out as a practical Vedantin *par excellence*. To the extent Gandhiji practised *Vedanta*, and he practised it to a profound extent, 'Gandhiji's religion' was 'basic' and 'revolutionary.'

The next group consists of five articles. In her powerfully written article, 'Non-violence and the modern world' Ethel Mannin makes out the plea that there is no escape for humanity except through acting in obedience to the law of love, truth and non-violence. 'Satyagraha and its Origin in South Africa' by H. S. L. Polak is a useful documentary

piece. 'Satyagraha against war' by K. G. Mashruwala and 'Defence Through Ahimsa' by Satish-chandra Das Gupta (in the fifth group) are two highly interesting but equally controversial and unconvincing articles. In their excessively theoretical enthusiasm both the writers ignore facts of reality and an utter confusion results. They do not seem to remember that an independence movement and war are two different things. It is good to remember, Gandhiji himself had to acknowledge the limitations of *ahimsa*. Though Gandhiji had advised Czechoslovakia to defend her freedom against German invaders by non-violence in 1939, and Britain in 1940, it is common knowledge that Gandhiji ultimately endorsed India's armed resistance against the invaders in Kashmir. Logic need not defeat commonsense, neither need non-violence in its self-righteousness ignore the collective frailties of humanity. As far as non violence goes it is supreme. Let us work for superior results by all means. But let us not appear to be infallible even when we are ineffectual. In 'Master Christian' Maudo Royden Shaw says that the best Christian in the world was a Hindu, and he was Mahatma Gandhi. In his rather outspoken article 'Mahatma Gandhi and Christian Pacifism' Reginald Reynolds shows out the anomalies of Christian Pacifism and also how Gandhiji 'being an exponent of the Christian principles' has done much to save them at last from the 'ethical fog' in which they were caught up. Peace is no where but in God. The world seeks it everywhere except in God. Therefore peace it has not. In a powerful passage of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* it is said, 'Only when men will roll up the sky through like a skin, will there be an end of misery for them without realizing God.' Gandhiji always remembered this truth. And this is why he subordinated all the multifarious activities of his life to prayer. Specially in his later days Gandhiji made all the activities of his days go like spokes around the hub of his prayers. His post-prayer speeches have an edifying value like the prayer speeches of Tagore published in the book named *Santiniketan*. This aspect of Gandhiji's life is emphasised in the article 'Peace through Prayer' by Priyaranjan Sen. In 'Some Pivotal Principle for Peace' Gurdial Mallik makes out the thesis that man being essentially good, only those factors which come to obstruct

the manifestation of goodness must be the stronghold of anti-peace. A collective effort from all directions to deal with these obstructions is the basic work for peace. In the short article 'The Cow's True Devotee' by Mira Behn we get a glimpse of the tenderness of Gandhiji's heart. Gandhiji became the devotee of the Cow because she was the wielder of welfare to the millions of his poor country. It is however amusing to see here again how the Mahatma has little favour for the buffalo on which millions depend for the poor milk supply. Anyone advocating peace, most of all Gandhiji, could not have desisted from laying stress on education of the proper type. Margaret Barr thinks in her article, 'Gandhiji and Peace through Education' that the 'Basic Education' as initiated by Gandhiji was the right type of education for peace. Swami Vivekananda laid great stress on two points for the regeneration of India—uplift of women and the awakening of the masses. Gandhiji worked for these two schemes all through his tremendously active public life. Rajakumari Amrit Kaur's article 'Gandhiji and Women' shows how the Mahatma helped women to help themselves, in finding their way to higher fulfilment. Peace could not come in a world where women could not play their own part correctly. 'On Earth as in Heaven' by J. C. Kumarappa will startle many. He shows how few of us could ever plead 'not guilty,' our life being steeped in untruth and violence. He also presents the remedy in the light of Gandhiji's life and teachings. One may profit considerably by reflecting on the point of view presented here. Narayan Agarwal writing on an important theme, 'Gandhiji and Decentralization of Political Power' criticises with cogent arguments the present Constitution of India and shows where it strays away from the 'Gandhian Constitution for Free India.' According to Gandhiji's view, centralization of power can never be conducive to peace. In his small incisive piece Aldous Huxley writes on the same theme. He says, 'Gandhi succeeded in ridding his country of the alien tiger; but he failed in his attempt to modify the essentially tigerish nature of nationalism as such. ...Jefferson's plan was not accepted nor was Gandhi's. So much the worse for us and for our descendants.' Horace Alexander writes on 'Finland and Non-violence'.

Arthur Moore traces the growth of the World Government Movement, in which he himself had a part to play. This article has little reference to Gandhiji except that Gandhiji accepted World Government as an ideal to be reached and that the movement is solely devoted to the high purpose of peace. In his thought-provoking article 'Politics and Morality' G. Stephen Spinks presents the thesis that morality to be progressive must work in the political context because politics now invades every part of our life. He also thinks out the prospective role of Gandhiji's progressive morality in the future of humanity.

The next group consists of five articles. In his well-written article 'Gandhiji and Indian Revolution' Humayun Kabir shows how step by step Gandhiji prepared the nation for the great revolution he conducted. In this unique revolution of history Gandhiji learned and taught while he lead. The famous Indologist Louis Renou writing on 'Gandhi and Indian Civilization' shows how Gandhiji was a true scion of the soil of Indian civilization. Gandhiji is a natural efflorescence on the background of Indian tradition and history. There is nothing exotic or sporadic about him. In the context of the psychological history of different nations it does not seem probable that any other country could have produced such a unique man as Gandhiji. John Haynes Holmes writes on 'Mahatma Gandhi the Greatest man since Jesus Christ!' Serious readers might pass over this hyperbolic claim as an expression of the author's boundless admiration for the Mahatma. There are people in our own country who consider Gandhiji as the greatest man ever born; they will not certainly agree with Holmes in assigning a place to Gandhiji equal to or next to Jesus Christ; for clearly, for them, Gandhiji's ministry extended over a far longer period of life and affected a far larger number of contemporaries than that of Christ. Though we are thankful for the great tribute paid to our lamented leader by a distinguished occidental (for there had been occidentals who have not recognized anything great or good in India's past) we would choose to leave great men to shine for themselves, without measuring and pigeon-holing them and fixing their rank. Superlatives are either self-stultifying or insincerely hollow. Millions of Indians know and believe that India and the world were not barren of great

men of the magnitude of Gandhiji or greater than him in the past 2000 years. Only the passage of time has tended to obscure their real stature from the immediate-seeing eyes of men. There are also people who believe that Gandhiji, although brought the light of national freedom, is also responsible for bringing the darkness which followed the vivisection of India by agreeing to that course to end foreign rule.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan tries to measure the prospective impact of Gandhiji's life on the generations to come.

The last section of the four articles are full of exalted reminiscences of the relations of Gandhiji with Tagore and the Santiniketan. Jawaharlal Nehru and Krishna Kripalani present the Mahatma and the Great Sentinel facing each other in their inner unity but outward disparity. The friendship of these two great men of our times is indeed a fascinating study. 'The Santiniketan Pilgrimage' by Pyarelal is a very useful document. Here we meet Gandhiji as a unique man of experience who could throw illuminating light on any problem that confronts an institution and its men. There is much to learn in this article. Nirmalchandra Chattopadhyaya's 'Mahatma Gandhi at Rabindranath's Santiniketan,' beautifully brings out the inner relations of Tagore and Gandhiji and the latter's tender and abiding concern for the institution the former founded.

In page 212, 2nd para, 'Even those who sought to defy or repudiate him could deny the power of his personality.' we hope, should be read, 'Even those who sought to defy or repudiate him could not deny the power of his personality.' In page 256, first line, 'sole' should be read as 'soul.'

Perhaps one article on Gandhiji's life-long efforts for effecting Hindu-Muslim unity in India, could well find a place in such a volume.

Tributes are due to the Editor for the excellent work he has done.

There are five paintings of Gandhiji by such celebrated artists as Nandalal Bose, Mukul Dey, Ju Peon, and R. N. Chakravorty. Nandalal's linocut named 'The March to Dandi, 1930' in the *frontispiece* is a work of rare genius which will remain unexcelled in power, fire and simplicity in the domain of that species of art. There are four such rare photographs of Gandhiji at which you

will like to look on lingeringly, such inexhaustible is the depth of these photos. At least one painting of Gandhiji by Sri Abanindranath should have added lustre to the volume.

In conclusion we could not do better than to fully endorse the good words of Rajendra Prasad in the foreword: 'It is a publication worthy of the name it commemorates and the institution it represents, and will be a valuable contribution to the cause of peace in this generation.'

Rabindranath, we fancy, would have liked to handle the copy.

SWATANTRA ANNUAL 1950, EDITED BY  
KHASHA SUBBA RAU, 160, LLOYDS ROAD,  
ROYAPETTAH, MADRAS-14.

They always remember it or not, to day, not a little of the world's future depends upon the journalists. They determine to a considerable extent the shape of things to come. They also name the things that should go. They mould, mend, inspire and tend. They really matter. They educate. They also spoil. They bring power to saddle patterns and they pattern the power that be. Such is the importance of journalism in the modern civilization.

Much of our future depends therefore on how the journalists rise to shoulder their responsibility. It is a great good fortune of India that in this most delicate times of her history she can count quite a few conscientious, creative, vigorous, intrepid and wakeful journalists. When the clouds of confusion tend to cover up the national mind, they release their words which bring back seeing power. When the power that be falters, fumbles, or follies, they guide, counsel and chastise. They are the peoples' conscience, eyes and the voice.

Undoubtedly Sri Khasha Subba Rau is one countable journalist of India today. Very few journals of India ever rose to such deserving and useful preeminence in such a short time like

*Swatantra*. And this preeminence, it must be remembered, is no gift of any patron. The only prop of *Swatantra* is its unsheathed merit. Its merit is its efficient honesty. Its honesty is its power. And its power is a decentralized one. The culture of the editorship of Sri Khasha has been responsible for bringing out talents from their detached grooves and making them flow in the field of journalism as the currents of character, education, and social usefulness. It is not possible to read *Swatantra* without learning and profiting. And it is no small gratification to note the excellence with which the merit of the paper is sustained week after week in the wheel of the year.

Naturally therefore readers of *Swatantra* look for its annual number with a view to mark a new fulfilment in its career. 1950 annual brings us a considerable fare from familiar minds.

'Not much worse than reality' is Vigneshwara's 'Lunar Episode.' Now that Vigneshwara seems to be turning towards the moon who is the man who will doubt his future ministrations! But when unwisdom is determined in this bad world of our's, what better thing can we denizens do than to resolve for a fire-walk? In the meantime you may rest assured Vigneshwara is somehow going to air-drop the suggestion as to how you could make the soles of your feet incombustible.

In 100 pages readable matter there are articles on the Balance Sheet of Freedom, Taste, Exasperating Economics, Unfailing Light and the Silent Revolution, From Rome to Jerusalem. There are three short stories. Among the writers are included, James H. Cousins, T. T. Krishnamachari, Pothan Joseph, John Hampson and Manjeri S. Iswaran. Sri Chakrapati Rau is conspicuous by his absence. Readers will surely have grievances against 'working journalism'!

The printing and display are good. The price, Rs. 1-8-0, is moderate.

More people should read *Swatantra*.

#### CORRIGENDUM

*Vedanta Kesari*, September, 1950

In pages 173-174, please read Benzene for 'Benzine', and Hydrogen for 'Oxygen.'

*Vedanta Kesari*, November 1950

Please read 'Mahabalipuram' for 'Mavalipuram' in pages 266, 267, 268, 269. We are sorry for the mistakes.

The birthday of Swami Vivekananda falls on Monday, January 29, 1951

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BANARAS

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service for the year 1949 the fortyninth year of its existence is published. The Home of Service, as it appears from the foreword of the Report began nearly fifty years ago with a small beginning—capital of -/4/- (annas four only) but with public sympathy it has grown to its present status. Its present activities comprise of (1) Indoor Hospitals both for men as well as for women with 115 beds, (2) Outdoor charitable dispensaries with an average daily attendance of 1068.3 patients (3) Two Invalid Homes—one for men and the other for women with 25 and 50 beds respectively. (4) Outdoor relief in the form of money or kinds to the deserving poor people (5) Special charities to the respectable but poor people.

In the year under review, 2,447 patients were treated in its Indoor Hospitals free of all charges as against 2,271 in the previous year and considering that the Institution accommodates roadside patients the death rate 6% compares favourably with that of other Hospitals. In its outdoor dispensaries the total number of patients treated was 3,89,940 as against 3,40,151 in the previous year, of which 1,12,602 were new and 2,77,338 were repeated cases. In the Indoor Hospital the total number of Roadside and Ghatside patients was 83. Of the total number of patients in the Indoor Hospital 1974 were cured, 143 were relieved, 93 discharged otherwise, 125 died and 112 remained in the Hospital at the end of the year.

In the General fund, the receipt for the year under review was Rs. 1,25,619-3-0 and the expenditure Rs. 1,39,986-11-8, the receipt under the Building fund was Rs. 18,125-4-7 and the expenditure Rs. 13,935-4-0; the receipt under N. C. Das Estate was Rs. 615-0-0 and the expenditure was Rs. 642-14-0. Thus the total receipt for the year was Rs. 1,44,389-7-7 and the total expenditure was Rs. 1,54,564-13-8. Thus there was a heavy deficit. So the Home of Service appeal to the public for funds to meet the general expenditure. The Government of India have approved this Institution for the purpose of Section 153 of the Income Tax Act, 1922, by virtue of which intending donors will have their donations of Rs. 250/- and above exempted from the payment of Income Tax.

The immediate needs of the Home are (1) Endowment of the beds which cost Rs. 6,000/- for a bed in the Surgical ward, Rs. 5,000/- for a bed in

the General Ward and Rs. 4,500/- for a bed in the Invalid Home. Donors may avail of the opportunity to perpetuate the memory of their near and dear ones. (2) An Outdoor dispensary which will cost Rs. 60,000/- (3) 2 Septic Surgical wards which will cost nearly Rs. 95,000/- For repairing buildings and roads etc. which will cost Rs. 25,000/-

Though there are 75 beds in the Invalid Homes, the Home of Service has been able to accommodate only 17 for paucity of funds.

The Home of Service expresses its thanks to all its sympathisers and supporters, donors and subscribers who have helped the Institution for so many years and expects that they will continue to lend their sympathy and support for the suffering humanity for all times to come. All contributions however small in the form of cash or kinds may be sent to (1) The General Secretary, The Ramakrishna Math and Mission P. O. Belur Math (Dt. Howrah), West Bengal (2) The Assistant Secretary, The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Laxa, Banaras

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, PURI, ORISSA

Hon'ble H. K. Mahatab, Minister of Supply and Industry, Govt. of India accompanied by Hon'ble N. K. Chowdhury, Premier of Orissa, Hon'ble Pandit Lingaraj Misra, Minister of Education, Hon'ble Nityananda Kunango, Minister of home, Hon'ble Sadasib Tripathy Minister of Revenue, Hon'ble Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, Minister of Publicity, Orissa paid a visit to the Ramakrishna Mission Library on the 21st October 1950, and highly appreciated the work and management of the library. As this library is considered to be one of the best public libraries in Orissa and also an important place of culture, Hon'ble Mahatab remarked that effort should be made to see the library does not suffer from any want. He appealed to the public to contribute Rs. 20,000/- (twenty thousand) for all round development of the library. The ministers were very much pleased with the work of this institution.

It may be mentioned that the foundation of the library's new extension was laid by Hon'ble H. K. Mahatab, while he was Prime Minister of Orissa and the Govt. of Orissa contributed about Rs. 13,000/ (thirteen thousand) towards the cost of construction. Hon'ble Mahatab is taking keen interest for the development of this institution and wants to see that it becomes one of the best seats of culture in India.

## THE HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENARY

Sri Saradamani Devi, though born in 1853 in a remote village named Jayaram-bati in the district of Bankura in West Bengal, became known as the Holy Mother because of her pristine purity, overflowing affection and deep spiritual experience. She was the perfect embodiment of womanhood at its best, a worthy successor of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, etc., of hallowed Indian tradition, and a spiritual guide of the highest order. When she came of age Sri Ramakrishna worshiped her and offered to her all the results of his spiritual discipline. She was again his immediate spiritual successor, the unseen guiding force behind the growing Ramakrishna Movement, and to her thousands owed their spiritual unfoldment.

It behoves us all to celebrate her Birth Centenary all over the world in a befitting manner. To give a start to such a worthy cause the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math at Belur have formed a provisional Executive Committee with Swami Madhavananda, former General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission as its Chairman, and Swami Gambhirananda as its Secretary and six other monks as its members. The Committee will be expanded commensurately with the progress of the work. The Math authorities have also sponsored the following plan of the Celebration:

1. The Birth Centenary should be observed during the period between December 1953 and December 1954.
2. An authoritative and comprehensive life of the Holy Mother as also a short biography should be brought out in as many Indian and foreign languages as possible.
3. An album containing the picture of the Holy Mother in as many postures as possible as also the important places associated with her memory should be published.
4. A publication dealing with the lives and contributions of the great women of India in different spheres of life and different periods of Indian History should be undertaken.
5. An arrangement should be made for putting tablets at important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother.
6. An essay competition on the life of the Holy Mother should be organised for students.
7. Ladies' meetings in different places, particularly in women's Institutions should be organised to discuss the life and teachings of the Holy Mother.
8. Steps should be taken for the collection and preservation of articles used by the Holy Mother as well as her letters.
9. Pilgrimage to Jayarambati, Kamarpukur and other important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother should be organised.

It will be readily realised that the success of such an undertaking is dependent not simply on a scheme carefully drawn up, but to a great extent on funds liberally contributed. We appeal, therefore, to all who believe in the advancement of womanhood and the worship of motherhood to contribute their mite for one or all of the following purposes.

1. Perpetuation of the memory of the Holy Mother.
2. Advancement of the cause of women.
3. Publication of the above mentioned books.

All contributions may be sent to, and cheques drawn in the name of "The Secretary, The Holy Mother Birth Centenary" P. O. Belur Math, District Howrah, West Bengal.

Belur Math  
October 25, 1950

SWAMI VIRESVARANANDA  
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