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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. XLV

SEPTEMBER 1958

No. 5

WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA FROM FORM TO FORM DIVINE

"God is One; His Names and Forms are Many."

By virtue of Sarad, with hosts of stars the fullmoon shone in the sky, and on the earth Sri Krishna shone in the midst of Vrishnis.

Seeing those delightful nights, with jasmines in full bloom, Krishna, the Almighty Lord, chose to exercise in manifold sports His supreme Yoga power.

Graced with peacock's feather and with Karnika flowers decorated, clad in golden garment and Vaijayanti garland, filling the holes of His flute with nectar of His lips, Sri Krishna with the Gopas entered Brindavana.

Listening to His flute's bewitching sounds all the women of Vraja delighted in describing them to each other: for that music verily stole the heart of every living being.

Hearing their pitiful prayers, Krishna, the Lord of Yogis, smiled and out of His infinite mercy granted them the desired joy; though He indeed findeth delight only within Himself.

(Bhagavata Purana, X. 20. 44; 29. 1; 21. 5, 6; 29. 42.)

Sri Ramakrishna's Madhura Bhava being purified and intensified by the grace of Sri Radha, he was shortly afterwards blessed with the vision of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. This form too united finally with his holy person, like all the other divine forms seen before. At that time, the Master said, he lost himself completely in the thought of Bhagavan Krishna, sometimes regarded himself as Krishna, at other times as every being, from Brahman down to a blade of grass. One day he plucked a grass-blossom and coming to us with a face beaming with delight, said: "The complexion of Sri Krishna, I used to see then, was like this." One day, while listening to the reading of the Bhagavata he went into Bhavasamadhi and had the vision of Krishna's luminous form. He saw a beam of light coming out of His lotus feet, touching the Bhagavata, then the Master's heart, and remaining thus simultaneously touching the three for a while. He used to say: "The three—the Bhagavata, the Bhakta and the Bhagavan are the One, and the One is the three."

(Great Master, II, 14. 18, 20.)

THE GUIDE AND GOAL DIVINE

I

Sri Krishna has been looked upon for a number of centuries from various points of view. Some have worshipped him as an ideal man, some as a complete, all-round incarnation, some as God. While all these are true, his life on earth may broadly be classified into two aspects. Swami Ramakrishnananda in his book *Sri Krishna the Pastoral and Kingmaker* has narrated them in detail. One is the aspect of his younger days and is depicted elaborately in the *Bhagavata*, *Vishnupurana* and *Harivamsa* and the other is his life as a teacher of humanity described mainly in the *Gita* and the *Mahabharata*. The earlier life of Sri Krishna has appealed to devotees down the ages and different religious sects have developed round the child or younger Krishna considering him as the goal of life. The latter part of his life where he manifests himself as a teacher *par excellence* has always attracted the rational and intellectual minds. Thus Sri Krishna's personality has a charm for all varieties of people. Like the facets of a diamond there were many sides to his brilliance. Even the earlier part of his life was multiform.

II

The sylvan surroundings of Vraja far from the madding crowd, the idyllic setting of Yamuna and the Nidhu, Radha and other groves, the love of the simple-hearted Gopas and Gopis, the maddening music of Krishna's flute—all these have a great emotional appeal. His life at Vrindavana transports us to a haven of pure, unalloyed, spiritual joy. It is all sweetness too as a saintly poet puts it :

Sweet His lips, sweet His face,
Sweet His heart, sweet His gaze,
Sweet His smile, sweet His gait,
Sweet's ev'rything of Madhura's
Lord great!

Sweet His words, sweet His deeds,
Sweet His lilts, sweet His weeds,
Sweet His moves, sweet His turns,
Sweet's ev'rything of Madhura's
Lord great!

Sweet His singing, sweet His drinking,
Sweet His eating, sweet His sleeping,
Sweet His person, sweet His head-mark,
Sweet's ev'rything of Madhura's
Lord great!

(A. S. P. Ayyar's translation)

Lilasuka goes further and says :

Sweeter than sweetness, livelier than
liveliness, the childhood of Krishna, the
Father of Love, carries away my heart.
What shall I do?

Sweet, sweet is the body of the Lord ;
sweet, sweet is His face, sweet ; Oh, sweet

¹ अघरं मधुरं वदनं मधुरं
नयनं मधुरं हसितं मधुरम् ।
हृदयं मधुरं गमनं मधुरं
मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥

वचनं मधुरं चरितं मधुरं
वसनं मधुरं वलितं मधुरम् ।
वलितं मधुरं भ्रमितं मधुरं
मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥

गीतं मधुरं पीतं मधुरं
शुकं मधुरं सुप्तं मधुरम् ।
रूपं मधुरं तिलकं मधुरं
मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥

(Sri Vallabhacharya—*Madhurashtaka*.)

it is smelling, sweet it is smiling ; it is
sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. ²

Sri Krishna has attracted great souls
like Suka, Chaitanya, Vallabha, Nim-
barka and others who have formed
different sects round him. His message
of overflowing and self-effacing love has
a transforming power. It cleanses the
baser passions of their dross and makes
people God-conscious. The *Bhagavata*
accepts even the passions as a spiritual
discipline, if directed to God. Thus were
saved Sisupala, Kamsa and others. In
the *Bhagavata* ³ Narada says to Yudhish-
thira :

Through the passion of love, hatred, fear
or affection as through loving devotion,
many concentrated their mind on the
Supreme Being and, having thereby got
rid of their sin resulting from the pas-
sions of love, hatred, etc., attained to
Him.

The women of Gopas through love,
Kamsa through fear, Sisupala and other
kings through hatred, the people of the
Vrishni clan through their relationship
and you through affection and friendship,
and we through devotion, O king, (have
attained His grace).

Sri Ramakrishna explained that even if
Radha were not a real character we
could very easily imbibe her deep, pas-
sionate attachment to the Lord ; that
will assure the achievement of the
summum bonum of life. He said :

It is immaterial whether one believes
or not that Radha and Krishna were In-
carnations of God. One may believe (like

¹ माधुर्यादपि मधुरं मन्मथतातस्य
किमपि कैशोरम् ।
बापत्यादपि अपलं चेतो मम
हरति किं कुर्मः ॥

मधुरं मधुरं वपुरस्य विभो-
मधुरं मधुरं वदनं मधुरम् ।
मधुगन्धि मृदुस्मितमेतदहो
मधुरं मधुरं मधुरं मधुरम् ॥

(*Krishnakarnāmrita* I. 64, 92.)

² VII. 1. 29-30.

the Hindu or the Christian) in God's In-
carnations. Or one may not believe (like
the modern Brahmos) in His assuming
form, human or otherwise. But let all
have a yearning for this Anuraga or
intense love for the Lord. This intense
Love is the one needful thing.

In the renunciation of the self by what-
ever method it be lies the realization of
the Self. The love of the Gopis, how-
ever, was of the earth but not earthy as
is evident from the fact that some Gopis
unable to go to Venugopala on hearing
his flute left the mortal coil and joined
him in spirit. ⁴

His relation with the people of Vraja
exemplifies the different approaches to
the Divine. The calm devotional atti-
tude of the cowherds in general, the
servitude of Raktaka, the friendly love
of Sridama and Sudama, the parental
affection of Nanda and Yasoda, and the
bridal love of Radha and the Gopis are
recognised as the five valid attitudes in
spiritual disciplines.

There are many facets of devotion.
And 'as is one's attitude such indeed is
one's success'. There is a conception of
eternal Krishna playing in eternal Vrinda-
vana. This personality is a matter of
direct spiritual experience. To have
this Krishna-consciousness intense long-
ing is essential, as Sri Chaitanya reveals
in stating his own condition :

In the state of separation from the
Lord (Govinda), even the twinkling of
the eye seems to me a cycle, copious tears
flow from my eyes like unto the rainy
season, and all the world appears to me
a void. ⁵

Alwar Kulasekhara wanted to be a
step leading to the sanctuary of the
Lord. Nammalwar was satisfied to be
'the servant of the servant of the servant

⁴ X. 29. 9-11.

⁵ युगायितं निमेषेण चक्षुषा प्रावृषायितम् ।
शून्यायितं जगत् सर्वं गोविन्दविरहेण मे ॥
(*Sikshāshtaka*. 7.)

of the Lord'. Such was the fascination of Sri Krishna's rich and varied personality. This is the mystery of an incarnation. The unique conception of Godhead as an incarnation visualizes Him to be ever anxious for the redemption of the suffering souls. Sri Parasara Bhatta beautifully describes how Lord Ranganatha is ready to swear to establish His claim that the Jivas really belonged to Him. The poem runs thus :

(God says :) 'Thou art Mine.'
(Jiva :) 'I am mine.' 'How is that?'
'What is your point?' 'My contention has Veda for its authority.' 'I claim it on account of the splendour of the long enjoyment of the same.' 'But that has ever been disputed.' 'When did you dispute it?' 'I have mentioned this point in the Gita and other works.' 'Who will bear witness?' 'Men of divine wisdom.' 'Alas, they are your partisans (favourites).' Thus in this quarrel of the individual soul as though there can be no mediator, (so) Thou (Lord, art ready to swear).⁶

The poet concludes his poem on the bathing ceremony of Ranganatha thus : 'Dost Thou, sweet Lord, in the impossibility of getting an arbitrator, think it advisable to establish Thy claim by going to the length of swearing, and thereby redeem and reclaim Thy lost child, man? Verily, Thy dripping waistcloth and Thy garland make Thee appear as one prepared to swear on behalf of one's claims.' This superb lyric of the 'Disputant Divine' far surpasses the 'Hound of Heaven' in its

तव मेऽहं मे कुतस्तत्
तदपि कुतः इदं वेदमूलप्रमाणात् ।
एतच्चानादिसिद्धादनुभवविभवात्
सोऽपि साक्रोश एव ॥

कदाक्रोशः कस्य गीतादिषु
मम विदितः कोऽन साक्षी सुधीः स्यात् ।
इन्त त्वत्पक्षपाती स इति नृकलहे
मम मध्यस्थवत् त्वाम् ॥

unique conception of the soul-hunger of the Lord.⁷

The personality of Sri Krishna has yet another manifestation in the vision of the devotees. The intense faith stirs the devotee to his inmost depth and as Sri Ramakrishna says, he develops the especial eye of love by which he sees visions. 'Today's imagination becomes tomorrow's realization', said Swami Turiyananda. Thus the devotee meditates on Sri Krishna's purifying form with intense love and becomes a saint. This saint-making personality of his takes different forms even in recent times according to the aspirations of the devotees. So we have the Giridharilal of Mirabai, the Ranganatha of Andal and the Bala Gopala of Gopaler Ma. Thus has Sri Krishna been regarded by devotees as the goal of all beings.

III

The later life of Sri Krishna reveals him as a great teacher which appeals more to the intellectuals. The *Bhagavata* describes him as the Supreme God who had descended on the earth as a full-fledged incarnation to protect the good and destroy the evil. The modern age is an age of aggressive evil. Evil there was in every age but it could be distinguished from the good. The seers of the Upanishads were much concerned about the play of good and evil in life. That is why they analysed the nature of *sreyas* and *preyas* (the good and the pleasant). The pursuit of pleasure as it is is not bad. But when it becomes the be-all and end-all of one's life or the life of a nation, it becomes a positive evil. For such a man or a nation any method is acceptable if it could serve the purpose. The purity of the ends and means is of no consideration. Even those who value much the ethical perfection in their lives, do not hesitate to transgress

⁷ c.f., *The Disputant Divine* by A. Srinivasachariar in *Vedanta Kesari* 1920

it when their countries are involved. They hold a higher standard of ethics before the people of the land, for in its absence social order will crumble, and follow a different standard in their dealing with other nations. This double standard has a disastrous effect on the national mind. The result in the language of psychology is a split personality. What a tremendous stress it creates on the sensitive, susceptible minds, especially of the youths of a nation! Its effect is incalculably extensive but too subtle to be easily detected. Many thinkers have warned about the startling increase of half-witted, dull and delinquent children. And they find a connection between this phenomenon and the ever-increasing stress and strain the contemporary minds are subjected to, due to the ideological conflict, intellectual confusion and ethical uncertainty. The result is a spiritual crisis and a nervous breakdown. Still spurious systems of philosophy are built up and the confusion is made worse confounded. Of course to remedy this, psychological therapy grows, psychiatrists flourish. But the malady of the modern people of today is too deep for surface solutions. The modern society has lost all sense of direction. It has no purpose, no goal. But the solution is deeply felt to be in having a goal of life. Hence develop life's philosophies. But alas, they also are too many. Every man has his own philosophy of life. The outlook of men as a unified whole, springing from the same source, springing in the same social milieu and marching towards the same goal, has been forgotten. In such a confusing intellectual climate it is difficult for an ordinary individual to seek the truth and find it. The necessity in such circumstances of a guide, of a principle, of a goal that never fails is imperative. Sri Krishna satisfies all these demands. He is the friend, philosopher and guide of humanity. His

teachings represent a principle and point out to us an eternal goal.

The setting in which Sri Krishna delivers his message of the Gita is very significant and bears close similarity to the tension and uncertainty prevailing in the contemporary world. The occasion was the great Kurukshetra war. The whole of the then India divided itself into two warring camps. The dark clouds were not merely hovering on the horizon. The huge conflagration was about to start in which thousands of able-bodied men would be offered as fodder. Arjuna, the great hero, was in a dilemma. He was overawed by the sight of a sea of soldiers ready to shoot arrows at one another. The fear of losing the battle against the great Generals like Bhishma and Drona and the ethical consideration of being the cause of the death of near and dear ones confused him. He could not find out the way. As Nehru says in his *Discovery of India*, 'Arjuna becomes the tortured spirit of man, which from age to age has been torn by conflicting obligations and moralities'. And as is common with all confusion, it resulted in indecision and the accompanying depression of the mind. He lost all calmness of the mind, and out of sheer despair surrendered to Sri Krishna. It has been described as 'the confused mind surrendering to calm philosophy'. Sri Krishna observed his condition and was filled with compassion. But he was a great teacher and wanted to create a great disciple out of his own mould. He first encouraged Arjuna to regain the calmness of his mind before he himself could solve his problems. It is our day-to-day experience that clarity of vision and free play of reason are possible only when we are tranquil and free from agitation and flurry. The solution of a problem of great dimension demands the full play of all our intellectual and spiritual faculties. At the outset we must feel a want,

an urge, a hunger and then with a calm mind we must solve it. And at the end we must translate our conclusions into action, for a real problem demands a real solution which has a practical bearing on life. And the whole process must be undergone by the disciple himself. The teacher's part is to help manifest the inner potentialities of the student. All knowledge is in the soul, the teacher's part is to help it manifest, as Swami Vivekananda puts it.

Arjuna with all humility approached Sri Krishna for a solution. His humility was born of the strength and purity of his character. As his character was strong, his doubt also was deep. The question raised by Arjuna was a vital one. And the answer it solicited was equally vigorous. Even now the doubts raised by Arjuna are hovering round the mental climate of the thinking men of the world. How various are the interpretations from different points of view that have been given to Gita by eminent modern men like Vivekananda, Tilak, Gandhi and Aurobindo. The creative doubt of Arjuna brought forth such a body of enduring, classical truth of a universal character that it defies all attempts to exhaust its significance and its meaning to men. Life raises problems at every step and Sri Krishna's teachings help men to solve their own problems. The conflict, both inner and outer, and its solution gives the ethical character to the Gita. It gives an insight into the nature of things and suggests solution for the threefold sufferings—natural or social, individual or personal and supernatural or divine. In the Gita Sri Krishna shows Arjuna the ultimate Truth and the way to realize it through performance of one's duty, being non-attached, practising equality and surrendering one's all to God. The Gita teachings represent the best he gave to the world. It is no wonder Sri Krishna

says in the *Mahabharata* :

'The Gita is my heart, O Partha, it is my very essence.'⁸

It is always ennobling to dive deep into the teachings of the Gita. But no spiritual teaching acquires validity and strength unless practised by the proponent. Sri Krishna is superb in this aspect. He practised his message to such a perfection that he remains the incomparable ideal in this field. The cowherd boy of Gokula playing on his divine flute, spending his time in boyish pranks, protecting the dwellers of Vrindavana from the onslaught of Kamsa's retinue, Indra's wrath, Brahma's tricks and teaching the Gopas the highest truths, helping the Gopis to overcome the eight bonds, changed overnight to a king-maker and killed the tyrant Kamsa, put Ugrasena on the throne and brought peace in Mathura. When it was being repeatedly troubled by Jarasandha he removed the capital to the walled city of Dwaraka to avoid meaningless bloodshed. The hero of a hundred battles tried to avert the conflagration of the Kurukshetra war going himself to the Kauravas as a messenger of peace. But when all efforts failed he accepted calmly the relentless divine decree. He was so free from egotism that he became the mere charioteer of Arjuna.

Thus the life of Sri Krishna as the king, king-maker and charioteer presents the superb ideal conduct before men of all times, to imitate, to follow, to emulate. He is ever the eternal guide of humanity. His life as a pastoral presents him as the destination, the refuge, the goal of man. Visualizing him in such a mood Acharya Ramanuja bows down to him saying :

Thou art my mother, Thou my father ;
Thou art my kinsman, Thou my guide (or friend) ;
Thou art knowledge, Thou wealth ;
Thou art my all, O God of gods.

⁸ गीता मे हृदयं पार्थ गीता मे सारमुत्तमम् ।

SRI KRISHNA, THE PET OF DEVOTEES

G. KRISHNAMURTHI AIYAR

Sri Suka describes the birth and lila of God Sri Krishna in the 10th Skanda of Sri-mad Bhagavatam. In the sloka which describes the birth of Krishna Suka says he is a wonderful child. Lord was born in a prison and brought up by Yasoda in the midst of cowherds in Gokulam. Just at the time of birth Brahma, Siva and other Devas came and praised that wonderful child, the Lord.¹ Brahma says that he is the embodiment of Truth in all its aspects. God is Truth and Truth is God. The purpose of the Avatar as stated by Brahma is to protect the devotees and to destroy the wicked. He also indicates a higher purpose that this Avatar will be a special boon to the devotees for his lila as a child and his beautiful form and qualities will help the devotee to concentrate his mind on God. The guna and rupa of Krishna will attract all Bhaktas.

There are three aspects in Krishna Avatar, viz., physiological, intellectual and spiritual. This is indicated in two slokas.² In the 10th Skanda of Bhagavata Krishna as a child is described as having performed many lilas. In Gokulam he was always loved and petted as a child and at the same time his super-human acts reveal that he was God and they admired and respected Him without fear. He had charming beauty with lustrous eyes and radiant smile which bewitched all boys. He had a good gathering of his own and was always found doing some innocent mischief or other. A story is told of him that one day he ate a morsel of sand and when the boys complained to Yasoda, his mother, she took a stick and threatened him. She commanded that he should open his mouth. Krishna said 'No, no. I never ate any

earth. All these boys and even my brother Balarama speak untruth. If you want please look into my mouth.'³ He opened and Yasoda saw in his mouth the entire universe with all beings created by God in the natural state doing their respective avocations and attending minutely to every duty assigned to them. She saw her own image too. The boy, Krishna opened his mouth to Yasoda to substantiate the truth that he did not eat earth but it was already there. This wonderful scene exhibited by Krishna revealed to her that he was God. Three texts of Upanishads are illustrated in his lila.

1. All this had its first origin in Eternal Truth. 2. Earth is the only Truth (not the name and form). 3. The Lord on creation of the Universe, Himself animates it.⁴

The distinction between Rama Avatar and Krishna Avatar is this: Rama typifies an ideal man but Krishna has dual capacity. He sometimes acts as man and at other times exhibits himself as God. Krishna is loved by all devotees because of his sportive spirit. As a child he killed in sport many asuras like Trinavartaka, Pootana, Sakatasura, etc. Pootana pretended to be a nurse and attempted to feed him with poison but Krishna under the pretext of nestling her milk sucked out her life, that is the five pranas. He passed through two trees with the mortar tied around his waist by Yasoda and when the mortar got crosswise the two

³ B. X. 8. 35.

⁴ (i) सदेव सौम्येदमग्र आसीत् ।

Chândogya Up. VI. 2. 1.

(ii) मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् । *Ibid.*

(iii) तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् ।

Taittiriya Up. II. 6.

¹ तमद्भुतं बालकम् । *Bhāgavata X.* 3. 9.

² B. XI. 1. 6-7.

trees fell down and two yakshas, Nalakubera and Manigriva, came out and praised him for the release they obtained. He danced on the head of the serpent Kaliya and freed Yamuna from poison and made its water drinkable. When Indra rained for seven days he held a big mountain Govardhan with his little finger and afforded protection for seven days to all the cattle and people in Gokulam and saved them from destruction. Indra fell at his feet and craved his pardon.

There are such numerous episodes which constitute the lilas of the Lord. Though a child there is a superhuman power exhibited in his activities. We have to realise that he is a child god, Balakrishna. It is miraculous; but the greatest thing about miracles is that they happen.⁵ When once it is appreciated that Krishna is an Avatar then superhuman acts have no touch of improbability in them. He endears himself to all the cowherds by participating in their daily life and sportive activities. He is puckish and very mischievous. He would leap with them like a frog, pelt stones at the dogs, would pull down the tail of a monkey from a tree and re-echo the voice when he heard an echo.

Yasoda felt a lot of difficulty in managing with this boy and also attending to her daily household duties. She was one day nestling the baby. The milk on the oven became too hot and boiled. She weaned away the child, put him on the ground and ran to the kitchen for the purpose of pouring some water on the boiled milk and appease its overtemper. Meanwhile the boy got angry, broke the milk and curd pots, ate enough of butter and drank curd and milk. Then he ascended and stood upon a mortar. He was found breaking all curd and milk pots which were preserved in the hanger. The cats and monkeys were being freely fed by butter, curd and milk pouring down from those pots. Yasoda discovered him in his highly

⁵ B. X. 14. 32.

mischievous attitude and attempted to tie him down to a mortar; but all the ropes in the house were not lengthy enough and when she was about to tie the knot, the rope was short by two inches. She sweated and grew tired. At last Krishna laughed at her and resolved to be bound. The reason why each rope was short by two inches is stated to be that Yasoda was fed up with ego in the nature of 'I and Mine'. The moment she shook off these two elements of ego, God became bound to the mother-devotee. Here we find the two bonds of Love and Grace.⁶ Love on the part of the devotee and Grace on the part of Lord, facilitating each other to be bound in heart by the eternal chord of friendship. As we have already seen even in his posture of bondage he released two yakshas from bondage. Each lila therefore has a lesson behind it. 'Free Love, so bound, were freest.' The Pundit tries to realise him by study, ratiocination and initiation from the Guru. The Rishi tries to practise penance, adopts all sadhanas and by meditation has a vision of God. But here the Lord is bound by Love and so bound, releases devotees from all bondage. Such is the lesson of his lila. Each lila is a parable for an earnest student.

The concept of God as a taskmaster and as one who punishes the sinner is almost excluded in Krishna lila. He embodies in himself the ideal of sport without motive and motive without sport for the benefit of mankind. His lila interprets the Brahma Sutra.⁷ In all his sportive activities we always feel that Krishna is thoroughly innocent of any advantage to himself but at the same time keeps in view the purpose of his Avatar which is his only motive, that is, to liquidate the wicked asuras from the world and protect his bhaktas. All this is

⁶ कृपया आसीत् स्वबन्धने । B. X. 9. 18.

⁷ लोकवत्तु लीलाकैवल्यम् ।

Brahmasutras II 1. 33.

done in a playful mood, no arm, no weapon and no arrow as in other Avatars. He is always a smiling boy and his smile has been interpreted by Vedantins as Maya.⁸ Saulabhya is an aspect which is constantly stressed by all commentators as a great attribute of Lord Krishna. Ramanuja lays special emphasis on this quality of God (i.e. adaptability).

The householder, ascetic and people who wish to spend their leisure in a jolly mood, all of them delight in listening to the interesting and instructive stories narrated by Suka in the 10th Skanda which is compendiously called 'Bālalila.' Madhusudana Saraswati says that there is no Truth except Krishna playing on the flute. He must have listened to the melodious notes of Krishna's flute in his contemplation.⁹ We know the story of Rasalila. Krishna is aged seven and all women overwhelmed by the mellifluous music of the flute felt attracted to him. In the midst of moonlight breeze and a galaxy of young women, this little boy never gets perturbed and plays the role of a ripe Brahmachari. He is not only a pet of devotees but Suka depicts him as the darling of humanity.¹⁰ These ladies were rishis in previous birth and their desire to embrace Lord in Universal Love was satisfied in this Rasa lila. Swami Vivekananda states, 'You can never understand the love of Gopis so long as you have the carnal sense in you.' Suka says that God conquered love and he was Manmatha Manmatha.¹¹ Narada in his *Bhakti Sutra* illustrates the highest form of Bhakti

⁸ हासोन्मादकरी च माया ।

Sankara's *Sutra-Bhāṣya*.

⁹ वंशीविभूषितकरात् नवनीरदाभात्
पीताम्बरादरुणविषफलाधरोष्ठात् ।
पूर्णन्दुसुन्दरमुखादरविन्दनेत्रात्
कृष्णात् परं किमपि तच्चमई न जाने ॥

¹⁰ अखिलदेहिनाम् अन्तरात्मदृक् ।

B. X. 31. 4.

¹¹ B. X. 32. 2.

by citing the example of Gopis.¹² Here renunciation of worldly things is complete and the only idea that seizes their minds is Prema-bhava. This also illustrates that a true Bhakta must not only love God, he must make God love him. The moral is, God is the pet of devotees and the devotee is the pet of God.

The mind of the highest devotee is depicted in the Akrura episode. From the moment he left Gokula till the time he reached Mathura, his soliloquy was about God and God only. Kuchela even in distress and poverty never loved God to obtain riches. But his Bhakti was of the superior Prema-bhava and he thought that love of God is not a means to an end but an end in itself. This enjoyment of Krishna lila educates the senses, makes the mind pure and purges it of bad qualities. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna says, 'Do not restrict your desire to a particular thing. Either love all or love God.' We must educate the passions. The only way of educating the passions is by dedicating all our desires and actions to the superior will of God.¹³

The spiritual aspect in Krishna Avatar is a subject for careful study. Krishna delivered his message to Uddhava in the 11th Skanda of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. As a boy of five, Uddhava worshipped God when all boys played. His only play was the worship of God Krishna. He was a pupil of Brhaspati, Chief Minister of the Vrishni tribe and a good friend of Krishna and the most intelligent of all pupils at the time. He was specially chosen as a messenger to pacify the Gopis whom Krishna has deserted and to console their grief caused by the pang of separation. When Uddhava entered Gokulam the Gopis mistook him for Krishna. They surrounded him, put numerous questions regarding Krishna and

¹² यथा व्रजगोपिकानाम् ।

Nārada-Bhakti-Sutra. 21.

¹³ B. X. 31. 44.

symbolised him as a bee that buzzed about Krishna. They poured out all their feelings about Krishna's faithlessness. They accused God and charged him with infidelity not only in this birth but in previous births.¹⁴

'During Rama Avartar you killed a Monkey King Bali without any lawful cause. You disguised a damsel Surpanakha that loved you. As Vamana you were as faithless as a crow that feeds and makes a house in which it is fed unclean. You showed one measure and then fraudulently enlarged your feet and measured all the three worlds with a different standard and here as Krishna you charmed us with your beauty, deceived with your persuasive words and ultimately deserted us. We ought not to think about you at all. Alas! Your story is so sweet and so instructive that we are unable to forget you.'

They exclaimed:

'Oh! Uddhava, this Govardhan, Yamuna and Brindavan and all these surroundings again and again remind us of his lila. Rishis by penance attempt to bring him to their mind so that they may have a vision of his image. But his figure is so imprinted in our minds by his lila, that however much we may try to forget him we are powerless to erase his beautiful image from our minds.'¹⁵

Uddhava was overpowered by the bhakti of Gopis. He at once understood that Krishna sent him as a messenger so that he may know directly the Prema-bhava of Gopis. Is this madness in Love or is this madness in the highest state of devotion? This question he answered by prostrating before the Gopis and acknowledging them as his Guru. When Uddhava approached Krishna as a pupil he said: I can conquer evils of samsara by dedicating myself and all my activities to the Lord. But I wish to know the easiest method by which the ultimate Truth can be realised. Krishna having indicated the three normal methods of approach, Karma, Jnana and Bhakti, emphasises on the cardinal aspect of Bhakti as an end in itself. In fact Uddhava puts the most im-

¹⁴ B. X. 47. 17.

¹⁵ B. X. 47. 49, 50, 63.

portant question: Is Bhakti a means or an end in itself? The Lord in His Infinite mercy strikes the key note to the whole situation. A true Sadhu sees God as manifested in everything.¹⁶ One who is educated in gunas naturally develops love for Him. His stories when listened to will have the educative value and He would enter the mind of the devotee through the stories without his knowledge and will gain a seat in his heart. Satsanga or the contact of the good is the initial stage and Narada is an example of it. When Sadhus describe the form and qualities of God the mind slowly becomes devoid of worldly desires and imperceptibly acquires the habit of enjoying the form and the gunas of God. In the mind so attuned God appears in form and shape and the devotee feels that he lives and acts in the presence of God. The love of fellowmen increases. Mercy and sacrifice become the two dominant qualities of his existence. The contact with good therefore generates love of God and it ultimately expresses itself in service to humanity.

Krishna therefore has endeared himself to his devotees by his lila. Even the ascetic who renounced the world revelled in His Glory as revealed in his stories by Suka. Krishna has captured the imagination of such great poets as Narayana Tirtha and Jayadeva—the beautiful lila as depicted in Taranga of one sage has its only parallel in the Ashtapadi sung by the other sage. Narayana Tirtha called his Pet by the nickname of 'Jārachora Sikhāmani', Prince of Lovers and Thieves. Jayadeva immortalised the love of Radha in his song, 'Viha-rati Haririha'. Sankara prescribed for Sadhus Krishna who played on the bank of Yamuna as the only object of meditation. Sadasiva Brahmendra, an avadhuta, expressed his experience in the Kirtana 'Mānasa sanchara re'. He describes Him as the Hero that successfully played with

¹⁶ B. XI. 14. 1, 21.

young women in the fortress built by the Cupid Lord. Subrahmanya Bharati in recent times has enshrined his immortal lila in his two songs 'Teerata Vilayattu Pillai' (Resourceful child) and 'Kannan en Sevakan' (Krishna, my servant). Suka describes God as the devotee of devotees.

Bhasa has written a simple and melodious drama by name 'Pancharatnam' in which all the lila of Krishna are graphically described.

The reason why such a volume of literature has sprung around the lila of Krishna as narrated by Suka in the 10th Skanda is obvious. The mind would not always contemplate on an abstract Truth. It often craves for relaxation. Theological doctrines of Advaita and of Dvaita cannot be a permanent source of enjoyment. That is why Tyagaraja exclaimed in his Kirtanam, 'Will the doctrine of Advaita or Dvaita make us happy?'¹⁷ Let us not indulge in a profitless debate as to the nature of the ultimate concept of Saguna Brahman. Let us not stand in the way of the learned Pundits who derived the highest intellectual pleasure by adopting the true Vakyartha that Brahman is Real and the world is unreal. Krishna by his lila has made us enjoy in actual experience that genuine happiness consists in revelling in the qualities of his form and guna as revealed in his lila. Let us remain the humble wor-

¹⁷ द्वैतमु सुखमा अद्वैतमु सुखमा ?

Tyagaraja-Kirtanam.

None but you to love me,
None but you to give me,
None but you to please me,
None but you to grace me!
I love not wrongful gain,
I love not sinful life,
I have not other God
But you, my own Lord!
Hail, All Hail, O Lord of Lords,
Nectar to eye, ear and soul!
Hail, All Hail, O Glorious Name,
Bring joy to all the worlds!

(From Krishna-Karnamrita—
A. S. P. Ayyar's Translation.)

shippers of Saguna Brahman. Desika, the pet devotee of Lord Venkatesa in recent times, exclaimed in one of his verses 'Which artist has painted this image of Krishna in my heart?'¹⁸ Krishna lila immerses the devotees in spiritual beatitude. We have now understood the meaning of the verse¹⁹ which describes the Bhagavata as 'the essence of all the Vedas'. Suka sang the praise of God and described His lila from out of his own rich spiritual experience, as and when he described the lila of Krishna. Srutis in the form of Devas praised Krishna and verified the experience of Suka as the only Truth embodied in the Vedas. Krishna lila is the only lamp of Love for all householders. We can cross the rubicon of fear and misery by sankirtan.²⁰

The devotees that listen to Krishna lila are thrice blessed. They visualise the form by contemplating on the image described. Their misery is at an end when they hear the short stories narrated in the 10th Skanda, their sins are washed away and they derive material benefit and enjoy spiritual happiness here in this world itself. Such is the fruit of spiritual merit (Punya) acquired in previous births.

¹⁸ हृदि मुग्ध-शिखण्ड-मण्डनो लिखितः केन
ममैष शिल्पिना ।

भदनातुर-वल्लवाङ्मना-वदनाम्भोज-दिवाकरो
युवा ॥ Gopala Vimsatih. 14.

¹⁹ B. I. 2. 3.

²⁰ B. X. 31. 9.

INDIAN WOMEN AND RELIGION

Part II

CHANDRA KUMARI HANDOO

If we glance at the present position of Indian women in relationship to religion we will be constrained to say that a temporary cloud seems to have covered our understanding of this vital element of our lives today. Due to the modern materialistic way of our living and thinking, religion has either been discarded as a superstition of the past, or it is confined to the limited field of ritual or personal devotion. The Hindu religion in particular is full of beautiful rites and ceremonies which are meant to help in the subduing of the restless mind. Since we men and women of the world, who live and think on the gross external plane cannot easily turn our minds inwards, we must necessarily create an atmosphere of devotion by an appeal to the senses. Thus a shrine, decorated with pictures and flowers, and fragrant with the smell of burning incense is conducive to calm and quiet; while it is easier to lift our hearts in thanksgiving and adoration to the Creator with the help of music, gong, cymbal and song than without them. It is understandable that religion should begin with rituals but it is deplorable only if it ends with them. Though they need not be discarded at any time but the inwardness of the spirit is ultimately the true test of a religious life.

Again, due to the absence of religious education, occult phenomenon, miracles and a good deal of superstition easily pass in the name of religion. Having also been deprived of education since many generations, we Indian women, lacking in intellectual strength and vigour, are inclined to be more sentimental than our Western sisters. Ideas, specially on an abstract subject like religion are therefore more or less confused, and

emotions erratic and unstable are unable to conserve themselves and direct their course to higher ends. A blind attachment to home, children and family is also a sentimental effect of our excessive emotionalism and barren intellect; it hampers the growth of the children, narrows the spontaneous love of the motherly heart and limits our field of sympathy and service. But motherly love must transcend the physical fact of motherhood and not be bound by it; specially when like the present times we are engulfed by the poverty, misery and ignorance of our masses every mother heart must awake to their needs. This absence of social awareness on our part is our greatest national fault and has been responsible to a great extent to the prevailing condition of our masses in the country.

A criticism levelled against the philosophy of India is that in its attempt to be unworldly it has disproved its utility in the ordinary affairs of life, for has it not neglected the *loka* or the world in its desire to attain the bliss of *para loka*, the higher world or heaven? Such a criticism presupposes an irreconcilable contradiction to exist between temporal and eternal values, but life can no more be divided into compartments than can the waters of a flowing stream be prevented from intermingling with one another. Life is a whole and must be treated as such. An artificial barrier created between religious life and the world is the cause of this apparent failure and our contention is that not less of religion but more of it is the only remedy. If world peace and consolidation is our dream than the necessity to bring spiritual values to the level of the common man to show him

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mands of the mundane and commonplace is an essential necessity of the present times. Selfishness, greed and violence though detrimental to the welfare of society at any time are more so at the present because nations cannot live in isolated self-sufficiency as was possible in the past. The world drawn close together physically has become interdependent and influences are easily carried from one part to another. Thus any evil in society spreads far and wide and causes inconceivable havoc in settled modes of life and thought. If Indian spirituality claims to be a vital and living force it must reorient itself so that it can meet the challenge of modern materialism armed as it is with weapons such as atom bombs, cold wars, highly technical inventions and specialised knowledge.

In the present moral and ideological crisis it is fortunate for us, the women of India and the world, that we have a concrete example to guide us in the person of Sri Sarada Devi, wife of Sri Ramakrishna, reverently known to her admirers and disciples as the Holy Mother. Though we have just passed her first birth centenary, she is already loved and worshipped as an incarnation of the compassion and motherhood of God in many parts of the world. The reason for this astonishing popularity in so short a period of time is that she fulfils the needs of this age to a remarkable degree. Her message though simple is spiritually deep and has a universal appeal which cannot fail to touch the hearts of all sincere religious seekers. She is an excellent example of the teaching of the Gita which tells us to live like a drop of water on a lotus leaf. The Holy Mother lived very much in the world performing what we would consider to be the lowest menial work like cooking, cleaning floors and utensils, or husking paddy even at a time when she was a recognised teacher of religion and was being worshipped as a goddess by hundreds of devotees. The two set of circumstances co-existed in her life, but ever serene and unruffled in situations

that would drive another one crazy she moved easily and gracefully between them without being aware of their inherent contradiction.

Her brother's widow, a mad woman with a self-willed and eccentric daughter tested her powers of endurance to an unimaginable degree. Patiently and uncomplainingly she bore this life-long liability, providing for them from her meagre purse but receiving only insults and fits of temper from the suspicious sister-in-law and the disobedient and insolent niece. In the midst of screaming abuse showered by this sister-in-law and the loud weeping of her grandchild, the Holy Mother was known to receive her disciples and give spiritual instructions to them. The only notice she took of her surroundings was to say to the devotee in a gentle voice, 'Always speak sweet words, my child.' Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the camel continues to eat the thorny bush, though the thorns prick its tongue and make it bleed; he meant that we are unable to wean ourselves from our excessive family and other attachments though it invariably leads to sorrow and suffering. But this was not the case in the Holy Mother's treatment of her relations. She often said, 'Don't regard me as your relative. I can leave this body at once if I so desire', or 'In the midst of worldly activities, whenever I desire, I understand with a flash that all this is nothing but the play of *Mahāmāyā*'. Hers was the selfless love that demands nothing in return and which fulfils itself in giving. She bore all the responsibility of a householder's life without enjoying any of its corresponding advantages. It was to set up an ideal that she showed us how the obligations of family and social life can be met with while the mind is kept in constant communion with God.

There is a well-known quotation of Sister Nivedita regarding Holy Mother in which she asks, 'Is Mother the last of an old order or the first of a new one?' Though the conclusive reply to this question can be given

by posterity only we feel we are not running a great risk in saying that she is surely the first of a new order of womanhood that must come up in India and the world. According to the Indian tradition great souls are born from time to time to set up a new ideal for humanity. Mediocre men and women like ourselves, unable to rise to such great heights strive for ages to follow in their footsteps realising at best but a fragment of their many-sided achievements in our individual lives. But these personalities act like leaven upon society as a whole, quickening the evolution of the soul, widening our social and moral concepts and also inspiring us in the realm of poetry and literature, music and the fine arts. Such a one was the Holy Mother. Without destroying the values of the past she enriched them and opened avenues other than the home in which womanly energy may harness itself for the good of the world. A unique attitude of forbearance and forgiveness with the faults of others, an unusual courage in the face of danger, modesty based on an absence of the ego, utter self-effacement, a great humility and calm were amongst her many virtues; an ideal daughter, sister and wife, the real significance of her life lay in going beyond all worldly relationship; but the most outstanding trait of her character was her all-embracing motherly love. Religion in its most universal aspect was translated into practical life through her deep and abiding love for the saint and the sinner alike, and the untiring and selfless service that she rendered to the high and the low. Her moral perfection was built on the solid foundation of spiritual experience and those who came to her found godliness flowing through her like a living and palpable stream. Like the holy water of the sacred *Gangā* this mighty current of spirituality seemed to descend from the heavens itself. Her words and presence healed the wounds of their hearts, lightened their burdens and gave them a glimpse of the Unseen Glory which is the common inheritance of all. By

example and by precept they were taught that an unbroken remembrance of God was the only way to peace and immortality. She said, '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 manner one gets spiritual awakening by constantly thinking of God.'

Though the Ramakrishna Mission is a well-known organisation in India and outside, but few amongst the members of the public are aware to this day that the Holy Mother is looked upon as the power behind the movement. Swami Vivekananda started the Mission in the name of his great guru, Sri Ramakrishna, but though a world-moving figure, Swamiji considered himself to be a mere child at her feet. He went to the Parliament of Religions held in America only after he had secured her consent and blessings; he said, 'To me Mother's grace is a hundred thousand times greater than Father's.' Sri Ramakrishna himself said of her, 'She is Sarada, Saraswati; she has come to impart knowledge . . . She is full of the rarest wisdom.' The Holy Mother so overwhelmed Swami Brahmananda, who was greatly venerated for his own spiritual attainment that he trembled like a young boy in her august presence. He said, 'Our Mother is Mahamaya Herself. . . . Inside, the ocean of realization; outside absolute calm.' It was her strong yet gentle hand that gave shape and guidance to the movement in its early days. She organised the young disciples after the passing away of the Master; that she had vision and foresight in keeping them together is evident from the way she prayed to Sri Ramakrishna. 'It is my prayer, O Lord,' she said, 'that those who give up the world for your sake may not suffer for want of simple food and coarse clothing. It is also my prayer that my children should live together, clinging to you and your teachings and people afflicted with the sufferings of the world should come to them and get peace of mind by hearing your words from them.'

Besides being a mother and guide to the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna she also had innumerable disciples of her own, and even the least amongst them received as much of her tenderness and affection as the best. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother had incarnated themselves for the same purpose which they fulfilled in different ways. The Holy Mother said, 'Do not make any distinction between Sri Ramakrishna and myself;' and Sri Ramakrishna also called her his divine *śakti* and added that she was identical with him. Her disciples very largely outnumbered those of Sri Ramakrishna. A few amongst them were unimaginably unworldly and discourteous; for instance a man while bowing at her feet struck her big toe with his head and was quite unconcerned when she cried out in pain; for he said, he wanted her to remember him by the pain he had inflicted on her! The disciples came to her 'crawling in their hundreds like ants,' she once said to a woman devotee. So many were they that she could not remember them individually but she prayed for them all till the very last days of her life on earth. Swami Premananda once said in admiration, 'We are sending to the Holy Mother the poison we could not take ourselves. She is giving refuge to everybody, accepting the sins of all and digesting them. Unlimited power! Boundless compassion! What to speak of us, we have not seen Sri Ramakrishna doing this.' It is evident from this remark that her grace and compassion was not confined to the good alone. She fulfilled to the very letter the Sanskrit hymn to the Divine Mother, 'Though the son may be unworthy the mother can never be so.' She also said, 'My child, many among those who come here are unworthy, but when they address me as mother, I forget everything and they get much more than they deserve.' On another occasion she said, 'If we do not accept the sins and sorrows of others . . . who else will do so? Who else will bear the responsibilities of the sinner and the afflicted?'

Orthodoxy in India has strength but is associated with a narrowness of outlook, a rigidity and stress on non-essentials which is somewhat negative in character; it seems to be based more on a fear of Western materialism rather than on conviction; but religion as taught and practised by the Holy Mother is full of commonsense, rationalism and realisation. She was true to the essence of Indian culture which though rooted firmly in the past is also a progressive growth, a dynamic way of life and not a stagnant creed to be accepted passively. In keeping with this assimilative power of Hinduism she presented a synthesis of many ideals. A devoted wife and at the same time a nun of unusual purity she combined in herself the two ways of life known as *grihastha* and *sannyāsa*. Born and brought up in the most orthodox surroundings she was easily able to overcome the strong prejudice of caste and birth so prevalent in her village home; strict in the following of *Sanātana dharma* she was at the same time more broadminded and had a deeper appreciation and understanding of foreign cultures than the most modern man or woman of our times. To those who believe and feel deeply in moral and spiritual values it is not easy to give up old modes of thought and expression for new ones; but in spite of her old-fashioned background the Holy Mother was quick in grasping new ideas. By including humanitarian work in their programme, the Ramakrishna Mission made a great and startling departure from the traditional way of *sādhu* life; notwithstanding the opposition and criticism they met with from the orthodox section of society the Holy Mother encouraged and supported them in every way. She showed a keen interest in the charitable work of the Mission and in token of her appreciation once donated a ten rupee note to the Banaras Sevashrama; the same has reverentially been preserved by the sadhus of the centre to this day. Once when foreign goods were being boycotted, a controversy arose against the buying of foreign cloth, the Holy

Mother said, 'Can I ever be exclusive, my child?' These words in short sum up her character and approach to life. She was the living embodiment of what Swami Vivekananda called, 'toleration and universal acceptance'. We all know to our cost how sectarianism, bigotry and narrowness harden the heart of man. If we wish to break down the barriers between man and man, let each one of us ask ourselves the heart-searching question, 'Am I exclusive in the acceptance of good ideas and ideals? Am I able to penetrate through unfamiliar modes of expression and presentation?' A great understanding of the human heart and a deep sympathy is required for such appreciation and this cultivation of the virtues of the heart is the only way of bringing the human family together.

Thus though the Holy Mother never preached any metaphysical doctrine she reconciled all *sādhana*s and philosophies in her living. In summing up she once said, 'we are all Advaitins,' meaning in common language that though the approach to the Divine may be by different paths, but the realisation of our oneness with the universe and with the spiritual consciousness that pervades it is the supreme end of human endeavour. The Vedanta says that everything is God. If everything is God, everything is real though not in its phenomenal aspect; therefore whether one worships Kali or Krishna, Allah or Jehovah, Christ or Zoraster, and whether one worships the many, the few or the one, it is all the same, only the knowledge of the all-pervading, non-dual Reality must be there. Under this broad conception not only are all religions in this world true and worthy of our respect, but the distinction between the sacred and the secular is also lost. The Holy Mother saw the Divinity in animal and bird life as well as in man. She once fed her

parrot Gangaram with *halwā* meant as an offering for Sri Ramakrishna, because she saw that he dwelt within it. On another occasion she told a disciple that it was she who lived in a cat whom he was inclined to ill-treat. But this was not all. So conscious was the Holy Mother of the reality of the spirit as against matter that she could not bear to see the cook fling a broom unceremoniously into a corner. Even the lowly broom was for her a mere covering of Divinity.

Such a life vibrating with an all-embracing God-consciousness must purify the very earth from which it arises; thus we see a great awakening amongst the women of India in the present times, such as perhaps hardly ever existed before. Western women put up a heroic struggle to get their votes but women in India were able to get the same without any trouble. Politically their sex is no bar to any service, examination, career or position. Education is spreading rapidly, and the changes women have undergone within a few generations are not less revolutionary and striking because they have taken place silently and without friction. The material is ready but the end is a little obscure. If we would venture to give the message of the Holy Mother it would be this: spirituality is the greatest power on earth, cultivate it assiduously. Women are ever known to be the manifestations of *śakti*, or the spiritual power of God. Armed with this positive definition of womanhood let us march forward boldly towards peace and progress. Combining the modern idea of intellectualism, learning and efficiency with the ancient one of purity, stability of character and singleness of purpose, let us take our rightful place in world affairs as mothers of the human race.

NACHIKETA—THE CHILD OF IMMORTAL BLISS

(A Play)

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

CENE II.

(Background: Chanting of Vedic Mantras, and sounds appropriate during the performance of a Yajna or sacrifice are heard, and fade off when the curtain rises.

Location: Near the entrance to Nachiketa's residence.

Enter Devadatta and Gautama.)

Devadatta: Who can rival Nachiketa's father in organizing such a grand celebration? Wonderfully capable!

Gautama: Capable no doubt . . . but it would be nice if he could be a little more calm while doing things.

Devadatta: Well, if things are to go on vigorously, the person carrying them out also must be vigorous. A little anger is inevitable.

Gautama: Why do you say so? Have you not observed our Nachiketa himself? Whatever he undertakes, he does so well . . . and besides, how calm! May be, when he was born, he inherited away all the patience of the father. Perhaps that is why Vajasrava has so little of it!

Devadatta: Look here! In the whole of this province, who else has performed such a big sacrifice? What to speak of other things, think of the very magnitude of the gifts ceremony that is going to take place shortly. Giving away a thousand cows! Not one, or two, or even a hundred, but a thousand! Are you not seeing it with your own eyes? In the midst of all this what if he exhibits a little temper? . . . As for myself, I am thirsting for such grand occasions. What a delight!

Gautama: But, to me, it is no such delight. There might be a thousand cows

. . . but, after seeing them, I felt no joy at all. Rather, I felt unhappy.

Devadatta: What for?

Gautama: This morning, Nachiketa and myself had gone to see the cows. They were being tethered in the grove near the sacrificial hall. What wonderful cows! There was no need to tie them at all!

Devadatta: Why?

Gautama: They were animals which could not run away even if they were left untethered! What to speak of running away, some could scarcely stand. In whatever direction we saw, there were only weak and emaciated, old and decrepit cows. Some could not relish the hay put before them; some had no inclination even to drink the water offered to them! Old ascetics indeed!

. . . It was only after seeing them that Nachiketa, who was quite happy and joyous till then, suddenly became thoughtful and moody. He left the place and came away home.

Devadatta: Oh! Is that so? That was why Vajasrava was searching for him . . . Sometimes, I can't understand this Nachiketa. Instead of being with us all and feeling happy, why should he behave like this?

Gautama: Devadatta, let us not pass remarks without knowing the situation fully. For the present, let us take him with us to the sacrifice.

(A sudden heightened sound of Mantras heard in the background)

Devadatta (excited): There, there! The time of distributing the gifts has arrived. We must see it. Never can I afford to miss it. Let us go, Come on! (Trying to drag

Gautama bodily) If we go on waiting for Nachiketa to come . . .

Gautama: If you wish, you may go; but, I would not come without Nachiketa.

Devadatta: (Scratching his head and staying on half-heartedly): Well, Well!

(As they turn towards the entrance of Nachiketa's home, Nachiketa himself comes out. Gautama greets him enthusiastically.)

Gautama: Nachiketa, Nachiketa! You are here!

(Nachiketa smilingly greets them by way of putting his hands on their shoulders.)

Devadatta: Come, Nachiketa! It is already the time for the gifts. Let us stand close by and witness everything to our heart's content. Come, Come!

Nachiketa: No, Devadatta! I prefer not to go.

Gautama: What is this, Nachiketa? How can you—the only son—stay away from the ceremony? Won't your parents feel hurt? And, what will other people think?

Nachiketa: Gautama, I can appreciate what you say. But, what can I do? Had things been all right, I would gladly have gone with you. But, . . . from the moment I saw those gift-cows this morning, my mind is thoroughly upset. Brooding over it, the brain seems to be burning!

Devadatta: But I can't understand why that should prevent you from going there and participating in the ceremony.

Nachiketa: I do not wish to speak of this to others. But you are my own, dear friends. So, to you only am I disclosing what is in my mind. . . . It seems to me that father is not doing the right thing, as regards the gifts.

Devadatta: What do you say?

Nachiketa: You see, in this great Visvajit sacrifice, the Yajamana should give away all of his possessions, or at least must be prepared to do so. Has not our Guru Vasishtha told us that gifts should be made in a very earnest and reverent way?

Here, the cows are the chief articles of gift. But, instead of making a gift of the best cows, father is giving away only pitiable creatures.

Devadatta: Where a thousand cows are being given away, why should we try to rake up these points and consider them as blemishes?

Nachiketa: Not so, Devadatta! Don't you know that even if we give a little, we should give what is good and with Sraddha?

(Background music:

श्रद्धया देयम् अश्रद्धयाऽदेयम् ।

Taittiriya Up. I. 11.3.)

Devadatta: Then, would it suffice if only two or three good cows are given away?

Nachiketa: Yes, that is the proper thing to do, at least on other occasions. So far as the Visvajit sacrifice is concerned, the performer must give not only the best but also in plenty.

Devadatta: Anyway, hundreds of people would have the good fortune of receiving the gifts. Let them feel grateful for what they get.

Nachiketa: Devadatta! It is the giver who is fortunate, not so much the receiver. It is the giver who gets the merit. It is he who must be grateful. So, one should give in all humility.

Gautama: Give with generosity, give with modesty, give with reverence.

(Background music:

श्रिया देयम् हिया देयम् भिया देयम् ।

Taittiriya Up. I. 11.3.)

Devadatta: Oh! Pandits both! Well, if what Vajasrava is doing is wrong, why don't you speak out to him boldly, instead of brooding here? If I should find any one doing what I think is wrong, I would condemn it downright.

Nachiketa: But I can't do it—and specially where my revered father is concerned. If I speak that way, it would certainly

Devadatta: Then, just keep quiet. Either we should speak out all that we have got to say, or shut up.

Nachiketa: Devadatta! Why are you talking in this manner? Have you forgotten what has been taught to us repeatedly: To speak the truth but in a very agreeable way, never in a harsh way?

(Background music:

सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ।
Manu Samhita, IV. 139.)

Gautama: Nachiketa! If there is no way out of this, why should you unnecessarily worry about it? Let things take their own course. Besides, why should we meddle in the affairs of the elders?

Nachiketa: No Gautama! Remaining mere silent spectators in such a context would do good to none; on the other hand, it does harm. When a wrong is being committed before our very eyes, and even though aware of it, if we do not try to correct it, then we also become a party to it; and we have to share the resultant sin. . . . And, moreover, the person concerned is no stranger. He is my own father worthy of my highest love and reverence. If then, I do not strive to save him from such a situation, do I deserve to be called a son? . . . I must somehow help him; but I do not at present know how to do it.

(A rather harsh and angry voice is heard from the wing, calling 'Nachiketa, Nachiketa'. All the three become alert and listen intently.)

Devadatta: (in a hushed tone) There! That is your father!

Gautama: (Peering in the direction of the voice): Judging by the manner in which he is coming, he seems to be quite angry.

(Enter Vajasrava, his face indicating displeasure. Nachiketa bows down to him.)

Vajasrava: Nachiketa! What is all this? You are absent from the Yajna, just

on this most important day . . . I could find no trace of you ever since the morning.

(Nachiketa keeps silent, bending down his head.)

What is the reason Nachiketa? Are you unwell?

Nachiketa: Father, I am quite well physically, but my mind . . .

Vajasrava: Your mind! What is the matter with it? Wonderful fellow you are! When such a grand sacrifice is going on, to come away and sit brooding here like this! Where did you learn all this perversity? Enough of it. Come, let us go.

Nachiketa: Father, somehow, rituals like this are not to my liking. I would rather be left alone. Pray, permit me to be here.

Vajasrava: (Excited): Oh! Now I understand. It is all the mischievous teaching of that Vasishtha. So, he has sowed the seed of anti-ritualistic ideas in your young brains too. What does he know of the value of rituals and sacrifices!

Nachiketa: No, Father. He is not opposed to them. He only says that they should be performed with reverence and with a knowledge of their meaning, and for the sake of purifying one's mind.

Vajasrava: As if we are doing ignorantly! It seems as though we have to learn these things from you youngsters!

Nachiketa: Forgive me Father! But, in this sacrifice, you are to give away all that belongs to you, all that you consider dear and valuable. Is that not so, Father?

Vajasrava: (becoming red in the face): What else is being done now? Are not a thousand cows being given away?

Gautama: Sir, it was since he saw the cows in the morning that he has become gloomy like this.

Vajasrava: (Still reddening): (Aside) . . . What, even these boys have started commenting on the cows! I must not allow this to proceed any further.

(To Nachiketa): Enough of this foolishness. Come. Let us go to the Yajnasala.

The distribution of gifts cannot be delayed any more. (Changing the tone) . . . Dear boy! How can the ceremony go on without you—my only son, my darling son! Come, come.

Nachiketa: (Aside) Without me the Yajna cannot go on. . . . Then, let it be fulfilled through me. The sacrifice shall certainly find its fulfilment more by the gift of one dear object of love like myself, than by the gift of a thousand useless cows.

(To *Vajasrava*): If I go to the Yajnasala, would you give me away as a gift?

(*Devadatta* smiles at this, thinking it to be a good joke but *Gautama* becomes grave, scenting some serious development.)

Vajasrava: (trying to ignore what he has heard): Giving you! Ridiculous! . . . Now, all of you get along. It is already late.

Nachiketa: (Persisting): If I go there, to whom shall you give me, Father?

(*Vajasrava* does not answer; turns away his face sharply and frowns in obvious anger.)

Nachiketa: Father! To whom will you give me?

Vajasrava: (Exploding with wrath): Give you to whom? To whom? To Death, to Yama I give you! . . .

(*Devadatta* and *Gautama* stand aghast.)

Nachiketa: (Taken aback and pained at the statement, the mind in a whirl) To Death, to Yama! Father, what have you done! Why are you so angry with me, your ever-obedient son? Have I not always acted just according to your bidding, and always with the greatest care? Why then did you say that you have given me to Death? . . . And of what use would I be to Death? . . . (Slowly) Death! . . . Death! . . . Yama!! (Passes into a trance and collapses. *Vajasrava* supports the falling boy. All the three anxiously try to bring him round by sprinkling water, fanning, etc.)

Vajasrava: (holding on to his son): Oh

words spoken in the heat of anger would produce such serious consequences? . . . Let him somehow become normal now; never again shall I speak such words!

(To *Devadatta*) You go to the Yajnasala at once and inform the priests that I am being delayed here unexpectedly.

(As *Vajasrava* again begins to fan him, *Nachiketa* opens his eyes.)

Vajasrava: *Nachiketa*! My child! Thank God, you have come round. (Heaves a sigh of relief).

Nachiketa: (Sitting supported) Oh Father! You have given me away to Yama, to Death, the terrible!

Vajasrava: No, my child. Don't be afraid. I did not at all mean what I said. Who would ever think of giving to Death such a gem of a son as you? I have not yet become so foolish, my child! They were just mere words spoken in anger.

Nachiketa: (Slowly rising and in a serious mood) But, Father! You have uttered the words, and that when you are under the vow of the Yajna, and further during the very occasion of bestowing gifts. How can you go back, Father, on your own words uttered under such circumstances?

Vajasrava: (Stunned) (Aside) Though still a boy, what he says is the truth. But what a terrible truth!

(To *Nachiketa*) What is this, my child! I never meant what I said. So, why should you interpret it like this? Can I ever give you to Yama?

Nachiketa: But, Father, you must act up to your word. Never does the Arya forsake the path of truth. How can we give up the glorious truth for the sake of this insignificant life? It cannot be.

(*Vajasrava* stands aghast, turning pale.) For your sake, Father, . . . for my sake, . . . for the sake of Truth, please keep up your word. You must send me to Death . . . Death! . . . Yama! (Again sinks into a semi-conscious state.)

Vajasrava: Don't speak like this, *Nachi-*

my son. I admit that the gift of cows is not being made properly. I shall correct my mistake. Please don't get angry with me. Somehow save the child, save him! (Passing his hand over the boy's forehead, and giving a start) Oh! Oh! It is burning, hot as fire . . .

Nachiketa: (with a start) Lo! The voice, the Voice! It is the voice of Death. Listening to it, as in a dream, and rising up) I come! . . . I come! . . . No, — Father never goes back on his word; he is certainly truthful. . . . Death! Yama! . . . He is indeed terrible. But why should I fear?

(Background music:

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

Brihadaranyaka Up. I. 3.28.)

Nachiketa (Listening to it joyously), What? . . . I can attain immortality through death? . . . Here, I come! . . . I come!

(As he tries to go forward with outstretched hands, collapses. *Vajasrava* stands in despair.) (Lights fade off. Curtain.)

SCENE III.

(Yama Loka or the Region of Death. Semi-darkness. Weird shadows pass across the back screen. Weird hushed sounds break the otherwise unearthly silence and fade off.

From the background music arises the chant

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

(Lead me from death to immortality) just as it did at the end of the second scene.)

(Lights become brighter. Enter from one wing *Chitra* and *Vichitra*.)

Vichitra: (Looking in the direction of the other wing) Who is that? (Peering intently) *Chitra*! Some one seems to be coming by the Uttara Patha—the Northern Path. . . . A boy!

Chitra: (Also peering) By the Northern Path! Then it must be an extraordinary . . . times this is impossi-

ble. They have to come only by the Southern Path. . . . Such an extraordinary event occurs but once or twice in a thousand years!

Vichitra: Then we should have to inform the Master immediately.

Chitra: No, no! The Master has now retired into Tapas; and he has given me very strict orders that he is not to be disturbed under any circumstances, that he would see none until the Tapas is over.

Vichitra: Then let us ourselves greet this soul fittingly and inquire who he is and why he has come.

(By now *Nachiketa* has entered, as though walking in sleep. Once more the background chant—softly:

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।)

Nachiketa: (Looking around) Everything seems strange—as a dream. I wonder where I am!

Chitra: (Coming near *Nachiketa*) Kumara! May good betide you!

Nachiketa: (Still in a daze) Where am I? Everything is strange!

Vichitra: Yes, my child. This is Yama-Loka.

Nachiketa: (Gives a start as he hears the word 'Yama' and regains external consciousness) Yama-Loka! . . . Then, pray, who are you?

Chitra: We are the servants of Lord Yama. Dear child! Please tell us who you are. Where did you come from? And, how did you come in this manner?

Nachiketa: I have come to Yamaraja. 'Nachiketa' is my name. My revered father has offered me as a gift to Death, during the performance of Visvajit sacrifice; and I have come to implement his words.

Vichitra: A son coming of his own accord to Yama, in order to fulfil the father's words! Blessed are you, blessed indeed!

Nachiketa: Where is Yamaraja? Would you please take me to him?

Chitra : He is now in strict seclusion, in Tapas, my dear child! We are sorry you cannot see him till he comes out of it.

Nachiketa : I would wait until he comes out.

Chitra : Then first have some refreshments and rest yourself.

Nachiketa : But, before seeing Yamaraja, how can I take any food? First I must see him . . .

Vichitra : (Aside) Ah! What a marvellous Sraddha! What a devotion to duty!

Chitra : There is nothing wrong in accepting our offering, my child! It is not gross, earthly food; it is ambrosia fit to sustain your subtle body! If you don't take anything, you would become exhausted.

Nachiketa : Forgive me please! But, before seeing Yamaraja it would be impos-

sible for me to accept any food. I would wait just as I am. Please permit me to do so.

Vichitra : (Aside) Ah! Sraddha itself is the life, the sustaining energy of this wonderful lad.

Chitra : Then, my child! Please be seated here. Or, if you like, you may just be walking about in the vicinity. . . . Rest assured that we shall inform the Master about you at the earliest possible moment.

Nachiketa : Please do so.

(*Chitra and Vichitra retire, casting back glances of loving appreciation at Nachiketa. Nachiketa also takes a step or two and then sits on the rock closeby.*)

(Curtain)

(To be continued.)

THE PRAYER OF A BOUND SOUL

BY A DEVOTEE

Tied by the strings of desire
Like a corps on a pyre
I lie—helpless and prostrate.

Maya, the mocking maid,
Has wreaths of flowers on me laid
To bury the stench of self-consuming flesh.

Smothered in 'samigri' and 'ghee'
I lie a bonded slave, no longer free
All set for Agni's leaping flames.

Yet Freedom's breath is not all fled
I feel that I am not quite dead
For I can see my own undoing.

Let captive wings burst into flight
Let flames that burn turn into light
Let Maya's farce come to an end.

The chafing chains of tortured frame
The tongues of bounding crackling flame
I still can feel and see and dread.

But save myself I cannot do;
My God of Gods I turn to you
For hope of freedom—life divine.

My sole Refuge, Thy lotus feet
Are source of waters, cool and sweet
Of love and faith and purity.

Vouchsafe me just a drop of this
'Charanamrit' of Thy boundless bliss
That I may count myself as Thine.

THE CATALAN MYSTIC RAMÓN LULL AND HIS BOOK OF THE LOVER AND THE BELOVED

WOLFRAM H. KOCH

'Blanquerna was in prayer, and he reflected how he had contemplated God and his virtues. And when he had finished his prayer he wrote down his thoughts; and this he did day by day, and he changed his prayers every time in accordance with the new inspirations so that he composed the Book of the Lover and the Beloved (*Libre de Amic e Amat*) in manifold ways. And he took care that the meditations became short in order that the soul could grasp many of them in a short time.

With God's blessing Blanquerna began the book, which he divided into as many verses as there are days in a year. And each verse was enough for contemplating God a whole day long in accordance with the art he taught in the Book of Contemplation (*Libre de contemplacio*).

The author of the *Libre de Amic e Amat*, Ramón Lull (1235-1316) is one of the strangest personalities of that age. He was a typical Troubadour—a real minstrel of love—and remained a Troubadour all his life to the very last. His was a personal passion of love, not any abstract concept of love, nothing like the abstract idea of loving humanity or God or praising Charity. There was nothing abstract about him. It might be said that he did not love Christianity but Jesus Christ—his Beloved—, that he did not love humanity but individual men and women. What, before his conversion, he would have been ready to do for a woman in a spirit of perfect recklessness, he was ready to do for his Beloved for the rest of his life, but the wild, flaming impulse remained the same,—undiluted by intellectual speculations or any merely abstract intellectual or philosophical convictions. Love for him was not a new sudden awakening, only his wild, passionate love for women was suddenly changed into a reckless, passionate love for God. After having been for many years a knight errant of love in an out-and-out worldly sense, a worldly Troubadour writing and singing his love-lyrics, he became a Troubadour of God, a Joculator Domini; but the great power of love swaying all his life remained the same,—

the one driving power of all his actions and thoughts.

Ramón Lull, the layman, wandered for more than forty years through Western and Eastern countries in order to teach his Beloved to the ignorant and to defend the Kingdom of his Beloved wherever he believed it to be in danger or to be altogether unknown.

His home was the beautiful and picturesque island of Mallorca, which at that time was a point of connection between the two great Mediterranean cultures, the Christian-Occidental and the Islamic-Oriental one. For after the reconquest of the island by James I of Aragón, there still lived numerous Moors in its towns and villages and made Ramón Lull in early childhood realize the deep-rooted racial, political and religious differences of the many-coloured world around him. That is why later on we find a marked Islamic influence in many of his writings; very strongly so in his *Libre de Amic e Amat*, some of its metaphors having most certainly been suggested to him by the verses and sayings of the Sufis.

His father had taken part in reconquering the island and had been rewarded with very considerable landed property by James I. As a page to the king and later

on as seneschal to his son who was made King of Mallorca by his royal father, he early in life acquired those princely connexions and courtly manners which later stood him in good stead in his relations with the spiritual and worldly dignitaries of his time.

At first court-life hopelessly corrupted his morals and his whole outlook on life, so much so that even his marriage with one of the noblest daughters of the land could not bring about the slightest change.

In those years he occupied himself chiefly with the composition of love-songs in the style of the Provençal Troubadours, but not one of them has been preserved. In spite of that we know how strongly the lyric poetry of his later writings, most of all his *Libre de Amic e Amat*, his *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, was influenced by the Provençal poetry of his time.

It was during his occupation with the 'Gay Art', the 'Gai Saber', that he suddenly became converted by a vision of the Crucified Christ. He himself says in some verses of his 'Desconort' (Desolation):

'When I was young and, possessed by the vanity of the world, I committed evil deeds and took the road of vice, forgot the Lord and followed the call of the flesh. But Jesus Christ in his great love had pity on the sinner and five times showed himself to me on the cross, whereby, seized with longing and love, I began to make known to the world his Trinity and his Humanity. I was filled with a great will that aimed at nothing but his honour, and thus I began thanking and serving him.' (Desconort 2)

His conversion took place in his thirtieth year. From that day his whole life became changed, and we know that he spent the following fifty years entirely in the service of his Beloved—of what he called in his *Desconort* his 'Great Will'.

He sold all his possessions, provided for his wife and his children and started on a pilgrimage to the holy places of Spain:—Santiago and the Montserrat.

At the age of forty he withdrew to Mount Randa, a hill rising out of the plain not far from Palma, where he found the solitude he longed for and enjoyed the great rapture of being lost to all ordinary earthly things and cares.

On the eighth day of his solitary meditation he is said to have received through Divine inspiration the plan of his philosophical system, the 'Great Art' (*Ars Magna*), which henceforth became the foundation of all his later philosophical and apologetic work.

After coming back from Mount Randa he composed several of his ascetic and philosophical writings, among them one of his masterpieces, the 'Book of Contemplation' (*Libre de contemplació*), full of deep inwardness and faith. The sensation created by it induced King James of Mallorca to call him to his court at Montpellier where we find him writing his novel 'Blanquerna', (about 1283), a magnificent utopian scheme for a theocracy on earth, containing as one of its most precious parts his famous *Libre de Amic e Amat*—Book of the Lover and the Beloved.

King James of Mallorca, who had always remained his friend, was so captivated by his ideas and his new conception of life that he granted him the means for the foundation of a school for oriental languages at Miramar on Mallorca. Thirteen Franciscans became its first students, but we do not know anything of its further development. In his *Desconort* written in 1295 we find Ramón Lull already lamenting over its decline.

In the following years he led the life of a knight errant of God and seems to have visited North-Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Abyssinia and Turkey, wholly possessed by the wish to bring the Kingdom of God to both Christians and Non-Christians and to make them realize him as he himself had experienced him at the time of his conver-

sion. He met countless obstacles and was disillusioned again and again by the dignitaries of the Church and by many of those whom he wanted to convert, and several times almost stoned to death by the furious mob and taken prisoner.

In one of his writings he touchingly confesses:

'I had a wife and children, was rich, irresponsible, scatter-brained, and worldly. I renounced everything out of my own free will, so as to honour God and encourage faith. I learnt Arabic, and went several times to the Saracens to preach to them. For the sake of my faith I was caught, imprisoned and beaten. For 45 years I tried to make the leaders and princes of Christendom act for the welfare of all. Now I am old and poor. But I am still pursuing the same goal, and shall continue to do so until my death if it be pleasing to the Lord.'

Towards the end of his life, in the summer 1314, Ramón Lull once more went to North-Africa—to Bugia and Tunis—but the fury of the mob was so great when they heard him preaching that, one day, he was almost stoned to death and seriously injured. Christian merchants took him on board one of their ships. On the way he is said to have died (spring 1316) in full view of the coast of Mallorca. He had reached the goal of all his ceaseless wanderings after having faithfully served his Beloved for more than fifty years.

There is a verse in his *Libre de Amic e Amat* which strangely seems to describe his fate:

'Love is a sea moved by wind and waves that has no haven or coast. The lover was drowned in the sea, and along with him were drowned his torments. But his merits floated on the surface.'

Before and after his conversion, all through his life, love had given Ramón Lull no respite and mercilessly driven him on and on; and love had brought him untold pain, disillusionment and frustration, and with them the highest fulfilment and joy.

In his writings Ramón Lull very rarely mentions Christ. For his God was far less a God of suffering than a God of love and joy who contained within himself all perfections, who manifested himself at all places, in every form of being, whose truest dwelling-place was the heart of the lover. But then his true lover, he who really knew how to love him, had to throw away everything that could be an obstacle to the attainment of the highest Divine vision: the world, the family, his home, himself, his will, his intellect. All these call the lover a fool and thus make him realize how very few there are in the world who are prepared to live for the Beloved, and how great is the number of the indifferent and the ignorant who do not really care for God or for religion even when they are muttering their prayers and visiting churches and temples. To Ramón Lull, love should at all times be the one and only centre of life. It should be life and death at the same time and yet not be touched by either of them. It should become the dominating factor in all fields of activity. It should ceaselessly kill and renew the will of the lover. It should at all times and at all places be completely free and completely disinterested, — entirely pure and unselfish. Ramón Lull was convinced that such a love finally led to the highest mystical union between the lover and the Beloved. But to him there could never be any identification between the two. For even during the very highest spiritual experience vouchsafed to a man, his personality is fully maintained, and he and his Beloved remain two distinctly separate entities; only the dense veil between the two being removed. Thus in his teaching and experience there is neither Pantheism nor any form of Panentheism, which would have made him a heretic in the eyes of orthodox Christians.

In none of his writings has Ramón Lull given expression in so profound and at the

same time so radiant and living a form to his love for his Beloved as in the Book of the Lover and the Beloved, the *Libre de Amic e Amat*, which still—after almost 700 years, has remained one of the gems and chief breviaries of mystical love in Christian mystical literature. Through it he became a solitary but brilliant precursor of the great 16th century Spanish mystics like Francisco de Osuna, Luis de Granada, Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and Juan de los Angeles. He himself, however, does not seem to have been aware of this uniqueness of his booklet forming the fifth part of his novel 'Blanquerna'.

For want of space only a few of the 366 verses of the *Libre de Amic e Amat* can be given.

'The Lover asked his Beloved if there remained anything for him to love. And the Beloved answered: There still remains to love what might increase the love of the lover.

The roads on which the Lover seeks his Beloved are long and beset with many dangers and peopled with meditations, sighs, tears, and illumined by love.

When will the Lover be able to boast that he is dying for his Beloved? And the Beloved,—when will he see the Lover perish from love?

The Lover said to the Beloved: You who fill the sun with splendour, fill my heart with love! The Beloved replied: Without the fulfilment of love your eyes would not be wetted by tears, nor would you have come to this place in order to behold Him who loves you.

The bird sang in the garden of the Beloved. The Lover came and said to the bird: If we do not understand one another through language, we understand one another through love; for in your song my eyes are beholding the Beloved.

The Beloved tested the Lover whether he was perfect in love: and He asked him

about the difference between the Beloved's presence and absence. The Lover replied: The difference is the same as that between ignorance and knowledge, between forgetting and remembering.

Loving fool! Why do you destroy your body and give away your money? And why do you despise the joys of this world and go about scorned among men? He replied: In order to seek the honour of my Beloved, who is dishonoured and scorned by more men than he is honoured and loved.

The Lover was asked: Where do you go?—I am coming from my Beloved.—Where do you come from?—I am going to my Beloved.—When will you come back?—I shall be with my Beloved.—How long will you be with your Beloved?—As long as my thoughts will be with Him.

The keys to the doors of love are gilded with meditations, sighs and tears; the chain holding the keys is composed of conscience and repentance, piety and penitence; the doorkeepers are righteousness and compassion.

The Lover knocked at the door of his Beloved with the blows of love and hope. The Beloved heard the knocking of His Lover with humility and piety, patience and love. Divinity and Humanity opened their doors, and the Lover went in so as to behold the Beloved.

A two-fold fire warms the love of the Lover; the one is stacked with longings, joys and thoughts, the other with fear, sorrow, tears and laments.

The Lover longed for solitude and went away in search of the company of his Beloved. For with Him he was alone even while dwelling among men.

To be near or to be far away are of equal worth to the Lover and his Beloved; for as water and wine mingle, thus mingles their love: and as the sun and moon

their love is linked; and as essence and being are united, thus they, too, are united.

The Lover walked pensively on the roads of his Beloved. He stumbled and fell among the thorns, but to him they were like flowers, and he seemed to be lying on a bed of love.

The Lover found himself caught, fettered, wounded and killed for the sake of his love for his Beloved, and those who tortured him asked him: Where is your Beloved?—He replied: Behold Him here in my greater Love and in the strength He gives me in my agony.

The Lover wept and sang the songs of his Beloved. And he said: The love in the heart of the Lover is quicker than the flash of lightning and the peal of thunder; and the tears of love flow faster than the waves of the sea; and closer to love are the sighs than the white colour is to the snow.

The Lover went through a town singing like a fool of his Beloved. And the people asked him whether he had lost his reason. He replied: My Beloved has taken my will, and I myself have given Him my reason. Therefore only memory is left me, with which I think of my Beloved.

The Lover went about full of longing for his Beloved, and he met two friends greeting one another with love and tears, embracing and kissing one another. The Lover lost consciousness, so strongly did the two friends remind him of his Beloved.

The Lover was asked: What is your wealth?—He replied: The poverty I am bearing for the sake of my Beloved.—And what is your rest?—The restlessness given me by love.—And who is your physician?—The confidence I have in my Beloved.—And who is your teacher?—The evidence which creatures give me of my Beloved.

Say, fool! If your Beloved no longer loved you, what would you do?—I should go on loving Him in order not to die. For not loving is death, and loving is life.

The Lover was asked what happiness was.—He replied: Unhappiness endured through love.

The roads of love are long and short: for love is pure, bright, true, delicate, simple, strong, zealous, radiant and overflowing in new thoughts and old memories.

The Lover was asked about the fruits of love. He answered: They are thoughts, wishes, sighs, anxieties, troubles, dangers, torments, longing. Without such fruits Love will not have anything to do with her servants.

The Lover called the people at the top of his voice, telling them that they were commanded by love to love while walking and standing, waking and sleeping, speaking and keeping silence, in joy and in suffering, while buying and selling, winning and losing: in everything they did they were to love; for such was the law of love.

The Lover went in search of his Beloved, and he came across a man who was dying without love. And he told him what a great loss it was for a man to be dying a death without love. And the Lover said to the man: Tell me, why are you dying without love?—He replied: Because I have lived without love.

The Lover asked his Beloved, which was greater: love or loving. The Beloved answered that in the creature love was the tree, and loving the fruit; and that hardship and grief were the flowers and leaves. In God love and loving were one and the same without hardship and grief.

Say, fool! What is a miracle?—To love absent things more than present ones; and to love visible and perishable things more than the invisible and imperishable ones.

The Lover went across country, over hills and dales, and he could not find a gate through which he could escape from his prison of love, which had so long a time kept imprisoned his body, his thoughts, and all his wishes and joys.

Say, fool! Are you not ashamed when people see you weeping for your Beloved?—He answered that shame which does not arise from sin showed a deficiency in the love of him who did not know how to love.

The Lover was asked what was the greatest darkness. He answered: The absence of my Beloved.—And he was asked, what was the greatest light. He said: The presence of my Beloved.

The Lover spoke these words to the people: He who really thinks of my Beloved forgets everything else in his memory. And he who forgets all things in order to think of my Beloved will be protected by my Beloved in everything and by Him made to participate in everything.

People made fun of the Lover and found fault with him, because he went about like a fool of love. And the Lover despised their derision and blamed them, because they did not love his Beloved.

Say, fool who go about like a fool of love! How long do you want to be a slave and to be forced to weep and to suffer torments and adversity? He answered: Until my Beloved separates my body from my soul.

Say, fool! What can be compared better than anything else? And what has the greatest similarity? He answered: The Lover and the Beloved.—He was asked why.—He answered: Because of the love existing between them.

Say, fool! Have you money?—He answered: I have my Beloved.—Have you villages, castles, cities, counties or duchies?—He answered: I have love, thoughts, tears, wishes, afflictions, which are worth more than kingdoms and empires.

The Lover was asked what was farthest away from his heart. He answered: Indifference.—He was asked why.—He answered: Because that which is closest to my heart,—love, is the opposite of indifference.

Say, fool! Are you envious?—He answered: Yes, every time I forget the generosity and the wealth of my Beloved.

Say, Lover! Are you rich?—He answered: Yes, in love.—Are you poor?—Yes, poor in love.—Why?—Because my love is not great enough, and because it does not inflame enough lovers who pay my Beloved honour.

Say, Lover! Where is your power?—He answered: In the power of my Beloved.—Wherewith do you arm yourself against your enemies?—With the strength of my Beloved.—Wherewith do you console yourself?—With the eternal treasures of my Beloved.

Say, fool! Why do you have such a great love?—He answered: Long and dangerous is the road on which I am seeking my Beloved. I must seek with great faith, and I must walk with great speed,—and all this I cannot accomplish without great love.

Say, fool! How can you become more like your Beloved?—He answered: By learning to understand and to love the nature of my Beloved with all my strength.

The Beloved asked His Lover whether he had patience. He answered: All things are pleasing to me, and therefore there is not anything that could make me impatient. For he who is not master of his will cannot be impatient.

Love is a sea moved by wind and waves having neither haven nor coast. The Lover was drowned in that sea, and with him were drowned his torments. But his merits floated on the surface.

Say, fool! Have you seen a man who has lost his senses?—He said he had seen a bishop who had many silver beakers, dishes and knives on his table, and in his room many clothes and a large bed, and in his chests much money, but at the door of his palace there were but few poor people.

The Lover painted and formed with his imagination the features of his Beloved in

physical things, and with his understanding he lifted them up into spiritual regions, and with his will he adored them in everything that is created.

On the day of judgment the Beloved will order man to put on one side all that the Beloved has given him in this world, and on the other side what man has given the world, so that it might become manifest how sincerely he has loved the Beloved, and which of the two sides is greater and heavier.

One day, while the Lover was praying, he noticed that his eyes did not weep, and in order to be able to weep he turned his thoughts towards money, women, children, eating and fame, and he discovered in his understanding: The more people have these things as servants,

the less they have their Beloved. And thus his eyes were filled by tears, and his heart became wrapped up in sadness and pain.

Say, fool! What is religion?—He answered: Purity of thought, the wish to die for the honour of my Beloved, renunciation of the world so that there is no obstacle to contemplation and to proclaiming His honour.

Say, fool! What is this world?—He answered: A prison for the lovers and servants of my Beloved.—And who is it that imprisons them?—He answered: Conscience, love, fear, renunciation, contrition on the one hand, and on the other hand the company of bad men and the hardships that remain unrewarded where they are punishment.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Once I was reading a Bengali Book on Conversations with Swami Shivananda, another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and there I found he stated:

When we lived with Sri Ramakrishna did we know that he was such a great soul? We were simply overpowered by his love and we were living in that atmosphere of love. It is hard to believe that in a body three cubits and a half in length there could be so much spiritual power. As days go by I feel it more and more.

When I read this I was startled. Because exactly that is what is felt about them. When we lived with the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, it did not occur to us what would be their spiritual height, what would be their measure of greatness. We got overflowing love from them. That was enough and in that we knew lay our safety. We felt we were safe in every way, in earthly way as well as in a spiritual way. It did not occur to us that there would come a time when we would feel their phy-

sical absence. Now one feels blessed to hear and remember what they taught. Those who could not know them, did not see them, might feel this a sentiment, an outcome of exaggerated devotion; they are perfectly right. I would not blame them, because they did not see them. It is not a common thing to see a man of God, in physical frame talking with you. You may see a person aspiring after spiritual things, you may see a person intense in his devotion, but it is a rare thing to see a person with whom life is not a matter of spiritual struggle, but a matter of spiritual realization and whose only concern is to share the joy with others. We saw such persons with our own eyes and as time is passing, they loom larger before our eager eyes.

If you read the lives of many Christian mystics, you find that they are as it were always bending low under the weight of sins. They struggle and struggle and do

not succeed even after great struggle. But we have the privilege of meeting some of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. With them there was no word of despair, of painful spiritual struggle. Theirs was a life of joy and great spiritual achievement. At the same time they were so human, and only human qualities were seen in them in a much greater degree. I have not seen any other person who can be more affectionate. Everyone felt that he got the same degree of love from them. They also felt the same thing with regard to Sri Ramakrishna. Everyone felt that he was receiving the greatest amount of love from Sri Ramakrishna. It is the characteristic of spiritual greatness. Why was there so much of struggle in the life of Christian saints from which the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were free? This thought occurred to me. Perhaps it is due to the fact that these disciples were the first disciples of an incarnation. They were able to be with him directly and therefore there was not so much of spiritual struggle.

When a person comes to us, in his struggle, in his difficulties we encourage him, try to console him with words about which we are sometimes not even sure. For instance, we say God will take care of you. But we are not sure whether God will definitely take care of you now or here. But with them it was not like that. They were always sure of what they said. Not only that, their words will give you strength and spiritual assistance throughout your life. All of them were of that type and one can easily see God was a living presence with them. When you talked with them they were very normal human beings, reading newspapers, discussing the problems of the country. But when they began talking of God and spiritual things one could feel at once that God was a kind of living reality with them. To be in their presence means all your doubts about the existence of God go away. When you are in their presence it would be hard

for you to resist the feeling that God is a living reality. They may not be giving spiritual discourses; they may not be talking high philosophical things. One or two stray words that would drop from their lips would be sufficient to indicate that God was a living presence with them. When listening to their words, one would feel that it was easy for him also to realise God in his life. One felt this way in their presence but afterwards one felt the necessity for struggle. One feels the warmth when one goes near fire, but when one goes away from near the fire one feels the coldness. It is in the same way that one feels it is easy to realise God in their presence, but when one goes away from them, one finds the necessity for struggle.

This aspect became very prominent even outwardly in the life of Swami Ramakrishnananda. There are many incidents about how he lived in Madras and worshipped Sri Ramakrishna who was his God. Sri Ramakrishna was a living reality with him. On several nights when the weather was hot he would go to the shrine and fan the picture of Sri Ramakrishna. It was not a picture for him, but it was a living reality. I heard that once a big official of Madras Government who was not so much interested in religion, saw Swami Ramakrishnananda while worshipping, his face radiant with devotion. By seeing this scene, his outlook of religion changed. It is because when you come in contact with a living person like Swami Ramakrishnananda, you are compelled to feel that there is another world which is also real. The devotion of Swami Ramakrishnananda to Sri Ramakrishna was dynamic like that of Hanuman to Sri Rama. You have heard how he served Sri Ramakrishna during his illness. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, his relics were a living reality with Sri Ramakrishnananda. He worshipped the relics with the same steadfast devotion. Other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna would go to

other places, but Swami Ramakrishnananda did not leave the relics. He did not go on any pilgrimage, leaving the Baranagore Math and was steadfast there. From that standpoint Swami Ramakrishnananda laid the foundation of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He served his brother monks when in their spiritual ecstasy they would forget about their health, food and drink. He was ready to take up or took up some job so that he could meet the financial needs to serve his brother monks. Such was his devotion not only to Sri Ramakrishna but to his brother disciples also.

When Swami Vivekananda asked him, he at once came to Madras to work. Swami Vivekananda was a living presence with him. On coming to the centre after some lecture engagement, he would go before the picture of Swami Vivekananda and pray to him that he might not develop any egotism of becoming a spiritual teacher. He worked hard. Once he was asked how he could work so hard even in difficult circumstances. He gave a reply and the reply was so

unique. He said: Suppose there is a pen; when you write with that pen, the pen does not grumble, the pen does not feel tired. So also how can one feel tired if one knows or feels that one is only an instrument in the hands of God? But even an instrument wears out in time. He worked so hard that he fell sick and did not live long. Once Swami Ramakrishnananda went to take some class in the city but no one turned up in the class. All the same Swami Ramakrishnananda opened his book and began to conduct the class at the appointed time. When asked why he did this, the Swami said: 'I do not hold the class for others. I do it for myself. It is my spiritual duty. It does not matter whether people come or not.' He lived such an intense life.

After a few years, the work he started spread in South India. It was the outcome of an intense life he lived, the power of the intense spiritual life of Swami Ramakrishnananda. A spiritual centre grows not out of spiritual paraphernalia, but only out of intense spiritual life.

THE SACRED MONOSYLLABLE OM

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA

Om is the Name of the Nameless, the common symbol of God, Isvara, or Brahman. Om is the essence of the Vedas and Vedas are the exposition of Om. Om is the basis for life, thought and action. Om covers the three-fold experience of man. Om is the first and the last word of every religious ceremony. The aspirants that realize the meaning and mystery of Om, enjoy supreme bliss.

Om is verbally or mentally repeated with one's heart, mind and soul entirely applied to it. Actions are performed as an adoration of Om. The glory of Om is sung, being awake in Truth.

The sublime philosophy of Om teaches the identity of the individual self with the supreme Self. It removes the illusion of the *Jiva* and melts the dream of the illusive world in the wakefulness of Om. It is the magnanimous philosophy that lifts life from the mire of matter and is indeed a panacea, a sovereign specific for all the woes and wounds of the world.

The assimilation and application of Om destroys the undercurrents of passion, greed, hatred, pride, jealousy and egoism, root and branch. Om is the solace of life and the ultimate Reality.

The whole world is, in and of Om. The universe comes from Om, rests in Om, and

dissolves in Om. Om is everything from A to Z, from beginning to end, and is the alpha and omega of everything.

Words denoting objects are centered in Om. The life of all words is vowels. A vowel is not pronounced as a consonant is done. A vowel shines by itself. A consonant is pronounced with a vowel before or after it, and not by itself. As body depends on the Self for its existence, the consonants depend on the vowels for their pronunciation. Likewise all letters of the alphabets of all languages are in, rest on, and dissolve in Om.

All names and forms of this universe are contained in this mysterious, sacred monosyllable Om for their existence. Om is the solemn and solid reality, radiating peace, joy, calmness, serenity, etc.

Om is the most appropriate name of Brahman. Om is the native name of one and all.

When we hear the sound 'tree', we immediately understand that it has roots, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. Similarly when we hear the sound Om, it denotes our true nature of divinity.

There are four aspects, namely, Shabda, Artha, Jnana, and Anubhava. Shabda means sound, name, *nama*. Artha means *rupa*, form. Jnana means wisdom of *Satchidananda*, the basic universal Consciousness behind and beyond name and form, *nama* and *rupa*. Anubhava means Self-realization, the *Satchidananda* Brahman.

In other words, the name and the object signified by the name are one and the same. The sound 'pot' is Shabda and its form is Artha. *Nama* and *rupa* are one and constitute the nature of the world. Negate them, there is no world. Then there is only Jnana (wisdom), the *Sat Chit Anand*, the basic Atman. The realization of this Jnana is Anubhava of oneself as Atman.

For example, when we say or hear 'Om', it is Shabda. When the Shabda denotes *Sat Chit Anand*, our true nature, it is Artha. The Shabda 'Om' and Its Artha (meaning) are comprehensible and relative, being only intellect-deep. When we go still deeper, i.e. when we transcend the theoretical and superficial experience of mind and intellect, and of name and form of the universe, we touch the basic principle *Satchidanand* which is the true dawn of wisdom beyond the worldly triplet knower-knowledge-known. This is Jnana. And when this wisdom of the Self Supreme becomes our very being, then it is Anubhava (practical realization, the glory and goal of life).

So our usual course is from Shabda to Shabda-artha, from Shabda-artha to Artha-jnana, from Artha-jnana to Jnana-anubhava (swanubhava).

Thought and word are inseparable. Name and form are inseparable. Shabda and Artha are inseparable. And Om and Self are inseparable. Om represents all symbols of God and all symbols of religions.

The common symbol of Om is the basis of all sounds and all languages. Om is the right and natural symbol or womb of all sounds and words, intelligence and actions.

Amen of the Christians and *Ahmeen* of the Muslims are modifications of Om only. 'Sat Nam Ek Omkar' (Real Name, One OM) said Guru Nanak.

Om is the cream of the Upanishads, the crest-jewel of the Vedas, the supreme pinnacle of Vedanta, the soul of all religions and cults, the harmonious vibration of microcosm and macrocosm.

Om is called Pranava as it runs through *prana* or breath or pervades life. Om is both *saguna* and *nirguna*, (*sakara* and *nirakara*).

In Chandogya Upanishad it is said that the essence of essences is the *Udgitha* which

is a combination of *Rik* (speech) and *Sama* (vital breath) and which is the syllable Om. Devas adopted the three-fold knowledge of the Vedas, protecting themselves with the metrical hymns called *Chhandas* but they were not free from Death. Finally they entered the asylum of voice — *Swara* (OM). Taking Its support, they became immortal and secure.

In Kathopanishad Yama says to Nachiketas that the goal which all the Vedas speak of, which all penances proclaim and wishing for which they lead the life of Brahmacharya, that goal is OM.

In Prasnopanishad, Pippalada tells Satyakama that the syllable Om is the higher and lower Brahman, that the three *matras* (A, U, M), if employed separately, are mortal, that they are to be properly employed in all the internal, external and middle functions, and that the wise by means of Om arrive at that which is quiet, undecaying, deathless, fearless and supreme.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that this Om is the Veda and that one knows through It all that has to be known.

In Mundaka Upanishad, Pranava Om is the bow, the Atman is the arrow, and the Brahman is called its aim. It is to be hit by him who is self-collected. As the arrow becomes one with the target, he becomes one with Brahman. Meditating thus on OM as the Self, he goes to the other side beyond darkness.

Taittiriya Upanishad declares that the Lord of all, pre-eminent among the Vedas in the form of Om, is ever immortal and leads one, with such knowledge of the Self, to immortality.

Swetaswata Upanishad states that the soul is pervaded within the body by the sacred word Om, like the fire is concealed in its cause, the wood. Making the body the lower piece of wood and the sacred Pranava Om the upper piece, one should practice meditation as the rubbing and rea-

lize the Self as the concealed fire is made manifest through percussion. One should hold the upper part of the body erect, other parts steady, and subdue the senses and the mind within the heart, and should, with the raft of Brahman Om, cross over all the dreadful worldly currents.

In Dhyana-bindu Upanishad it is clear that the *Akshara* (OM) should be contemplated upon as Brahman, uninterrupted as the flow of oil. The Vedas have Omkara as their cause. One should worship Omkara as Isvara as unshaken Light in the lotus of the heart. The Atma is the lower *arani* (sacrificial wood) and Pranava the upper *arani*. One should realize the Self in secret through the practice of churning which is *dhyana*. The *ardhamatra* of Pranava burns all sins and bestows salvation.

In Naradaparivrajaka Upanishad, Paramesti (Brahma) enlightens Narada thus: Omkara is Brahman, being both *vyasti* (individual) and *samasti* (cosmic). Brahma Pranava is one only, the substratum and support of the whole universe. Omkara is indestructible in past, present and future, immortal and ageless. Become aware that your Atma is Parabrahman.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna declares in the Gita: I am syllable OM in all the Vedas. Having closed the gates, confined the mind in the heart, fixed the life-breath in the head, uttering the one syllabled OM, the Brahman and remembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains the Supreme Goal.

Mandukyopanishad explains lucidly thus: Om, the word is verily all this, the past, the present, the future and that which is beyond the triple conception of time, manifest or unmanifest. All this is verily Brahman. This Atman is Brahman.

This Atman has four quarters namely Visva, or the waking state; Taijasa, or the dream state; Prajna, or the state of dreamless sleep; and Turiya, or the state of Pure

Consciousness, same as the attributeless Brahman.

Visva experiences the gross; Taijasa, the subtle; and Prajna, the blissful. A man says "I, who now am perceiving objects in the waking state, saw forms in the dream state and experienced their cessation in deep sleep." So the experiencer of the three states is really one.

The first three quarters correspond to the three *matras* or letters A, U and M of Om. The fourth quarter of Om (Turiya figuratively called a quarter) is *amatra* or without a *matra* or letter, and has no differentiated sound. Turiya is no part but Brahman Itself.

Realization of Turiya is possible by merging three quarters into It i.e. the waking state in the dream state, this dream state in the dreamless sleep and this dreamless sleep state, finally, in Turiya, or the Pure Consciousness. These quarters are a superimposition on the Atman.

Visva, Taijasa and Prajna, associated with names and forms, are the result of *maya*. Atman is distinct from the three states, non-dual, pure and detached Witness. This is microcosmic (subjective). Likewise the macrocosmic (objective) universe has four quarters namely Virat (the totality of gross physical bodies), Hiranyagarbha (the totality of subtle bodies), and Isvara or Avyakrita, the Unmanifested (the totality of causal bodies). The attributeless Brahman, like Turiya, is the fourth. It is transcendental, beyond all causal relations and are unrelated substratum of all appearances.

The macrocosm and the microcosm are superimpositions on Brahman through *maya* and on Atman through *avidya*. This establishes the non-duality of Atman and Brahman and the illusory nature of the entire phenomenal world.

Merge Visva in Virat, Taijasa in Hiranyagarbha and Prajna in Isvara. And when they are merged in Brahman finally, there is the realization of Brahman.

The microcosm and macrocosm are identical, both being only forms of thought and the effect of ignorance of one's own Self.

This Self, the Atman, the Turiya, the *amatra* of Om, is not that which is conscious of the inner (subjective) world, nor that which is conscious of the outer (objective) world, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is a mass of consciousness. It is not simple consciousness nor is It unconsciousness. It is unperceived, unrelated, incomprehensible, unthinkable, and indescribable. It is the essence of the consciousness manifesting as the Self in the three states. It is the cessation of all phenomena, all peace, all bliss and non-dual. This is Atman and this has to be realized. Such is the declaration of Mandukyopanishad.

Chant Om with profound feeling. Chant Om, knowing Its omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence.

Pour forth Om vibrations from the depth of your heart into the world at large, with vigour and vitality.

Chanting Om will shut out all worldly thoughts and bring your being in tune with the Infinite.

To chant Om is to melt the mind and intellect into the Infinite. To chant Om is to realize that you are the Light of lights. Om instills in you the divine energy and makes you a spiritual dynamo.

Live in OM, the solid Silence. Rest in OM, the embodiment of Peace. Be OM, the immortal Effulgence.

Om! Tat Sat! (OM! That alone is real).

चरैवेति

There is a Balancing Power in Nature. A little reflection will convince us of its existence. See what happens in our own body on a hot day. The sweat glands immediately become unusually active. Various other changes, beginning with perspiration, appear in a series to offset the rise in temperature. On cold days, on the other hand, the blood vessels, ordinarily visible on the outside in a prominent way, commence to shrink, and so on. Or let us mark what our limbs do when we walk on slippery ground. They carry out most unexpected movements, quite abruptly, in order to avoid a dangerous fall. Physiologists and medical men can give us hundreds of details about the amazing processes that build up our bodily tissues, regulate our growth, or preserve our general health or vitality. And these, as we can infer, are carried on steadily and silently, without any reference to our surface thoughts. It matters little whether we are engaged in intellectual work of absorbing interest, or—what is more remarkable—locked up in peaceful, dreamless sleep!

'Creation' involves a breaking up of earlier formations, a regrouping to produce new structures, and a constant effort at balancing to prevent excesses or deficiencies. This balancing principle may remain unrecognized by us; but it operates everywhere, even in matters affecting the welfare of human communities. If we know how to trust to its working, we shall never get into a panic when evil threatens us on every side. During such times we shall not only invoke the Balancing Power with the whole force of our personality but actually also inspire others to do likewise, so that in the field so created, the Unexpected may quickly condense into totally novel situa-

BALANCING POWER

tions. Not unoften the condensation takes the shape of the emergence of brilliant men and women who think and act in original and constructive ways.

We honour a person who can teach us to treat soils and seeds in such a manner that two blades of grass will henceforth grow where only one grew before. So too we salute the wise men who have shown us how to harness the terrific leap of waters over precipices and fit it into Hydro-electric schemes for the benefit of villages in remote areas. What then to speak of the homage to be paid to the large-hearted sages who have taught us to remain fearless when confronted with evil, seemingly invincible? In their attempt to make us draw superior strength from the Balancing Power ever abiding within us, is there any harm if they resort to stories with no background of the sort that can satisfy professional historians? Figures of speech, anecdotes of angels and devils, comic descriptions,—why should we not learn to enjoy them all, especially when they are conveyed to us through exquisite poetry, with fine turns of expression and alliteration? We know what happens even to sound arguments when they are presented without suitable precedents and examples, or when couched in words not distinctly uttered, easily understandable, or persuasive in tone. They can never impress listeners. In fact they are wasted like oblations poured into ashes instead of into a blazing fire. On the contrary, stories, big or small, found in any literature, must be most welcome provided they inculcate valuable lessons, are clothed in appealing language and abound in apt illustrations. Books containing such tales and legends will gradually, but surely, attain wide popularity in the

whole world. For they present vital principles for life in an exquisitely enjoyable medium,—refreshing like cool moon-beams.¹

* * *

Now to a few instances, culled from ancient stories, to indicate how the Balancing Principle operates with due respect to the mounting pressures of thought from all quarters, either good or bad. Do we not remember how Viṣṇu reacted when the great Tapasvins, Sanaka and others, cursed His gate-keepers? He did not cancel the curse, though He had the power to do so. Instead He only balanced the evil by agreeing to be with His devotees as a friend or a foe, as they wished, for seven or three life-times on earth! Let us also recall to mind what happened when snakes were cursed by their own irritated mother that they would perish in Janamejaya's fire sacrifice. Their eager thoughts condensed into a balancing promise that in due course a saviour would be born in their race, the mother being a snake-maiden and the father a highly advanced Brāhmaṇa ascetic. And the sequel shows that while one sage of unusual thought power was getting ready to rouse the king to commence his fateful oblations, the protector of all virtuous serpents, namely Āstika, was also getting ready to enter the field and eventually stop undue destruction, by his stupendous will power symbolized by a mere uplifted finger! It is ever thus: As often as evil gathers force in tangible form, let us be sure, protecting agencies are also heading towards it, although in a relatively im-

¹ Tyaktopamānam amanojña-padam durāpam Kṣubdham dharā-vidhuritam vinigīṛṇa-

varṇam
Śrotur-na yāti hrdayam, pravinaśam eti
Vākyam kilā' jyam iva bhasmani

hūyamānam.
Akhyānakāni bhuvi yāni kathāś-ca yā yāḥ
Yad-yat prameyam ucitam paripelavam vā
Drṣtānta-drṣṭi-kathanena tad eti Sādho!
Prākāśyam āśu bhuvanam sita-rāsmineva.
Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, Utpatti, lxxxiv. 46-47.

perceptible, yet none-the-less formidable and reliable shape. Wisdom consists in trusting and, if possible, locating the incoming forces of protection, and making ourselves its willing instruments at the right times.

Thus it was when Karkatī's misguided aspiration was returned to her, transformed into the shape of a needle, with the ability to penetrate the bodies of all creatures and suck their life-blood. The Creator indicated roughly the areas where she could find her victims. They would be dwelling in unhealthy places,—as we can imagine—would be addicted to unwholesome food, and would not be merely foolish but roguish, embarking upon actions injurious to others. No doubt good people as well as the wicked would equally come within her sweeping grasp when she appears in an epidemic form, the dreaded Viṣūcika. But, said the Creator, the virtuous could make their escape by revolving their thoughts round Viṣṇu's protecting Power,—by invoking Her to withdraw Her inferior aspect as disease. As all mystic formulas are, it can be made a rhythmic combination of requests and affirmations like: 'Remove, remove, destroy, destroy, root out, root out etc., this colic pain,' and so on (Om Namo Bhagavati! Viṣṇu-saktim enām, Om hara hara, naya naya, paca paca, matha matha utsādaya utsādaya dūre kuru svāhā!). The patient would do well to picture the evil of disease as already vanished into the world of the moon, the ruler of medicinal herbs. In health, if one could repeat this formula,—said the Creator—and reinforce it with humility and love of humanity, one could gradually transform his own personality into that of a healer whose look or touch could relieve unfortunate and helpless sufferers. Thoughts constitute an invisible magnetic field in which events take place, useful or harmful according to the nature of the emotions kept up.

The Balancing Power operates with equal efficacy from within as well. And so, within a reasonable time, Karkatī, we are told, found the stupidity which made her imagine the penetrating charms of the petty needle,—likely actually to be dropped in mud, among refuse, ignored, kicked and, when a little rusted, absolutely despised and rejected! And so, an opposite movement started within her at least to get back her original prodigious shape; and as it gathered momentum she betook herself once more to the mountain top to plunge again into the refined and intensively top-

like spinning thought-whirls of a profound meditation!

We are all Karkatis in one sense. In politics, economics and other fields we often view things in sections and apply formulas thinking them unmixed benefits,—only to realize, when it is late, that we had made the mistake of observing less and imagining more! But suffering can be minimised if we can have the persistence of Karkatī, and her belief in self-control as the best means for achieving desired results.

भगवैवेति।

SUBANDHU

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The article of Sri G. Krishnamurthi Aiyar, B.A., B.L., Advocate, forms the gist of his lecture last year on Sri Krishna in Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

Mr. Wolfram H. Koch of Switzerland has often contributed articles to the *Vedanta Kesari* on saints and mystics of the West. In this issue he writes on Ramón Lull who was, it will be clear on perusal, an out-and-

out Bhakta with a strong Latin temperament.

The article of Swami Pavitrananda of Vedanta Society, New York, is an adaptation of his talk on Swami Ramakrishnanandaji on the latter's birthday last.

Swami Rajeswarananda is Editor, *The Call Divine*.

STUDY OF INDIA'S HERITAGE

The study of the past achievements of a nation has always ushered in an era of enthusiasm among its people. Even countries which have changed the pattern of their cultures through the compulsion of history have found it useful to animate their citizens. Specially the younger ones require to know that they are capable of performing the tasks they are entrusted with. To be filled with unbounded enthusiasm which is the root cause of all endeavour and success it is necessary to be told about the past achievements and the potentialities. Real enthusiasm that bubbles up from deep inner sources is spiritual in nature. The word 'enthusiasm' is derived

from two Greek words, 'en' and 'theos', meaning 'God within you', or 'full of God'. When a man is conscious of his inner nature he is endowed with unbounded enthusiasm. It is for this reason that Swami Vivekananda felt the necessity of harping on the glory of the Atman, 'to rouse the sleeping souls to activity'. To know about the glory and achievement of men anywhere in the world also is capable of creating hope and confidence in man. And to know the heritage of one's own nation is to be filled with zeal and enthusiasm. It is more fruitful because it is so proximate. The achievements of man in a far off country is often vaguely animating

to us because of the lack of nearness and identification. The prevalent mood throughout the world for several centuries is nationalism. Already the spirit of being proud of one's own nation is there in our minds. If it is supplied with requisite information it will be heightened. For India, specially, it will be very beneficial, for India has a long history and an unbroken culture for several thousand years. And what a glorious culture it has which had given rise to the application of highest values in the nation's life, values which are eternal and valid and useful even in the complex structure of modern society! So to know of Indian cultural heritage is to know the best that man has ever produced. Not merely in the field of ideas. A knowledge of its heritage will reveal to the young people that India made her original contribution in scientific and other fields also. That will fill them with limitless enthusiasm and release tremendous energy which they never knew they had. It is common experience that dull, drooping, defeatist boys get courage, strength and zeal when they come to know of the achievements of their parents, brothers and other relatives. So study of India's heritage is essential for every Indian, not only youths but elders too. Among the top leaders of the Indian Government the President and the Vice-President generally stress on its necessity. We are glad to note that the Prime Minister also has impressed upon the educational authorities about the urgent necessity of this aspect of the training of the youth. He said :

I am surprised often to see the ignorance of many of our graduates and even those who are successful in our competitive examinations in regard to the heritage of India. Many of them know little even about this great period of India's history which was dominated by Gandhiji and which led to India's freedom. I think this is most unfortunate. How can they

serve India properly unless they know what India is and how independence gradually took shape? I do not know what kind of education is being given at present in our schools and colleges. I do hope that one of the essential subjects from the lowest form upwards will be something dealing with this heritage of India, from the past right up to the present and including, more especially, Gandhiji and the struggle for our independence under his great leadership. That will not only be some kind of a historical account, but will lay stress on the high principles for which Gandhiji stood and the moral and ethical approach to our problems. I would indeed suggest that for our high competitive examinations, there should be a compulsory paper on this subject.

(Indian Express, July 9, 1958.)

To know of one's heritage is itself an education. If properly presented it will arouse genuine understanding and intellectual sensitiveness. If the teachers and leaders are also imbued with it, they can transmit their zeal and create genuine appreciation in younger minds. A mere examination paper on culture may not be enough to create a real interest, but proper expounding pointing out all its ramifications by well-equipped teachers may do the job. But when thousands of students are there, it is enough if they have a general understanding and wider outlook. It will be easier if the elders of the society also develop a genuine appreciation. Then the mental climate itself will change and boys and girls will more or less unknowingly learn to appreciate their heritage and draw inspiration from it.

Moreover, Indian culture is not against, but positively for, world-understanding. So with the appreciation of its heritage Indian youths will automatically imbibe a world outlook. Indian educationists are aware of this. It will be a good news if Pandit Nehru's anxious concern urge them to take some concrete step in the direction.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CALL OF THE JAGADGURU—SRI SAMKARACHARYA OF KANCHI: Compiled by P. Sankaranarayanan, Publishers: Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pages 244. Price Rs. 4.

A companion volume to the one already published under the same title 'The Call of the Jagadguru' containing discourses of the Head of the Sringeri Mutt, Sri Chandrasekharendra Bharati, is now ushered into the world with the discourses of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati of Kamakoti Pitham. The only difference between these two volumes is that while the former one contained the thoughts and ideas of the head of the Sringeri Mutt as condensed in the words of one of his faithful followers, Sri R. Krishnaswami Iyer, the present one, though compiled by Prof. P. Sankaranarayana Iyer, is almost in the form and presentation of the discourses by the Acharyaswami during his recent stay at Mylapore, though, no doubt, the English translation of it makes it not quite in the exact language he spoke in. But as known to closer circles, most of the speeches that appeared in English in the press have been scrutinised, condensed and edited carefully by the Acharyaswami himself.

It is a very appropriate idea of the publishers to have followed the volume already published in the same name by this one, as the late Jagadguru of Sringeri Mutt and the present Acharyaswami of Kamakoti Mutt have been in every way and in every sense spiritual compeers of the highest rank. In this volume containing nearly forty-three topics of discussion covering most of the aspects of religious and spiritual life as conceived by our Rishis of old in regulating the conduct and aspirations of Hindus, are magnificently presented in a simple, informative and highly instructive manner. Rather one, who is familiar with some of the basic principles of Hinduism, feels more convinced than ever, on reading these pages, of their purposefulness as well as effectiveness in being adhered to. The Acharyaswami has a delightful fund of stories and anecdotes with which he could embellish out of recognition anything dry, usual or whilom. One can perceive also how much of a genuine research-worker the Acharyaswami is from the fresh, original and sometimes peculiarly individualistic contribution he makes to subjects even as the Vedas, Forms of worship, The caste sys-

tem, Ahimsa, Karmaushthana, Manual labour, Sankarabhagavat-pada, Peace through art, Bhakti and Jnana etc.

The superior intellectual eminence, the wide range of interests and subjects, the capacity to unravel abstruse points of philosophy, the happy and natural narrative medium he could adopt and finally the altitude to which he could take his listeners without their feeling any discomfort or difficulty in the process of climbing—all these harmonise towards making this volume one of the rare possessions of any devoted and cultured Hindu.

Need we add that the foreword of His Highness Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar is only a very appropriate introduction to the profound messages of the Teacher in order to render people's lives more meaningful, if not more sumptuous.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

HINDI

MARX-VADA AUR RAMRAJYA: By Sri Swami Karapatraji Maharaj. Published by Ghanasyamdas Jalan, Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pages 804. Price Rs. 4.

The book under review deals with Marxism and the ideal of Ramrajya. The ground that has been prepared for the full dress discussion covers widely the philosophy of East and West and the author successfully tries to blend here and there the Orient with the Occident. He has also placed before the public a very valuable book of reference in the Philosophy of East and West.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

PERIODICAL

ANUV RAT: October 1957 Special Number. Edited by Satyanarayana Misra, Anuvrat Karyalaya, 3, Portuguese Church Street, Calcutta-1. Pages 303. Annual subscription Rs. 6.

This Special Number, the 'Nirman anka' of the Hindi journal *Anuvrat* contains very interesting articles, essays and stories to suit the taste of different kinds of readers. The selections herein presented reveal the high quality of the writers and the Editor has been very careful to present to the readers the best quality writing.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL

Fifty-seventh Annual Report

The total number of patients admitted during 1957 totalled 1,439. The number of surgical cases was 161 of which 16 were major. The treatment, diet, clothing and accommodation, all being free, patients are coming in larger numbers year after year. In the outdoor dispensary the number of patients treated during the year was 85,507 which includes 24,591 new cases. The number of minor surgical cases was 816. The clinical laboratory investigated 2,239 samples. The total number of books in the Sevashrama and the Patients' Library at the end of the year was 4,355. Swami Vivekananda's birthday anniversary was observed with recitation and elocution competitions by boys and girls as well as with feeding of Daridra-narayanans. The Sevashrama while giving its sincere thanks appeals for more funds.

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, TRICHUR

Report for 1956-57

In 1957 the Gurukul and Orphanage had 79 boys and 33 girls of whom 4 boys and 3 girls were part free, 15 boys and 15 girls full free and 60 boys and 15 girls full paying. Vidya-mandir had in 1957, 672 boys and 460 girls. In the secondary section there were 157 free concession holders. 2 playgrounds with pavilions and sitting arrangements and 2 gymnasiums were completed during the period. A well furnished community hall was also constructed. The weaving and needle work section had 21 trainees and 2 teachers. The trainees were paid for their work. Two Harijan welfare centres were run in the nearby colonies. The total number of patients in 1957 in the charitable dispensary was 21,723 of which 9,876 were new cases. 131 minor surgical operations were also conducted. A hospital with 12 beds is under construction. About 15,000 poor people were fed during the year. An average of 250 poor school-going children were freely fed at noon. The Sishuvihar or Creche took care of 30 children. A children's park was also constructed during the period. The Punnamm Centre maintains a library and reading room and organises religious classes and birthday celebrations. The Spiritual Retreat for devotees was organized as usual. The publication

department has so far published 5 books in Malayalam. While thanking the supporters, the management appeal for more funds for improvement and maintenance of the centre.

OBITUARY

We announce with deep sorrow the passing away of Swami Devatmananda, at the age of 58, at 10-45 p.m. on the 8th August, 1958, at the Belur Math. Though he had long suffered in the U.S.A. from malignant (not cancerous) hypertension since about five years ago, his condition latterly had much improved, and no one expected that the end would come within two hours through cerebral haemorrhage.

In his pre-monastic life, the Swami was known as Sri Indu Kumar Dutta, and came in contact with the Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, where he imbibed the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. After graduation from the Calcutta University, he entered the monastic life in 1922 at the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, then at Mihijam, and got his Sannyasa from Swami Shivananda in 1924. He worked for some years at the Vidyapith, since removed to Deoghar, and was later at the Mission Students' Home at Madras as well as in the Madras Math. He was sent to the U.S.A. in 1930 to assist Swami Bodhananda in New York.

In 1932 Swami Devatmananda went to Portland, Oregon, where he succeeded in reorganising the suspended Vedanta work and placing it on a secure foundation. Through his efforts the Vedanta Society had its own home at Portland in 1943, and later a beautiful annexe 20 miles from the City. Here he erected in 1954 a Hindu temple and installed a bronze head of Sri Ramakrishna by Malvina Hoffman.

The Swami was compelled to leave the U.S.A. by air in December 1954, on account of failing health. Since then, except for eight months beginning with June, 1955, when he underwent treatment at the Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta, he was living at the Belur Math.

During his twenty-four years' stay in America, he visited India only once for about six months commencing from September, 1949. Fair and of handsome physique, the Swami was much loved for the qualities of his head and heart. The Mission has lost in him a valuable worker and a monk of great faith. May his soul rest in peace!

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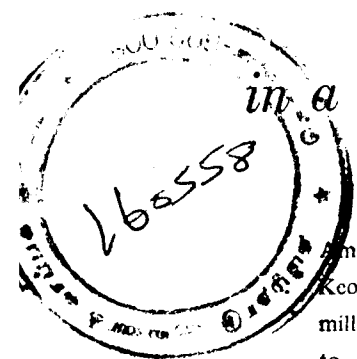
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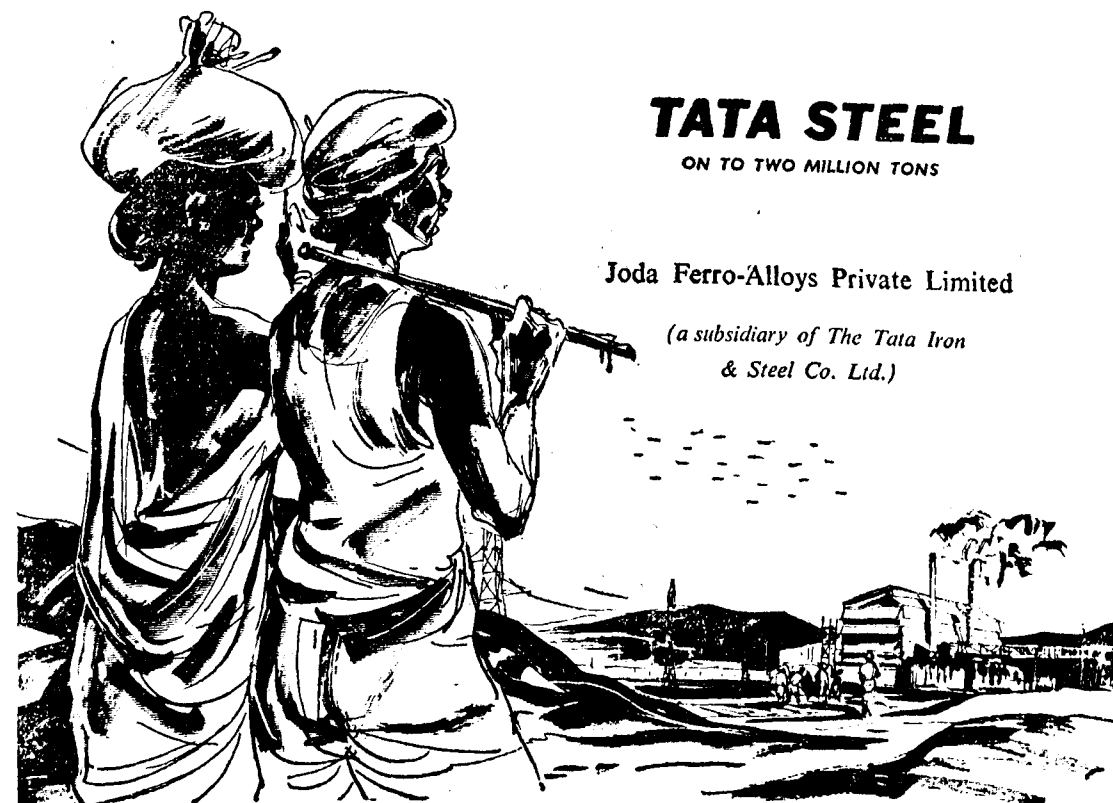
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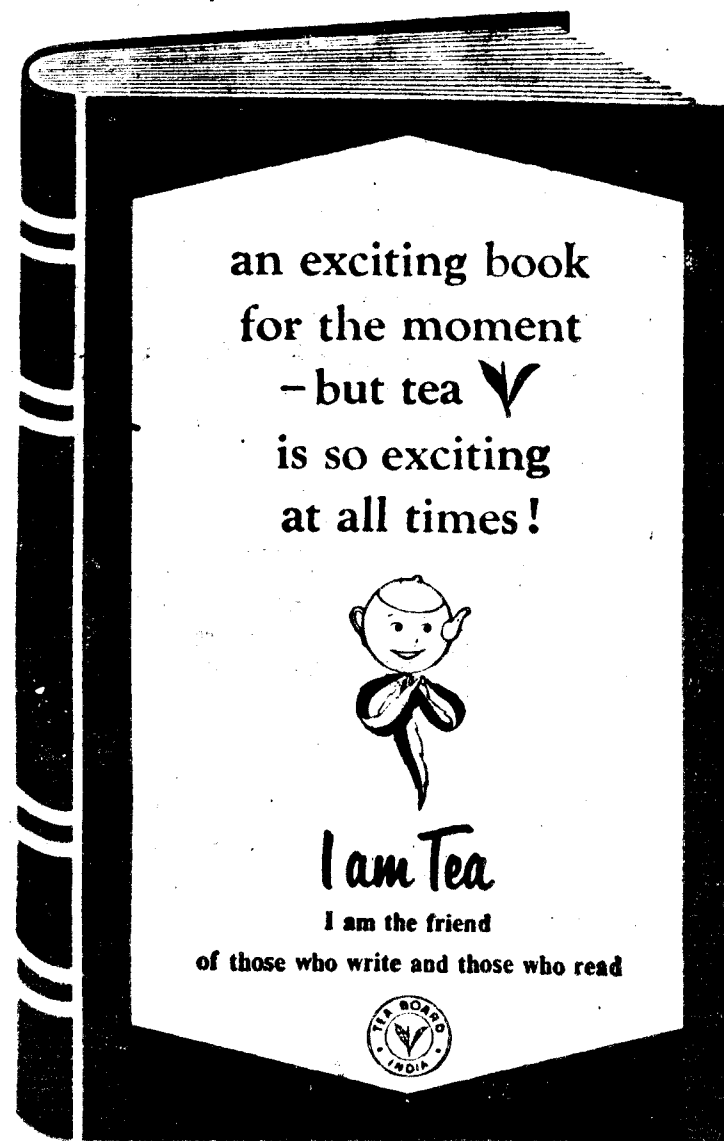
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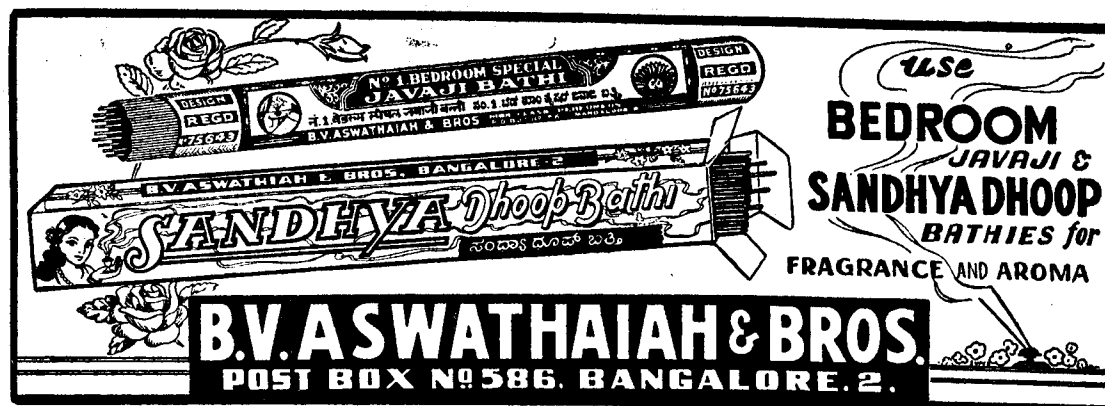
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**SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
MYLAPORE MADRAS - 4**



.... 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

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WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA FROM FORM TO FORM DIVINE

"God is One; His Names and Forms are Many."

(On the Divine Mother)

Once, long ago, the Divine Mother, in the form the Goddess Durga, had rescued the gods and men from the terror of demons. Later on, She appeared again on earth as the daughter of Himavat and Menakā, and was married to Siva, the Lord of Yogis. Siva, pleased with her hard Tapas, allowed Her to stay with Him on Mount Kailas, His divine abode. Learning that Siva was often roaming about as a penniless beggar, Menaka became scared for her daughter. Finally to disperse the worries of her mother, the Goddess came to her house on earth for three days. Menaka's joy and that of all people knew no bounds to have Durga again in their midst. They worshipped Her with great love and devotion, fed Her, sang and danced and were beside themselves with joy. Although on the fourth day Mother Durga returns to Mount Kailas, all Her children know that from now onward She will come every year for three days.

(From traditional sources)

It was 7-30 p.m. on the auspicious eighth day of Durga Puja. Many devotees had come to the temporary residence of Sri Ramakrishna at Syampukur. The devotees had brought him here a month ago as he was seriously ill. The Master rose from his seat smiling and entered immediately into deep samadhi. The devotees began whispering: "Is it not time for the Sandhi Puja? That is why the Master has suddenly entered into samadhi without knowing the time." About half an hour later the Master's samadhi came to an end and he said: "I saw that there opened a luminous path from here to Surendra's home. I further saw that, attracted by Surendra's devotion, the Mother had appeared in the image and a ray of light was coming out of Her third eye. I also saw that rows of lamps were lighted in the front verandah and Surendra was sitting and weeping piteously in front of the Mother. Go you all together to his home now. He will feel much comforted to see you."

(Great Master, p. 175.)

LESSONS FROM AN ANECDOTE

दुर्गेषु नित्यं भवसङ्कटेषु
दुरन्तचिन्ताहि निर्गन्धमाणान् ।
शरण्यहीनान् शरणागतार्ति—
निवारिणी त्वं परिपाहि दुर्गे ॥

The annual worship of the Divine Mother will be celebrated this month. Throughout the country She will be worshipped during the Navaratri in Her different forms by thousands of people. In accordance with their faith and devotion they will derive the benefit. It is often questioned how the common man, burdened with the worries and anxieties of life as he is, can derive the maximum benefit. Is worship of the Mother Goddess or for that matter any worship capable of bestowing some tangible result on the ordinary votary? The answer can be gathered from the scriptures. One of the most important books of the Devi cult is the *Devi-māhātmyam*, also known as the *Chandi* and the *Durgā-saptasati*. In thirteen chapters and seven hundred verses, it deals with the glory of the Devi and Her exploits in killing tyrannous demons, interspersed with the fine hymns to Her. Instead of going into the philosophy or teachings in the body of the book let us see some of the practical hints given for spiritual benefit, which are woven round the story preparing for the delineation of the glory of the Goddess.

The book begins with a description of the sufferings of a king and a merchant. King Suratha had been defeated by his enemies, troubled by his subjects and ignored by his employees and relatives. So he repaired to the forest being fed up with the world and its ways. The merchant Samadhi had a similar fate. He had been cast out by his wife and sons

Goddess Durga! You who remove the distress of those who take refuge in you and have no other saviour, protect us who are eternally being swallowed by the python of endless anxiety, in the insurmountable difficulties of life.

So he also came to the forest. But their present trouble was not so much the old suffering as the meaningless attachment they felt for their old relatives and property. As the *Chandi* graphically describes: 'There then overcome with attachment, the king fell into the thought, "I do not know whether the capital which was well guarded by my ancestors and recently deserted by me is being guarded righteously or not by my servants of evil conduct. I do not know what enjoyment my chief elephant, heroic and always elated, and now fallen into the hands of my foes, will get. Those who were my constant followers and received favour, riches and food from me, now certainly pay homage to other kings. The treasure which I gathered with great care will be squandered by those constant spendthrifts, who are addicted to improper expenditures." The king was continually thinking of these and other things.'

The merchant also was worrying: 'Dwelling here, I do not know anything as regards good or bad of my sons, kinsmen and wife. At present is welfare or ill-luck theirs at home? How are they? Are my sons living good or evil lives?'

When the king asked, why was his mind affectionately attached to those ungrateful folk, the merchant replied that he did not know why it was being drawn to them. Then they went to the sage Medhas and narrated their sorrow and the problem. The king said: 'Sir,

to reply to it. Without the control of my intellect, my mind is afflicted with sorrow. Though I have lost the kingdom, like an ignorant man—though I know it—I have an attachment to all the paraphernalia of my kingdom. How is this, O best of sages? And this merchant has been disowned by his children, wife and servants, and forsaken by his own people; still he is inordinately affectionate towards them. Thus both he and I, drawn by attachment towards objects whose defects we do know, are exceedingly unhappy. How this happens, then, sir, that though we are aware of it, this delusion comes? This delusion besets me as well as him, blinded as we are in respect of discrimination.'

The great sage informed them that it was by the illusive power of Mahamaya that the entire world is deluded, but it is She who, when propitious, becomes a giver of worldly and heavenly enjoyment, as well as final liberation to human beings. The sage then told them about the exploits and glory of the Goddess, which engendered respect and faith in the two devotees. At the end the sage advised: 'O great King, take refuge in Her, the supreme Goddess. She indeed when worshipped bestows on men enjoyment, heaven and final release from transmigration.'

Both the king and the merchant practised hard penance to please the Goddess. She then offered two boons to them according to their wishes, one boon granting sovereignty of the universe and the other final realization. Thus the Devi according to the *Chandi* grants both material and spiritual fruits, bhukti and mukti.

Now when we study the cases of Suratha and Samadhi, we find that both of them were well-placed in life but met with reverses of fortune. They were let down even by their near and dear ones.

Yet the property, the pet animals which they lost, as well as their unkind relatives were still in their mind which was being drawn to those very objects. We can take some lessons from this anecdote, for similar is the case with most of us. Grief over the past and worry for the future take away most of our energy and time. It has been pointed out by a psychologist that 40 per cent of our worry centre round the past things, 50% round the future and only 10% round the present problems. We know it is futile to weep over the past or meaningless to think disproportionately about the future. But worrying becomes a habit in spite of ourselves, often for unworthy causes. The same thing happened to the king and the merchant. They knew it was fruitless to grieve or worry, still the mind was moving in the old groove.

Worry is the greatest problem of modern times. The primitive man was satisfied to live for himself and only one day at a time but with the growth of complex society, we worry for the future of ourselves, our family, our country, even the whole world. Any incident anywhere in the world is enough to scare us. This worry may be real or imaginary. It is a matter of habit, formed through years of unconscious practice. Like any other habit it may be broken. The method for it is to realize that it is an enemy and has devastating effect on us and then to forget it, to practise poise. To do that one must empty the mind of all anxieties and fears and suffuse it with the Divine and cultivate positive thoughts regarding the world where He resides. The modern psychiatrists use definite techniques to free the mind from tension and fill it with positive thoughts. The cause of worry is attachment and so the religious method is to practise non-attachment and fill the mind with the thoughts of

God and surrender oneself completely to Him. The conception of the Divine Mother as the supreme Reality brings God very near to us, for mother is so near to one who was a child. So the book prescribes surrender at Her feet which will free man from all attachment and the resulting worry, anxiety and tension.

The king and the merchant were introspective and so they discovered themselves that the real root of trouble was their lack of control over the mind. If they were the masters of their mind, they could be free from meaningless attachment. Self-control is the only means to gain mastery over all reactions when unpalatable experience inevitably comes to a man. So he discovers the urgent need for it. But alas, one cannot achieve it overnight. Specially when he knocks the bottom of life, he painfully realizes that it is impossible for him to gain mastery over himself. So he looks for a guide, a person of mature wisdom, who could help him to achieve the requisite mastery.

When a man is really anxious, and a piteous cry goes from his agonized soul in supplication to the Great Lord, He sends a proper guide who directs his way towards self-realization. This very thing happened in the case of the above two. With utter helplessness and the agony of the soul they went to the forest and found the great sage Medhas who became their teacher.

What was the path he showed them? Medhas informed them that the cause of uncontrollable attachment was the deluding aspect of the Divine Mother. She keeps attachment, which is vigorous and blind, so that the world process might go on. But when after different experiences, sweet and sour, the bound soul feels tired and tries to go out of it, the releasing aspect of the

same Divine Mother comes forward and helps it break the shakles of delusion. The pre-requisite for this release from limitations is the grace of the Mother and that can be achieved when one surrenders his all to Her and fervently prays to Her. To do that he must have enough faith and love for Her. This the sage implanted in his disciples by narrating in eleven chapters of the *Chandi* the exploits of the Goddess.

Hearing the *lilā* of the Supreme Goddess, contemplating on it, meditating on Her form and repetition of Her name are the methods through which the mind is prepared for total surrender. When a man progresses through this discipline, all his mental worries, sufferings, grief etc. drop away and with total surrender the grace of the Mother descends and he achieves the *summum bonum* of life. Here the two supplicants had their wishes fulfilled, one material and the other spiritual.

The Divine Mother granted enjoyment of his kingdom as well as the heavenly kingdom to King Suratha. How is that? Will he not attain the highest goal, the final release? In answer it may be pointed out that Suratha had desire and he must work out his karma by experience and enjoyment before he could have liberation. But now he knew where to place the worldly pleasure. It was no more the primary objective of life and so there was no chance of any attachment, conflict or tension. With the firm faith dawning on him, he knew that the goal of life is the final release. So bad experience in the world would no more upset him. While allowing the normal joys of life to the king the *Chandi* first gives proper emphasis to the supreme objective of life and relegates the other enjoyments to the secondary position. Thereby the devotee will enjoy the fruits of his karma

but will not be affected by them. As Sri Ramakrishna said, if milk is kept with water it cannot be separated but if it is churned and butter is brought out, it floats on water and does not mix with it. Similarly if the mind also is kept in the world after the attainment of knowledge it remains untainted.

The Holy Mother Sarada Devi pointed out that there were two types of karma, one that binds and the other that releases. We see only the middle of the chain of karma and know not whether it is the one or the other, whether it is winding or unwinding. But the progress in spiritual life seen later convinces us that it was of the second type, as in the case of the king.

By allowing worldly enjoyment while the supreme goal is not lost sight of, religion frees itself from the charges of some psycho-therapists who hold that it is the cause of tension. It is not necessary for religion to stress on guilt and sin but its primary emphasis is on love of God. For ordinary devotees harping on sin is not all necessary; for serious spiritual aspirants too it is useless. As Sri Ramakrishna once said to the Brahma devotees:

Will you tell me one thing? Why do you harp so much on sin? By repeating a hundred times, 'I am a sinner,' one verily becomes a sinner. One should have such faith as to be able to say, 'What? I have taken the name of God; how can I be a sinner?'

So the anecdote of Suratha and Samadhi gives us interesting clues to our life. First of all, we need not consider our sufferings in life as meaningless. They have a divine purpose. Through them we learn the true lessons

of life and become aware of a higher Presence. With the awareness of a Presence and a purpose, much of our suffering will lose their sting. We will be able to face the darker side of life squarely. With a stable anchor, the imaginary worries will drop away and the mind will be fit for contemplation and faith. Faith is of two types. The faith of realization and the faith of preparation. The former is unshakable and is the fruit of illumination. The preparatory faith also can be developed gradually into it. The method generally sought is through the intellectual conviction. But the way of the heart is more potent, specially for despondent souls. Assert faith right now and you have it. By repeating assertion of it in every undertaking of the day faith becomes stronger and stronger and possesses the entire soul. This facilitates meditation. Mind habituated in the application of faith naturally enters into meditation of the Lord. Moreover, feeling the presence of the Lord is itself contemplation. When the mind is thus directed purposively to a divine object, control of it is achieved. That is the goal of all sadhana. Wherever the concentrated mind is directed, success is achieved. When it is directed to God, the highest illumination is obtained. Devotion, worship, faith or religion helps a man to have a rich, healthy and peaceful life which is so much coveted by an ordinary man of the world. But they become significant only when they hold to the supreme ideal of life; religion is religion when it leads a bound soul to the final liberation. The *Chandi* gives us these grand lessons through this fine anecdote of Suratha and Samadhi.

In God there are both Vidya Maya and Avidya Maya. The Vidya Maya takes man towards God, whereas the Avidya Maya leads him astray. Knowledge, devotion, dispassion, compassion—all these are expressions of Vidya Maya; only with their help can one reach God.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

THE DEVI-SUKTA

VAK ON HERSELF

Metre: Trishtup, except in st. 2, Jagati.

Rendered by: ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE

I move with Rudras and with Vasus, I move
with Adityas and All-Gods by my side,
And both Mitra and Varuna I support
as I do Indra, Agni and the two Asvins.

I uphold Soma, the destroyer of the foe,
and I sustain Tvastar and Pushan and Bhaga;
I reward with wealth the man who offers sacrifice
and the devout worshipper pouring the soma. (2)

I am Queen, the gatherer-up of treasures,
the Knower, the First among the Holy Ones,
The Devas have established me in many places,
Me who live on many planes, in many a form. (3)

The man who sees, who breathes, who hears what's spoken,
through me alone obtains his sustenance;
There are those who dwell by my side but know not.—
Hear, who hast hearing: I tell thee the sacred truth. (4)

Yes, I myself say this—and these my words
must needs be welcome to the Devas and men—
One whom I love I make mighty—make of him
A Brahmana, a Rishi, a gifted man. (5)

For Rudra I stretch out the strings of his bow
to slay the fierce hater of the holy man,
And for the people I engage in battle,
and through the earth and the heaven I spread. (6)

And on its summit I bring forth the Father,
my home is within waters, in the ocean,
From where I extend to all existing worlds,
and yonder heaven I touch with my forehead. (7)

And it is I who, like the wind, breathe forth,
and set all existing worlds in motion;
Beyond heaven and beyond the earth am I,
and all this I have become in my splendour. (8)

Note: This hymn has been called 'Devī-sūkta' in Markandeya Chandi. In this lie the Vedic roots of the Shakti cult. Vāk is described here as the Ultimate Reality, immanent as well as transcendent. Vedic Devas are manifestations of this Power. The Chandi personifies it as 'Devī', the Divine Mother, whom it also calls Saraswati, Veda-Janani

(Mother of the Veda), Paramā Vidyā, etc., and speaks of it as the concentrated spiritual Energy of the Devas. The Veda finds in Vāk both the Brahmana power (st. 5) and the Kshatra power (st. 6), the power of both the seer and the fighter for Dharma. The hymn has been reproduced in the Atharva Veda (IV. 30).

& 2: The familiar Rigvedic Devas are associated with the Ultimate Power, 'All-Gods' is a peculiar Vedic term, signifying the Many in One.

speaks of the One Reality expressed in many forms—a typical Vedic idea.
refers to the Divine inspiration behind sagehood.

: 'Bring forth the Father' implies that the concept of God as Father (or as any other relation) is a relative one, representing the Absolute. 'Ocean' in the Veda often means the skyey ocean—the outer space.

says that the Divine Shakti supplies the initial momentum to the material universe.
Across thousands of years the Devī-sūkta links popular worship with the Veda.

"I INVOKE THEE, MY LORD"

M. MAHENDAR

The spark of His light is in every being;
In you, in me, in him and in all
He is omnipotent and all pervading
He is Omniscient and an infinite being.

He is beyond our senses to be perceived;
He is visible behind the golden veil of matter;
He is neither a man, nor a woman, neither young, nor old.
He is formless and dwells the kind hearts of young and old.

He needs an eye of meditation to behold;
He needs a kind heart to be felt;
He needs devotion to be loved;
And above all He needs a pious soul to be realized.

Time is rolling in to years with evolution;
The highest of which will be the realization;
That is the human being merging into the supreme;
Which would be after endless births and rebirths and many a generation.

Why not take the path of devotion;
Why not take the path of meditation;
And why not take the path of truth and non-violence;
To realize Him in this life alone for our salvation.

ANCIENT INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

SHAMSUDDIN

Ordinarily the history of ancient Indian education extends from 2000 B.C. to 1200 A.D. From the point of view of education, the period from 1200 A.D. to the eighteenth century can be called medieval age. Socially and educationally, ancient India did not have the same characteristics throughout. Therefore, we subdivide the periods, and the division would be as follows: I. 2000 B.C.-1000 B.C.—The Vedic Period; II. 1000 B.C.-200 B.C.—The Upanishadic Period; III. 200 B.C.-500 A.D.—The Dharmashastric Period; IV. 500 A.D.-1200 A.D.—The Pauranic Period.

The Vedic Period: At this stage society was very simple. Image worship was unknown. Men and women had equal rights. The caste system had not taken shape. Practically, everyone was his own teacher, his own warrior, his own farmer and agriculturist.

The Upanishadic Period: During this period, gradually, society began to be divided into groups, and this grouping started with the Vedas. Round about 500 B.C. we began formulating the rules of writing. The Vedas were very small in the beginning, and the people did not practise image worship.

The Dharmashastric Period: This period saw a good deal of activity in respect of art, literature, mathematics and dramatics. Sanskrit had become a classical language. The language of popular communication was Prakrit. The caste system was rigid. Women did not enjoy the same freedom as before.

The Pauranic Period: Really speaking this period is the period of the Buddhists so far as education is concerned. Universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila were Buddhist institutions. Their language was Pali. Institutional education began for the first time in the Pauranic period.

Thus in brief, our modern institutions can be compared with the schools of ancient India. Any student who earnestly desired to be educated was never disappointed. Teachers too did not hide deliberately any technical knowledge from their students.

Shukracharya, the preceptor of the Daityas, taught to his bitterest enemy's son, Kacha, the art of reviving the dead. Drona, the famous archer, could not hide whatever he knew of the art of archery from Dhrishadyumna, in spite of the fact that he knew that this disciple would kill him one day.

The guru and the pupil lived together. They had great affection for each other; rather their love was just like the love of father and son. The students used to live in the teacher's house which was known as the gurukula.

In the gurukula, the student had to shun all comforts. He had to go to bed after the guru and had to get up before him. He had to help the guru in household work involving even menial duties at times. The life in the gurukula was well disciplined, and at times very hard. From the point of view of needs, both teachers and the taught were satisfied. As the teacher did not live in luxury, he did not lead a life of want. The problem of indiscipline arose very rarely, and since it was not frequent, punishments were not needed. There was a code for all sorts of activities.

LIBERAL EDUCATION

The education provided in the Universities like Taxila, Nalanda, Kanchi, Sridhanyakataka, Vikramshila, and Banaras was quite liberal. Students were provided with free boarding, lodging and clothing. There was generally a keen competition between the villagers in giving their mite for the village

schools. Besides this, they used to donate without hesitation at the time of social functions like marriage, upanayanam, etc. The teacher not only provided knowledge to the students, but also raised funds from the villagers for the benefit of the students. In times of crisis, the guru used to approach kings with a request to help the gurukula. The guru did not refuse to teach any student, provided the student was fit to receive instruction.

Their method of teaching was predominantly oral. It was not merely oral, but was also individual. Hearing, contemplation and practice were the main features of their method. There were few books, and even when writing was known, the Vedas were not written, everything was learnt by heart. Their conviction was, "If knowledge is in books, it is like money lent to others." At a time, the guru had 15 or 20 students and at a time two or more syllables were taught to a child. Whatever was taught, was learnt by the student on the same day. Unless the first lesson was fully learnt, no further lesson was given. Sometimes older students were required to teach younger students. The "Bell Lancaster System", the "Monitorial System" or the "Madras System" was copied by the Britishers from this country. The teacher taught older students at a fixed time of the day, and then the older taught the younger ones at some other time. It was possible, as the number of students and the number of subjects were less. In this way there was an apprenticeship.

NALANDA

Our information regarding Nalanda comes from the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chwang, who toured India from 673 to 687 A.D. He stayed at Nalanda for ten years. He copied sacred Buddhist works. According to him, the place was known as Dharmaganj. The University had three big buildings known as Ratnasagar, Ratnadandi and Ratnaranjak. Out of these the middle one was a nine-storeyed building. The library was housed

in it. In all, there were eight halls and 300 apartments. Messing was common. In every courtyard there was a well. Rooms were either single seated or double seated. Every student had a stone, known as chabutra, to sleep on. In every room there was a place for keeping lamps and books. There was great rush for admission. Not more than three out of ten succeeded in getting admission. Even then, there were 10,000 students and 1,000 teachers and it continued for more than eight or nine centuries, beginning from the 2nd century A.D. The Institution was financed out of grants in the shape of lands. There were as many as 200 villages endowed by the Gupta kings for the maintenance of the University. Since it was a Buddhist institution, the head was a monk, and the teachers were bhikshus. Strangely enough, the study of Sanskrit was compulsory.

To Indian Universities came students from far-off lands like China, Tibet, Java, Sumatra, Korea, Greece, Iran and Arabia to quench their thirst for learning. They stayed in the Universities for more than ten years, and specialised in logic, medicine and astronomy. It is quite obvious that the Indian Universities had a high standard; that was why students from foreign lands were attracted, even when there were no facilities for travelling. The standard of these Universities can be judged from the stay of the famous doctor Jeevak (who attended on Emperors and whose fee was a figure of not less than eight digits) at Taxila for seven years specialising in medicine. Even after his long stay, when he left the University he thought that he was lacking in adequate knowledge of medicine. In those days, theoretical knowledge had no value. The theoretical knowledge of the doctor was regarded like an ass, conscious of the quantity and not the quality of the load on its back.

Practical training in pharmacy and surgery was insisted upon by legislative action before a doctor could set up a practice,

Strabo, the Greek historian, has certified the fact that Indians were great physicians, and they were specially good at curing snake-bites. Inexperienced candidates were given practice in surgery, under the most experienced and specialised teachers. Only proficient surgeons were allowed to make operations of intestinal displacements, deep cranial abscesses, cataract, hydrocele and the removal of the still-born child from the uterus. The patients were made insensitive to pain by an over-dosage of wine.

Not only human beings but even animals were given perfect medical aid. For the first time in the history of the world, Asoka the Great built veterinary hospitals duly equipped with all necessary medicines. The names of great veterinary surgeons like Nakula and Sahadeva cannot be removed from the pages of history. Similarly, ambulance cars were also utilised to remove the injured soldiers from the battle-field. We do not find the name of any such conveyance in European history before the commencement of the Crimean War. Not only this; even the services of Indian doctors like Manaka and others were requisitioned by Khalifa Harun Rashid of Baghdad, when he was seriously confined to bed and Arab physicians had lost all hopes of curing him. After recovery the Khalifa himself requested Manaka to stay with him and translate Ayurvedic works into Arabic. He also desired to call Indian lady doctors and midwives to write text books for his medical colleges.

The Taxila University was at its zenith as regards medical studies even in the early centuries of the Christian era. Similarly, the famous University of Ujjain had specialists of mathematics and astronomy and was famous for having established a great observatory. In southern India, there was a famous educational centre at Kanchipuram.

Instances of life-long brahmacharya were quite common in Nalanda. Megasthenes has

quoted instances where Brahmins studied for as many as 48 years. They studied logic, Vyakarana and philosophical subjects which are given great importance today and have been included in the humanities.

There were equal opportunities for all. There was no distinction between the rich and the poor. The prince and the peasant used to get the same kind of education from the same guru. The pupilage of Drona and Drupada is the best example of this type.

To conclude, education was free and broad-based. For the upkeep of the Universities, donations and endowments were made by the foreign as well as native rulers. Accordingly, the ultimate aim of education was the emancipation of the soul. 'Action is important' was their belief. Self-action and self-control lead life to emancipation. Education was influenced by the general principles of life. The Bhagavadgita emphasises that a student who seeks admission into a temple of learning should be properly disciplined, a sincere devotee, eager to hear and serve and never showing hatred towards others. Learning for base purposes was strictly prohibited. Every individual was induced to serve the community, irrespective of caste or creed, or his needs, just like a doctor, who while treating, forgets whether the disease is contagious or whether he would get his fee or not. In convocations, high ideals were insisted upon both the teacher and the taught. The teachers prayed for the glory of their students so that they might earn good name and fame for themselves as well as for their teachers wherever they went. For such times only Yaska had defined a true scholar in the words of the goddess of learning, Saraswati: 'Protect me, and I will be thy cherished treasure.'

In brief, education was not controlled by any external authority in ancient times. The State did not try to control it. The teachers were free to teach whatever they liked. They were the masters of the field.

ASCETICS AND ASCETICISM

T. S. RAGHAVAN

Ascetics are those holy men who practise asceticism, which comprises of strict austerities, self-control, discipline, celibacy, abstinence, fasts, 'voluntary poverty and uninterrupted meditation on Supreme Divinity. They preach of ethics, morals, religion and philosophy. Their discussions are purely unassuming in character with a sincere desire to understand. They practise what they preach and preach what they experience in the inner-most recesses of their hearts.

Asceticism takes its root meaning from Greek Athletics to mean control, will-power and exercise and is directed towards a scientific highway for the development of one's strength of body and mind. Taken as a course of self-discipline, this ascetic activity bestows on all athletes certain development of power of the muscle and its consequent control. In as much as the Asceticism referred to above thus attempts to distinguish a higher strata of self-discipline for a serious aspirant—a real athlete in the game of life—it has come to mean in course of time activity—physical, mental, moral and lastly spiritual.

Someone somewhere would try to decry asceticism as useless or vain attempt of self-mortification, subjecting the body to rigid discipline and aiming at something like a goal—the *summum bonum* of every soul's journey in the world. This is the thought of laziness. For, since the days of old, asceticism has been considered as a systematic and scientific course of self-discipline which leads one to the heights of human capabilities and aspirations in this life and prepares the individual for one's self-enlightenment in the hereafter. We have heard of many great personalities who have devoted their lives and held aloft the torch of spiritual practises to solve many of the perplexing

problems of mankind. If only the clue has been taken from them, man need not fear for the monsters which he himself has created in this age of science, the quantitative aspect of the Universe. Surely those noble souls were not wasting their time and energy and surely they were not unscientific too. Indeed, the ancient concepts of value, justice and morality are ever new and ever fresh, as Shankaracarya explains Purana to mean *Purā api nava eva* (Bhashya—Kathopanishad I-ii-18) 'though old, yet fresh only', i.e., changeless. They need no development but only a proper atmosphere for inculcation, understanding and practice.

Pure Science, as a matter of fact, is not capable of providing an adequate definition of religion. And in this age of dangerous missiles and bombs, which can exterminate not only the opponents but also neutrals, science has come to know of its limitations. The discovery of evidence, writes J. B. Rhine, that man is something more than a physical being supports the most basic of all religious doctrines namely that man has a spiritual nature. Man is psychologically prepared and panting for solace and guidance of religion. The soul in man aspires for spiritual enlightenment. And, indeed, a systematic and scientific course of self-discipline definitely leads one to such heights of eternal enlightenment for which every man strives in his cycle of births. Yogic concentration enjoined of ascetics fills in the need and purifies the inner besides preparing the body and mind for severe austerities, self-training and restraint. This is the beginning of yogic self-discipline, and is concerned with the moral and spiritual aspects of the individual, who would otherwise find himself dazzled in the material Universe like any other.

Dr F. Homes Dudden, in his article 'Dictionary of Christ and the Gospel', observes :

The body is represented as the enemy of the soul, and the way of perfection is identified with the progressive extirpation of the natural inclinations by means of fasting, celibacy, voluntary poverty and similar exercises of devotion. Hence asceticism may be described as the gospel of negation—negation of the world and the negation of flesh, each of which is apt to be confounded with the negation of the devil.

The ascetic believes in the existence of an entity which cannot be defined because it is infinite but can be defined as 'not this' 'not this' in comparison with the objects of this world. In that sense, it may be called a doctrine of negation but definitely it is not nihilism—sunyata. That Entity is transcendent, supernatural, Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, to which every individual soul is related in its captivity here and there exists no other relationship between spirit and matter. They are identical in a higher plane.

The ascetic who is with us is not of this world but he moves in a higher plane of thought, in a plane to educate the masses, to enlighten them of the follies of this mad-world to which they are adept, to guide the beguiled masses and to help cast away the illusions. Indeed the presence of such holy men from whose person eternal sunshine radiates, are needed, when men are growing more selfish, envious, greedy and more materialistic in word and deed. We may remember incidentally the famous lines :

उद्यन्तु शतमादित्याः

उद्यन्तु शतमिन्द्रवः ।

न विना विदुषां वाक्यै—

नश्यत्याभ्यन्तरं तमः ॥

Let a hundred suns rise up !
Let a hundred moons rise up !
Not without the words of wise
Do the inner darkness vanish !

Sabharanjanasatakam, 12.

In that plane of thought, asceticism forms the highest life of humanity. Considered as an activity, it is directed purely by the self without any other dictation, although the essential principle that underlines the actions of the self may be dictatorial. But such 'calls' are of the Guru—the preceptor and the guiding principle—and it becomes a matter of discipline that is self-directed and self-imposed. As such, primarily speaking the course of ascetic response is morally religious and mentally spiritual. The 'calls' of the Guru are deemed to be parables, words of the Master, Gospels and many other such clothing. They do not subject the self of the disciple but inspire it to find pleasure in the beholding. In effect, the course of asceticism is voluntary activity directed towards a life of service, self-dedicated ascetic response to the claims of an order that is morally and spiritually great and enduring.

This gesture of self-dedication is highly notable and venerable. It is a noble virtue. The votary has left his hearth and home, kith and kin for the world of one community, one outlook, one watch-word of service and unity. To attain such sublime state, he must have suffered greatly. He needs be an artist to find for us joy through his sufferings. We who come after him reap the joy which he has won for us through suffering. As Goethe bursts out :

I made love-songs only when I was in love.
How can I have written songs of hate without hatred ?

Really ascetics in their ecstatic moods of samadhi preached of God, only when they were in God, and through God alone they spoke. Otherwise, how could it have been possible for them to hate the material world ? They must have had exchanged the temporal for the eternal and residing in the eternal, shedding powerful lustre, spoke to the people who were still groping in the dark and unto those aspirants. They must have one day addressed themselves their mission :

We must do our utmost to transform the minds and morals of men, to make human beings rebel against the folly of this mad world, to make them realize that there is nothing to redeem the grief of those who suffered the loss of their dearest ones. Their sorrow is absolute. If we do not emphasise the universal values of spirit, if we do not resist the encroachments of provincialism, whether of caste or class, race or empire, we are disloyal to our mission. Let us through the weapons of reason and emotion, fight the vile enemies of mankind, battle for the dignity of man, for the great emancipation of humanity. Let us proclaim that human life is holy, that force is no remedy for justice, that peace, freedom, and happiness are indivisible.

When the truth is conveyed to others, dharma or virtue grows. Truth 'rains' virtue. Whatever tends to unify mankind is truth; whatever tends to disunite it is falsehood. The true is therefore the good and the beautiful, while the false is the evil and the ugly. Truth reveals to us that humanity is one, manifold and external. However exalted thought may be, its ultimate issue is action. The attainment of truth consists in the growth of consciousness and is the supreme service of humanity. By serving truth, we create joy and beauty, and through such creation we build a new humanity. Truth though an individual achievement, has social effects. Truth and virtue, satya and dharma, go together. If we are engaged in the redemption of the world it does not follow that we should reject the solitary side of life and crucify the soul.

The gift of right vision comes to those who have effected a profound change in their inner being, into whose nature has entered a spirit, calm, equal and ineffable. Human consciousness cannot act in its purity until it is released from the domination of desires and the separative ego... The impulse comes from a higher consciousness. The possessions of our mind by a vaster spirit is the phenomenon of inspiration. It is intensity of living, concentration on the object, which makes ideas take wings and embody themselves in rhythms and colours...

Man rises to Godhead through tapas. Tapas is not passive suffering, however tragic it may be, the suffering of poverty, of disease and of degradation, of the injustice of fate, but the active suffering born of love, the burning passion to raise the lot of sorrowing humanity. It is these tapasvins that protect us from the great misery and the deeper sorrow. (S. Radha-

krishnan, From the Indian writers in Council, All India centre of P.E.N., Bombay).

Their preparation consists in acquiring powers of self-discipline, self-control, self-surrender and renunciation, through (1) rational discrimination of permanent and impermanent objects; (2) dispassionate enjoyment of objects in this and in the hereafter; (3) acquiring the six-fold virtue of calmness, equanimity, turning away from objects, desire to abandon objects, faith and concentration; and (4) desire for liberation. And as J. MacCum says in his *Ethics of Citizenship* (p. 205) that

to minimise wants, to reduce material resources, to simplify life all round of luxuries, to make a clean sweep—this is the way of the ascetic.

Generally, the ascetic abstains from certain things and sometimes undertakes fasts. The difference between the two practices is that by abstinence, the ascetic dislikes or turns away for ever particularly from certain things, e.g., alcoholic drinks, meat, marriage etc. This distaste is permanent. Whereas by fasting, he abstains for a particular period from everything, and this is for a temporary duration. Herein the will of the ascetic and his endurance are put to test squarely. There are certain saints, even today, who are held in high veneration due to their will-power, endurance, abstinence and fasting. In fact, by such undertakings alone do the ascetics expend their energy. By such arduous spiritual austerities, they overcome the weariness of their body and seek time for self-examination. Meditation is enjoined on them as a routine, through which they gain a powerful concentration. They impose on themselves voluntary poverty, so that they can go beyond the desire of acquiring wealth, possessions etc.,—the 'preyas' which Naciketas rejected in preference to 'sreyas'. No doubt, they suffer but in course of time, suffering itself forms the virtue in them. This voluntary suffering is called tapas in Rigveda. And one who has addressed himself the mission of 'voluntary suffering' is called tapasvin,

Sri Aurobindo said :

There can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it; for asceticism means self-denial, and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature. — (The foundations of Indian Culture, p. 85)

To sum up : Asceticism may be said to concern the theory and practise of everyone's conduct, conducive to his attainment of his desired goal. It is a common feature in all religious systems and is the practical expression of definite stages of religious beliefs and philosophical speculations. It may be, no doubt, due to a strong desire or aspiration for self-humiliation before the Supreme Brahman, as it is said 'through renunciation alone, do they attain immortality'. So has come to stay the austere life of an ascetic. Sanatsujata said to Dhrtarashtra :

The words *esteem* and *asceticism* can never exist together. Know that this world is for those that are candidates for esteem, while the other world is for those that are devoted to asceticism.—(section xli-Udyogaparva)

The ascetic may either renounce completely the worldly life, like Sri Shankaracarya or remain a disinterested householder, like Sri Vedanta Desika. Although it is a matter of opinion in choosing either, we may be content to point out that the second type of ascetics was in vogue in ancient times. In Kathopanishad, Naciketas did not renounce the world but continued to lead a householder's life. But his brother, Svetaketu was a life-long celibate. Both were held in high esteem. Bhagavad Gita, the Song Supreme, reveals the philosophical foundation for the life of an householder and proclaims it as an adequate spiritual preparation for future life. The dispassionate celibate of the first type is the naishkamya Brahmacari, and the householder ascetic is the nishkamakarmayogi.

Satisfied by the bliss within, curbing wholly the cravings of the senses, delighting day and night in the bliss of Brahman, blest indeed is the wearer of the loin-cloth.

—ACHARYA SANKARA.

Regarding the origin of monastic institutions founded by champions of ascetic order, it is not possible to say anything beyond controversy. It is said that rest-houses were provided by rich devotees of ascetic saints for stayal of sadhus during rainy season alone, as they were expected to be wandering sadhus during other seasons. But in course of time, it would have become their practice to stay for prolonged periods in the rest-houses. This may, perhaps, account for the development of monastic institutions. As to the date, we may point out here, that the Chinese Ambassador, Fa Hien, during his historic visit in 5th century A.D., has recorded to have seen numerous monasteries in India. Whether the Buddhist viharas were the original type of monasteries which were later on copied by others, it is beyond the purview of this article to discuss. But it may be pointed out that the fine architecture, sculpture, and massive construction of Buddhist viharas could have been preceded by very simple and modest monasteries.

In North India, today, matha means a monastery where a sadhu resides but in South India, it means merely a religious institution, where a sadhu may or may not reside. The only surmise that could be made is that asceticism should have taken roots individually and, in course of changing times, religious persecutions or due to political developments, must have developed into a religio-social organization with the reformist outlook. This development has been so remarkable that great saints, philosophers and poets have embraced ascetic order, and have propounded the germs of spiritual enlightenment to all their fellow-beings. They are really the Masters of a nation and unique examples of a great social order.

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

We would have inward peace
Yet will not look within,
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin;
We want all pleasant ends,
But use no harsh means.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The education that we really require is the education of daily conduct, the education of character, the education by which we say to self-will, to pride and to lust, 'lie down' and they do it!
—McDOUGALL.

Importance of character training.

The Republic of Free India hopes to build a welfare state with the help of applied science and the age-long intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic culture of her people. A welfare state is defined in the 1955 Edition of the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* as 'a polity so organized that every member of the community is assured of his due maintenance, with the most advantageous condition possible for all.' A people who have been awakened to the need of national advancement recognise universal literacy as an important target of planning. This basic measure of social amelioration itself is a costly and toilsome programme. The eradication of moral illiteracy from a whole nation through the impregnation of the minds of its population with a strong desire for living life at the highest and best level is a far more arduous task. 'You will do the greatest service to the state', says an American author, 'if you will raise, not the roofs of houses, but the soul of the citizens; for it is better for great souls to dwell in small houses than for mean souls to dwell in great houses.' Those who work in this important field are never to lose heart either by the slowness of success or fear of failure.

The study of human happiness has claimed the attention of writers from the remotest past known to history. Thinkers have carefully analysed and succinctly stated the

condition in which happiness is acquired. They have also made known methods by which unhappiness may be totally eliminated or considerably reduced. Wise men in various countries, and from time to time, have reasoned with the common man to convince him that the cultivation of intellectual, moral, and spiritual values by every individual is necessary for the establishment of a just and good society. They have also impressed upon the minds of those who are interested, the imperative need of a just and good society for the happiness and progress of men and women who compose the community. It has been wisely stated that character and environment make up human destiny. It requires persistent effort and heroism to be good. In every age he whose character is great is considered not only the greatest benefactor of the society to which he belongs, but also of the whole world. Therefore we who live in a scientific era and hope to create reasonable chances of happiness for all, and aim at a considerable reduction of physical evil (if not the total elimination of cruelty, oppression, and war) cannot afford to neglect educational regeneration through the right training of character.

The timeless and the dynamic ideals of character.

In this paper, an endeavour is made to study the principles of character from the

timeless background of religion and ethics as also from the view points of psychology and sociology. Character is essentially mind training which in its nature is a timeless subject. Nevertheless the fact should not be overlooked that the traits of individual character are influenced by the ideas, values and principles which govern particular situations of social evolution. The contemporary approach to character education which will be outlined in the second part of this article cannot be omitted without the discussion becoming one-sided and incomplete.

Provisional definitions of character.

The training of character being a vital part of any comprehensive scheme of education it would be in order here to note some of the provisional definitions of character, in the interest of definiteness and clarity. Character is defined as the sum of traits conferring some distinction which serves as the essential nature of a person. When we speak about the character of individuals or nations we have in mind the aggregate of distinctive mental, moral, and spiritual qualities that adorn them. A man or woman who has evinced great moral strength and won a good reputation is a 'character'. A person gains firmness in his attitude and becomes vigorous in his conviction only when well-developed and strongly marked moral qualities and spiritual excellences are judiciously blended in him. Nature, education, and habit have their due share in impressing upon an individual the true worth of character. As the supreme art of living, character expresses itself through consciously cultivated inner attitudes and dispositions. What is present as a conscious inner state alone can be genuinely and consistently expressed in outward conduct. A trained and disciplined mind which meets the requirements of character hinted above is a pre-requisite to the solution of all human problems, social and individual.

Emphasis on the need of character by leaders of thought.

'A man's greatness' says Marcus Aurelius Antoninus,

'lies not in wealth and station as the vulgar believe, nor yet in his intellectual capacity, which is often associated with the meanest moral character, the most abject servility to those in high places and arrogance to the poor and lowly; but a man's true greatness lies in the consciousness of an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, or frequent self-examination and a steady obedience to the rule which he knows to be right, without troubling himself what others may think or say or whether they do or do not that which he thinks and says and does.'

At the close of the last century Swami Vivekananda who awakened his countrymen to its vast spiritual wealth addressed these appealing words to his adherents and admirers:

The religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. Referring to history we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive, and what makes it fit to survive but character? Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is character that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulties.

A quarter-century later Mahatma Gandhi tried to impress by his words as by his own magnificent personal example on the minds of the youths of India the necessity of building up a sound character by living up to the traditions of the sages who built up a civilization by exploring the laws of the spirit in man. His incisive words of admonition run:

Purity of personal life is the one indispensable condition of building a sound education. When your heart is not pure, and you cannot master your passions, you cease to be an educated man... And what is education without character, and what is character without elementary personal purity? If India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youths must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction.

The Mahatma confessed without hesitation that to him morality and religion were synonymous and declared that 'any tradition however ancient, if inconsistent with morality must be banished from the land'. He was openly critical about material progress achieved at the cost of moral values. To his way of thinking material progress without moral progress was poison; hence he strove to spiritualise the political life and institutions of the land. Gandhiji's life was a commentary on the famous words of Gladstone 'Nothing which is morally wrong can be politically right'. The spirit of religion conceived in this manner, Gandhiji asserted, 'is our most immediate need. Religion is a heart-grasp, according to him, and a necessity to do anything in the right manner.'

The religious philosophy behind character.

With the above preliminary observations, we take a peep into the religious background from which the philosophy of character may be studied. Religion is still a living force in the world and no other branch of human experience and enquiry penetrates into the racial history of mankind so widely or deeply as religion. The fundamental doctrines of religion are based on and supported by scriptural revelation, mystical illumination and ethical considerations. The message of religion comes from another order of existence. If the life and consciousness of man were a biological accident, religion would argue, the moral and spiritual aspirations of mankind will be hollow and meaningless. Social conventions, changing with time and latitude, cannot discover a satisfactory ground for moral action. Nor can inductive reasoning based on limited instances help us in the matter. The sanction for ethical perfection and an ideal life must therefore proceed from revelation based on the realisation of a transcendental reality. There is a very large measure of agreement among the religions as revealed in the lives of their respective communities. Many of them hold that the natural life of man on

the earth is a state of imperfection, ignorance and bondage which it is his enlightened interest to overcome with the help of divine grace and self-effort. According to various religions, God, universe, and soul are ontological realities which cannot be accounted for in terms of empirical sciences dealing with finite experience. All the evil in the world according to a proponent of religion, comes from ignorance of the truth of the holy writings in their clear simplicity. A steadfast character is built on a God-centred life. Man ought to love God for his own sake and all fellow beings for the sake of God in order that his character might be perfect.

The ideal for character formation in Buddhism.

Though Buddhism is considered atheistic in the strict sense, it holds still that a supernatural law works through the process of world evolution and that evil is counteracted by a life of moral perfection based on psychic evolution. The Buddha says that it is goodwill and wisdom, a mind methodically trained, and the highest moral based on good conduct, that makes a man pure, not rank or wealth. Mind-building is the heart of Buddha's teaching. All the tendencies of individual character according to the *Dhammapada* are the offsprings of thought. Happiness is the result of unsullied thoughts, words and deeds. Evil cannot prevail against the man who lives not for the pursuit of pleasure, who guards well his senses, who is moderate, who is possessed of unflinching faith, and who is careful about the application of his energy only for good purposes. Without temperance and truth none can be happy. A righteous life is possible only for those who are wakeful and vigilant and those who perform blameless deeds. A mind which is difficult to subjugate, which is fickle and which seizes upon whatsoever it desires is not conducive to happiness. All unworthy thoughts must be rigidly kept out of the mind. The blessed Buddha taught

that it was better to live one single day in the development of a good life, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in strong endeavour, than to live for a hundred years corrupt, dull, and with a wandering mind, in idleness and lassitude. According to him suffering is the outcome of wrong doing and that true happiness comes from good deeds. One has therefore to fill oneself with good and shun evil like poison. Harsh and angry words, thoughts of revenge, and want of consideration for others received special condemnation in the Buddha's doctrine. Abstention from all evil, doing of good and purification of one's thoughts sum up the message of Buddhism in the briefest compass.

Character in Christianity.

The Christian tradition inculcates that man is a fallen angel on his upward course again, and not the rising primate of the evolutionist. The human soul is on a peregrination in this world which ends in the home of every soul which is God. To a true Christian that state is best in which he exercises the highest faith in God and establishes himself in good word and deed. Continual practice of the presence of God is the Christian road to unselfishness, peace and perfection. Christ was the Perfect Man and he who patterns his life upon Him is the ideal character. The true Christian is annoyed and mortified by transgressions and he daily resolves earnestly to please God by renewed efforts at perfection. Love of God according to Christianity is love of good. He always prays who always does well. The good desire is prayer, and to keep a clear conscience thinking that God sees one's secret thoughts is the best way to keep oneself from wrong-doing. The Bible says: The temple of God is holy, which temple Ye are.

Since the soul is from God, says St. Augustine, she is nowhere at rest except in God. Man is therefore asked to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness which brings into every heart love, joy,

peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and temperance. St. Paul advised the Philippians:

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

For as a man thinks in his heart so he becomes. A true Christian is commanded to consecrate himself to the Lord. In a consecrated soul meekness and quietness of spirit are habitual and other virtues like sweetness, calmness, love and absence of anxiety will become natural developments. The essence of the Christian teaching is put by F. W. Robertson in the following words:

To love God is to love His character. For instance, God is Purity. And to be pure in thought and look, to turn away from unhal- lowed books and conversation, to abhor the moments in which we have not been pure, is to love God. God is Love; and to love men till private attachments have expanded into a philanthropy which embraces all,—at last even the evil and enemies with compassion,—that is to love God. God is Truth. To be true, to hate every form of falsehood, to live a brave, true, real life,—that is to love God. God is Infinite; and to love the boundless, reaching on from grace to grace, adding charity to faith, and rising upwards ever to see the Ideal still above us, and to die with it unattained, aiming insatiability to be perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect—that is to love God.

'It is certain', says St. Theresa of Jesus, that the love of God does not consist in tears, nor in this sweetness and tenderness which we for the most part desire and with which we console ourselves; but rather in serving Him in justice, fortitude and humility.

Christ said:

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Christian charity is disinterested, is not content with returning good for evil, is humble, is not an emotion like the lower forms of love but commences as an act of will.

Saints in Christianity are the friends of God worthy of honour and imitation. They

put into practice known principles of virtuous life and try to discover fresh ones. Sanctity is the most perfect state of human existence and the dominant idea governing it is absolute rectitude. Saints are wrapped up in and filled with God; they are above ordinary wise men and servants of God. Faith, hope and charity are the great springs of action in the lives of saints. They exemplify active love and tenderness or energetic action for the propagation of good. Some of them hide the treasure of learning and holiness in a commonplace and foolish exterior; but all of them have purified themselves and become an influence for good in the world. By love the saint understands action for the glory of God and for the relief of human misery, such as feeding the hungry, teaching wisdom, retrieving those who have gone astray, establishing peace and concord, visiting the sick, and seeing that each one has enough of what is wholesome and essential to his needs. From the brief sketch given above we see that Christianity gives a clear and long-tested method of character-building solidly based on example and precept.

Springs of character in Hinduism

According to the Vedanta, commonly understood by the term 'Hinduism', Reality is one and independent. Whatever else appears to exist is a manifestation or subordinate expression of the one Divine Reality. All that is compassed by heaven and earth, or covered by name and form, are but configurations of the one infinite Divine substance. The drama of existence is all written out in the thought of the Divine, only to be played out to the end, whether the Divine Being projected the universe out of Himself or He manifested Himself as the universe. The world moves in cycles and the individual soul has to complete the circle and return to the point of starting. Every soul is intrinsically perfect and immaculate. The earthly sufferings of the soul are the result of its being eclipsed by primordial

ignorance. The struggle universally witnessed on the part of living beings for the betterment of their status is an indication that each soul will in the long run retrieve its original divine state. Although far apart from God and mixed with much that is gross and vulgar, by proper discipline and divine grace, man is capable of becoming God-like in this world itself. Eternal freedom, perfection, and bliss are the birth right of each and every soul. There is thus a natural impulse in every man to rise to higher levels of moral and spiritual excellence. If this innate tendency is not recognised and reinforced by suitable training, the downward pull of nature will drag human personality down to the condition of a beast. Man is an aggregate of Spirit, mind and matter called in the familiar idiom *atman*, *antahkarana*, and *sarira*. These ingredients are not capable of observation in uncompounded condition. Their existence is accepted on the evidence of revelation and elucidatory reasoning. The *atman* is the principal and the mind and the body are its adjuncts. The body is the temporary lodgement of Spirit and mind during their earthly life. Seen from the side of the *atman* organic evolution is manifestation of Spirit through matter and mind. *Atman* is essentially the principle of consciousness,—immortal, unlimited, pure and bliss itself. The omnipresent and subtle Spirit is the force behind all manifested intelligence and energy. The mind animated by it creates the body according to the law of *karma* or the momentum of past impressions and tendencies. Mind reacts to external stimuli according to the direction it has already gained through its past deeds and experiences.

The law of *karma* may be explained as principle of causality operating at the psychic level. It propounds that our personality at any given moment is the result of the effects of thoughts which we have already entertained and actions already completed; consequently we are the architects

of our future individuality. According to his theory waking and dream experiences of every man and woman leave upon their stream of conscious life different pictures, which combine to make his or her character. The bent of the mind at any point of its history, determines the character of the person. Misery and happiness (the first may be compared to medicine and the second to food) are both factors in the formation of character. Vyasa in his *Yoga-bhāṣya* compares the mind to a bifurcating river, one of the effluent branches of which is called the stream of happiness flowing down the plain of discrimination towards liberation, and the other called the stream of unhappiness, or sin, flowing down the plain of indiscriminate and ignorance, towards bondage. One of these is naturally strengthened and deepened by barricading the other. *Karma* is thus a tremendous power which forms and reforms character. Character moulds the will and the will in turn causes character to be shaped by *karma*. According to the Vedānta those species of thoughts and activities which conduce to the manifestation of the hidden divinity in man make for a sound character and what makes the veil of ignorance thicker and promotes vice and brutality engenders a character weak and broken.

A popular teaching of Hinduism is that there is nothing in the world which is not constituted of three primal modes of Nature, designated as *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, distinct but operating together like the flame, wick, and oil in a lamp. The progress of a personality towards ideal goals takes place only when an aspirant overcomes the element of inertia, ignorance, and incorrect tendencies of mind and body produced by *tamas* with the aid of *rajas* operating as energy, activity and impulse for personal achievement. The quality of *sattwa* is the sign of perfection here and an earnest of the soul's beatitude hereafter. The traits of *sattwa* are serenity and en-

lightenment gained through a trained and established character. One who is firm in his character properly formed by habits drilled through *sādhana* or steadfast practice is called in Vedāntic scriptures a *bhāvitātman* or *kritātman*. A puranic stanza runs to the effect that character is built by the conscious cultivation of virtuous attitudes and actions and by the weeding out of their opposites, just as a sculptor reduces a marble block into a beautiful statue by chiselling and polishing it. The *Bhagavad Gita* divides mankind into two distinct classes having the qualities of gods on the one hand and their rivals on the other. Godly qualities are charity, self-control, evenness of temper, harmlessness, renunciation, tranquillity, gentleness, modesty, forgiveness, and freedom from hatred and pride. The same scripture again emphasises that a man of *sattwa* is without craving, does not boast of his deeds, is ardent, enduring, and is untouched by triumph and untroubled by failure. Further a *sāttwic* conscience knows what actions are right and wrong, what is safe and what is dangerous. So also there is a *sattwa* variety of determination which never wavers and which helps control over mind, vital energy and the sense.

The foundations of character are laid in the fourfold values of life elaborated in the Hindu codes. Lawful pursuit of pleasure, called *kāma* and final emancipation by the realization of one's own divinity called *moksha* are the two end-values for which every person ought to strive. *Artha* and *dharma*, worldly goods and the religious righteousness, are the means prescribed for their realisation. The religious books of India are replete with stories and romantic biographies of sages and kings illustrating the personification of the above principles in their lives. A child is to be brought up in the faith that his soul and *dharma* are eternal values and that the pain and pleasure confronting life are flickering and transitory. Hinduism

of characters who have blazed the trail of virtue and who esteemed death for the sake of *dharma* infinitely superior to the ignominious life of unvirtuous. A precise and straight-jacket definition of *dharma* has not being attempted, but the meaning is clear more or less to the wise and the unlettered. Suppression of egoism together with active selfless benevolence may be said to be the principle underlying the multifarious expressions of *dharma*. *Dharma* grows by our transcending the limits of the senses through self-abnegation. It may be said that *dharma* is the heart of religion imparting to it life and power. *Dharma*, or religious righteousness, leads to *punya* (religious merit) which is at the root of happiness here and hereafter. *Adharma* (vice) begets *pāpa* (religious demerit) from which issue all suffering and torment. The slackness of moral fibre leads to religious demerit and suffering. The law of causality operates inexorably. None can sow thistles and reap grapes. One who has not ceased from sinful activities, who has not self-control, who is incapable of careful attention and who is not calm in mind, says the *Katha Upanishad*, will never attain to Truth by speculation.

The god-man, the man of Illumination who has attained to liberation-in-life, is the ideal man in Vedānta. He has achieved complete mastery over the powers of mind and body and is adorned with all the virtues which struggling souls aspire to copy in their lives. He has realized that his Self is the Divine principle that animates every living thing and so he is one with the universe. To him the universe is deified and every thought and action proceeding from him bears the stamp of the divine. He loves one and all as his own *ātman*, and is full of sweetness, calmness, frankness, contentment, benevolence, sincerity and gravity. In his presence, evil thoughts are scotched and his very life transforms that of others. The common man has to regulate and purify his conduct by checking and re-

of these exemplars, for, nothing but the purest and noblest thoughts can rise in their minds. They have no personal aims, wishes, schemes, and pleasures, for their minds are replaced by Divine good and they are a blessing for all. Theirs is the perfect character in the light of which one living in society can regulate his life in harmony with all.

Moral sentiments and religious aptitudes are worked into the minds of generations of Hindu aspirants through specific discipline based on *śraddhā*, *yama* and *niyama*. Without an active faith in what one wishes to achieve and in the means to the attainment thereof, efforts in any betterment work will not be fruitful. Faith in the religio-philosophical principles delineated above is the *sine qua non* for the perfection of character. An individual who possesses zealous faith in the perfectibility of character holds on to the tested methods with continuous energy. He consciously practises the *yamas* of non-injury, truthfulness, abjuring unlawful possessions, chastity and temperance, and limiting of one's possessions to subsistence level. He who approximates to this stringent rule of life has already the qualities required for a firm character. The above regulations are supplemented by *niyamas* consisting of regulated daily conduct of piety. The Hindu considers *tapas* as the potent means of success in all higher endeavour. There is a common misunderstanding of *tapas* as consisting in mere self-immolation. The higher authorities often define *tapas* variously as restriction of sensuous enjoyment, renunciation of physical gratification, endurance of pain in doing one's duty, and concentration of one's mental and physical energies for the attainment of an exalted goal such as knowledge and spiritual illumination. The highest character is the outcome of the greatest self-effort and one-pointedness according to the Vedāntic view.

(To be continued)

NACHIKETA—THE CHILD OF IMMORTAL BLISS

(A play : continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

SCENE IV.

(On a small rock Nachiketa is sitting, with one of his palms supporting his chin, wrapt in his own thoughts. After revealing his figure clearly, the lights grow dim.)

Enters Kali from behind. Comes slowly and stands by the side of Nachiketa who continues to be absorbed in himself, oblivious of the presence of the newcomer. Kali stands for some time with his hands crossed across his breast, glaring at the boy with intense displeasure, and then coughs in order to attract attention. Nachiketa gives a start, and seeing Kali unexpectedly, jumps up. Obviously in fear, he steps back, all the while looking at Kali nervously. Then he summons up courage and speaks.

For the rest of the scene, only flood lights from the top, concealed, pour light, preferably of a yellow shade. All the rest of the stage is in darkness.)

Nachiketa : (aside) Yamaraja! . . . He is fearful indeed!

(Still standing, offers salutations with folded hands.)

Kali : (Looks on glaringly in return . . . After a little silence,) Eh! You fellow! Who are you? Why did you come here?

Nachiketa : Lord! I have come to you only.

Kali : Lord! Come to 'you'! To me! . . .

Nachiketa : Yes Deva! To you. Are you not Lord Yama?

Kali : (Muttering) Lord Yama! Lord of Yama! . . . (Aloud) Eh! Have you come here to play with me? Get out of here . . . I will smash you.

Nachiketa : (Crest-fallen) (Aside) Alas! I never expected Yamaraja would be so cross. But I must not swerve from truth. (To Kali) Lord! I have been bestowed as a gift to you. So kindly accept me first, and then you may do as you please.

Kali : Gift! To me!! Who confers gifts on me? What for? And, what shall I do with you?

Nachiketa : It is to fulfil my father's words, 'I have given you to Death' during the time of sacrifice, that I have now come to you—the God of Death.

Kali : Eh, you fellow! I am not Yama. I am Kali! Kaliraja! . . . (Nachiketa looks in astonishment) What a strange creature you are! When men are afraid even to hear the very name of Yamaloka, you have come here all by yourself. I can only say you are a fool. Go back the way you came. Quick I say!

Nachiketa : (Aside) When you are like this, I don't know how much more terrible Yamaraja will be. . . . Yet, father's words must not prove false . . . (To Kali) Sir, then I would wait for Yamaraja; kindly permit me to do so.

Kali : You silly creature! Have you no sense at all? I admit you are brave. But you are stupid too; stupid I say . . . Some fellow of a father says something; and you, the son, take it seriously and come to Yama of your own accord. Rank stupidity!

Nachiketa : But, to carry out the behest of elders—is it not Dharma, Sir?

Kali : (Aside) Oh, oh! Dharma! So this fellow also belongs to that tribe, the gang of the righteous! I must . . .

fellow, unsettle his mind and tempt him away from Dharma. Otherwise I am not safe.

(To Nachiketa in a cajoling tone) My dear Child! Somehow, I am beginning to have a liking for you. I am only sorry you don't know how to get on in life.

Nachiketa : I am willing to learn.

Kali : Look here. Instead of looking after your own happiness, why should you bother yourself with some meaningless words of your father and get into all this trouble. That is why I tell you—you are stupid. . . . But then, what is done is done. Be careful hereafter at least. Give up this madness of going to Yama; return home and be happy. If you need any help, you shall have it from me.

Nachiketa : How can that be possible? How can I return to father without fulfilling his words?

Kali : In that case, you need not return at all! Stay on with me and be happy. I will provide you all the comforts and conveniences you want. Tell me whatever is dearest to you, what you desire most.

Nachiketa : . . . The things I desire most are . . .

Kali : (eagerly) Tell me, tell me! Is it riches, gold, royal pleasures . . . ?

Nachiketa : (After a little reflection) . . . Fine cows and gold . . . I would be glad to get them.

Kali : (Jumping with joy—Aside) Ha! Now I can catch him. (To Nachiketa) My dear child! Ask all that you want. I shall give you any quantity you ask. But, you must do as I say.

Nachiketa : It is not for my sake . . . It is for my father. That would be helpful to him in conducting the sacrifices—most dear to him—in a satisfactory way.

Kali : (Aside) Ahhh! The fellow has slipped out. (gnashing his teeth) Always thinking only of others—never of them-

selves. It is these perverse people and their wretched goodness that has brought on me all this infamy.

(To Nachiketa) You, wretched fellow! I ought to have torn you to pieces at the very beginning. To have allowed all this talk to go on instead of finishing you, is my own mistake. I shall do the right thing now (proceeds to roll up his sleeves).

Nachiketa : But Kaliraja! What harm have I done you?

Kali : Harm! You are my enemy, and I hate my enemy.

Nachiketa : Why should you hate me?

Kali : Do you know why? You are one of those good, virtuous people. It is your goodness that is the cause of my hatred. Even to allow you people to come near me is dangerous. In course of time, you would bring about my ruin. Ah! You and your goodness!

Nachiketa : But Sir, I am not such a good fellow after all.

Kali : You are. I say you are good. (grinding his teeth) You wretches! Full of truth and goodness . . . Why did you ever come here! Your very contact has stirred up so much distress in me. That is why I hate you.

Nachiketa : But I do not hate you Kaliraja! You are certainly not a very mild person. Still, I have begun to like you.

Kali : (in violent rage) You scoundrel, who does not know even to hate! If I don't finish you off now, I am gone. (Throws up his hands wildly, in great agitation. Finally sinks down exhausted with emotions.)

Nachiketa : (Tenderly approaching) Oh brother! You are tired. Why don't you first of all take some rest? After that, you may say whatever you wish. Come, please sit down here.

Kali : (Springing up at once) No! I won't sit down. I won't (Menacingly drawing near) Do you think I will be taken in by your sugary words? Never!

Nachiketa : All right brother ! Don't sit ... Do just as you please. ... But what exactly have I done for you to hate me ?

Kali : (Gripping his head with his hands and groaning) (Aside) How shall I confess my weakness to this boy ? (again groans) All right ... (To *Nachiketa*) You, you have planted in me the seed of poison — of the desire to become good like you. Before that sprouts and takes root, I must finish you.

Nachiketa : Am I such a good fellow as you think ? Do you know I have caused pain to my father ?

Kali : (laughing amusedly) It is but right to cause pain to such a father. ... You innocent babe ! What do you know of the ways of hurting others ! ... I tell you, you have poisoned my life with your infernal goodness.

Nachiketa : Brother ! Still I don't understand why you are so bitter against goodness.

Kali : (Aside) What am I to do ? I cannot destroy him nor let him alone. Neither can I go away from him. Some mysterious force is dragging me to him.

(To *Nachiketa*) Do you know the reason for this hatred of mine ? Those who call themselves 'good'—they shun me as the 'evil one' either out of fear or scorn. And again, there are those who obtain the objects of their desire through me alone ; yet they too do not acknowledge me as the one who has helped them and give me the honour due. That is why I hate the whole mankind ... and specially the 'good' ones. ...

(softening) ... But, my boy ! You neither fear me nor shun me. Till now the sage Narada was the only one who had a

soft corner in his heart for me. And now you seem to be another such. All the others are my enemies. ...

(Again in a mood of anguish, making wild movements with hands) Tell me boy ! What should I do to be good ! But only tell me the easy way.

Nachiketa : Well ... You should be obedient to your parents, and serve them.

Kali : (in obvious glee) Impossible ... I have no parents at all !

Nachiketa : Then ... You must behave with gentleness with your fellow-beings.

Kali : And allow them to think I am weak and to exploit me ? Never ! Tell me something easier.

Nachiketa : You may forgive those who try to harm you.

Kali : Forgiving ! That is the one thing I can never do. I would rather knock out four teeth for every one I may lose. You fellow ! Is there no really easy way ?

Nachiketa : (reflecting) Easy way ! I think the easiest is to give food and clothing to the poor and destitute.

Kali : Can they be won over by that ?

Nachiketa : Of course, brother.

Kali : I don't know. But something makes me believe what you say. I shall give it a trial. I shall go to earth and do what you have said. If thereby I am pleased and satisfied, then you too are saved. Otherwise ... take care ! Here I go ...

Nachiketa : (Watching him depart) May good betide Kaliraja !

C U R T A I N.

(To be continued)

I remember that great word of the Katha Upanishad—*Shraddha*, or marvellous faith. To preach the doctrine of *Shraddha* or genuine faith is the mission of my life.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GOSPEL OF DIVINE HUMANISM

RAMANI KUMAR DATTA GUPTA

'*Jiva is Shiva*'

To visualise and serve living beings as God for the realisation of the Divinity in them is a new philosophy of work enunciated by Sri Ramakrishna the great Master and preached by his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna fully realised that the suffering multitude he saw before him were but symbols of that Divinity, the realisation of which is the *summum bonum* of life and one who failed to pay due homage to those manifestations of the Divinity, worshipped God in other forms in vain. "Seekest thou God ?" says Sri Ramakrishna. "Then seekest Him in man. Divinity is more manifest in man than in any other object." Sri Ramakrishna lived constantly on high spiritual planes in the serene fulness of Cosmic Joy. But he was not on that account unmindful of the infinite sufferings and afflictions of the world. He was wide awake to the tragic miseries and agonies of the unhappy world and did not detach himself from life to avoid its sufferings. His realisation of the identity of God and man, and his universal love revealed unto him that the living being is God and that whoever loves God must unite himself with Him in sufferings, errors and excesses of humanity. It was due to his monistic (Advaita) realisation that he screamed and smarted under pain, as from a wound, and his heart was bleeding at the sight of two boatmen quarrelling and one beating the other on the Ganges near his dwelling-place at Dakshineswar. Suffering of the boatman tortured him and he felt in the deep recess of his heart his pains as his own.

On another occasion Sri Ramakrishna burst into tears to see a man strike at a tree with an axe and cried out with agony : "My Mother is present in this tree, the axe is striking at Her." After his superconscious

state in the bosom of identity Sri Ramakrishna could not even place his feet on tender blades of grass, pluck flowers from plants, utter an unkind word to anyone and allow his feet to be touched by way of salutation—in a word, he realised and felt the very presence of Brahman in all and sundry—in men and women, beasts and birds, plants and insects. He not only relieved the individual sufferings of those who came to him for succour, but also removed collective sufferings on several occasions and exhorted Vivekananda and his other great disciples to serve the afflicted and the miserable as 'Shiva' or 'Narayana' (God). Specially on two occasions Sri Ramakrishna himself was extremely moved with compassion and sympathy, shed tears to see the wretched condition of famine-stricken people at Deoghar and Ranaghat and persuaded his caretaker and disciple Mathuranath Biswas, son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, to feed and clothe them adequately, and even to exempt the tenants from payment of taxes for a period of time because of famine prevailing in his estate.

One day at Dakshineswar Sri Ramakrishna took part in a talk amongst his disciples about 'compassion to living beings' (*jive dayā*), a popular Vaishnavite maxim and at once uttered forth in a half-superconscious mood this aphoristic saying :

Jiva is Shiva (a living being is God). Why kindness to living beings ? Worship them as God. Kindness stimulates arrogant superiority. Man has a right only to serve and worship as God.

This pithy spiritual truth, pregnant with a deep meaning, was quickly grasped, assimilated and realised by Swami Vivekananda, who interpreted and preached his Master's gospel of service by way of giving secular education to illiterate masses, spiritual know-

ledge to those who thirst for God, food and clothings to starving people, medical aid to diseased persons, and other kinds of succour to the needy and the afflicted, so that having all their wants fulfilled they might by and by be led to the domain of spirituality. The many-sided works of service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad according to local needs derive their source of inspiration from this aphoristic saying of Sri Ramakrishna: 'Jiva is Shiva'.

Radiator of Peace and Unity

During Sri Ramakrishna's last illness at the Cossipore Garden House, Swami Vivekananda most often implored his Master to transmit unto him such spiritual dynamism as might enable him to be constantly attuned to and deeply absorbed in the ineffable bliss of the Absolute in the highest superconscious realisation (Nirvikalpa Samadhi). Sri Ramakrishna chastised Swami Vivekananda for his narrow and selfish idea and exhorted him to dedicate his life to the service of humanity as God in their tragic miseries and afflictions. The Master assured his worthy disciple that the highest superconscious realisation would become so easy and natural to him by the grace of the Mother that even in his normal state he would be able to realise one Divinity in all beings. "Thou art the bearer", emphasised Sri Ramakrishna,

'in this storm-tossed world, of the message of universal love, sympathy, joy and fraternity. It is thy sacred role, proud privilege and bounden duty to radiate peace, order and unity in the whirlpool of dissensions and wrangles into which people have feverishly thrown themselves. Be thou like the wide-spreading banyan tree in whose cool and soothing shade thousands of souls, weary and wounded in the struggle for existence, come for shelter, healing, solace and peace. The great mission of liberating people from all kinds of bondage and sufferings devolve on thee.'

And the worthy apostle proved equal to the task. Vivekananda preached his Master's universal gospel of divine humanism, which

has given an entirely new orientation to the scientific method of organised beneficence obtaining in the West as also to the hitherto-prevailing idea of compassion to the afflicted in the East, and has also given a quietus to the age-long conflict between spiritual life and social welfare. "From the highest Brahman to the tiniest atom," declared Swami Vivekananda,

'abides the same God. Dedicate thyself to their service. God exists in varied forms before thee. Where dost thou seek Him? He serveth God best, who loveth best His creatures.'

Conception of Divine Humanism

In India the conception of Divinity in living beings is as old as the days of the Vedas. The Vedic seers realised the Absolute in the highest superconscious state and visualised Him in and through all. The Upanishads declare emphatically that One Supreme Brahman pervades the whole universe and is the sum-total of all souls. The Gita, the Bhagavatam, the Puranas, the Epics and the Vaishnava Scriptures sing equally of the noblest conception of an all-pervading Brahman. But the tragedy of things is that no serious attempt has been made by the people to translate this sublime doctrine into practical life. There has been an age-long conflict between theory and practice. The result is that the highest teachings of the Vedanta are out of touch with the practical life of the nation.

Blind, lame, dumb, infirm, diseased, miserable and poor people are there in all societies, in all climes and in all ages. People are also rendered helpless and distressed by such natural calamities as famine, pestilence, flood, earthquake, cyclone, fire, etc., and also by destructive weapons of modern warfare and frenzied mob-violence. Except a few believers in fatalism and inexorable Law of Nature, who are callous enough to leave the afflicted and the miserable to their fate to reap the consequences of their own misdeeds, people in general have natural sympathy and love for the distressed and feel

inclined to alleviate their sufferings in all possible ways. All books on religion and ethics of the world inculcate kindness, sympathy, love and charity for relieving the distress of fellow-beings. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Jainism also stress the need of bestowing charity on the afflicted and relieving their sufferings, and regard compassion as an act of supreme virtue.

In India all schools of thought—dualistic, non-dualistic and qualified non-dualistic—appear to concur in the utility of the service of suffering humanity from different angles of vision and attitudes. The dualists are not disposed to look upon living beings as God, but they serve them knowing that the Lord abides in them and that He will be pleased if His children are lovingly served. Qualified non-dualists maintain that the universe is the manifestation of God and that to serve manifested beings is tantamount to divine worship. Non-dualists (Advaitists) hold that a living being is Brahman Himself and that to serve a living being is to serve and worship Brahman and to realise Brahman in him. It is on this non-dualistic conception that Sri Ramakrishna the great Teacher, built up his universal gospel of divine humanism, and Vivekananda the great interpreter, preached this new philosophy of work broadened and strengthened by his intimate knowledge of the East and the West. The idealist and realist Vivekananda with an intellectuality and foresight that were his own, realised the supreme necessity of ministering to the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual needs of suffering humanity by initiating wide-scale organised works of service to be done in the true spirit of worship as an efficacious means to self-realisation. The large-hearted Vivekananda declared:

Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak our gods? Worship them first. He who sees Shiva in them really worships Shiva and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is

preliminary. May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God that I believe in, the sum-total of all souls, and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races and of all species is the special object of my worship.

Service is Worship

The great religious and philanthropic institution, the Ramakrishna Mission of worldwide repute, founded by Swami Vivekananda, is catering to the needs of suffering humanity by secular education, spiritual knowledge, medical aid and varied relief works. A synthesis of these humanitarian works is essential for the constitution of man, for the gradual process of self-unfolding from physical nourishment to the succour of the spirit. It is a privilege to help others. We must not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in our hand and say: 'Here, my poor man', but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by giving a gift to him we are able to help ourselves. We must think ourselves blessed for the privilege given to us of working for God, not of helping Him, Who comes in the forms of the poor, the miserable and the afflicted. The service of the distressed does not only assist the sufferers in the mitigation of their sufferings but also helps their servers even more effectively in the realisation of the Self. The giver is always the recipient. If service is rendered in the true spirit of worship, it is the most efficacious means to spiritual realisation, for man is the highest symbol of God and the service of man is the highest form of worship on earth. Herein lies the special significance of the ideal of divine humanism enjoined by Swami Vivekananda. This universal gospel of service embodies the future hopes and aspirations of mankind and represents in a remarkable degree the harmonious blending of knowledge, work and worship (love). It is Vedanta in its application to practical life and is a distinct and unique contribution to world-culture. The highest Vedantic truths

that are treasured up in Scriptures, cloisters, hermitages and mountain-caves, have been brought down for their application to practical life.

One question may be asked: Is it possible for ordinary mortals to serve suffering humanity in the true spirit of worship without first realising the inherent divinity in them? It is true that he who has seen God will live for all and that without the realisation of the Spirit within oneself and in others, real service is not possible. But that must not deter us from practising the ideal. Before self-realisation we ought to keep constantly in view the revelations of the Scriptures and the spiritual experiences of the great seers, who have realised the Truth, and try to follow them as best as we can. Constant practice in the spirit of worship will enable the server to realise the Self in the long run. This point is thus elucidated by Swami Shivananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in a letter to Romain Rolland, the great French savant:

Some conceive of distinction between the realisation of the Divinity in man and the consciousness of universal suffering with regard to motives for service. It seems to me that these are merely two aspects of the same state of mind and not two different states. It is only by realising the inherent divinity of man that we can truly feel the depth of his misery, for only then the state of man's spiritual bondage and deprivation of the divine perfection and bliss becomes vivid to our consciousness. It is the painful consciousness of the contrast between the Divinity within man and his present

ignorance of it and consequent suffering that goad the heart to his service. Without the realisation of the Spirit within oneself and in others, true sympathy, love and service are not possible. This is why Sri Ramakrishna wanted his disciples to attain self-realisation before they could devote themselves profitably to the service of mankind.

India's Role as Peace-maker

The two devastating world wars have left terribly baneful anarchy in thought and life in their trail, and the combatant nations have got weary of slaughter and havoc, and are thirsting for peace. It is high time that the work of evangelising the war-worn West and East with the soothing and life-giving message of the Vedanta should be pushed forward on an extensive and intensive scale. It is the Indian Vedanta that is the sovereign panacea for all ills and shall bring real succour and abiding peace to the aggressive nations that are once again on war-path, and stage tests of destructive explosives, threaten wholesale annihilation with atomic and other offensive weapons, deliberately refuse to believe in the efficacy of spiritual power and adhere to brute-force to achieve their objectives. A great opportunity has now come to India, because she has at last shaken off her age-long shackles of political thralldom and is, therefore, in an unfettered position to fulfil her foreign policy, her spiritual mission, in the fullest possible measure. She must assert herself now and occupy her rightful place as the Spiritual Teacher and Peace-maker to the benighted world.

HELPLESSNESS

BY A DEVOTEE

What elements am-I made of,
That knowing sin to be sin
I cannot but commit it?
Thy hands hold the elixir of eternal blissful life
For me to take whenever I would;
And yet I sip on the poison of death and pain.
Am I attracted by life or afraid of death?

I do not know; but with a heart
That is almost dead, I live on
Forgetting the hard-earned moments of happiness
Trying to save my little identity.
Still at times the thoughts of touching Thy lotus
feet
Give me a hopeful throb or two.

चरेवेति

When a butterfly flits in the sunshine we enjoy the sight. But is it so pleasant when our thoughts behave like butterflies? Do we not feel miserable when they flit hither and thither, defying our attempts to control them? Not all of us, probably; for many among us may still be honey-seekers dwelling mainly on the plane of the senses. We may not have outgrown the stage of regarding external objects with attractive outsides as inviting, nectar-yielding flowers. Until we go through a course of being repeatedly cheated, caught in traps, or hit by rivals, we may not begin to see the mistaken direction in which we are moving. Even then many a vital lesson will be beyond our immediate grasp. We may be inclined to drop individual objects of our desire solely because of the pains they might give or the difficulties of securing them. But we may yet be contemplating the thrills sense objects can confer under favourable conditions. That tendency usually dies rather hard. Its conquest depends upon a thorough re-education of the mind. First there must be a clear recognition that the very leaning for support on external possessions reduces us to the position of abject slaves to them. Secondly we have to realize that whatever successes we may attain in life are all due to the enormous creative power already available within ourselves. The problem is to 'tap' it aright and to prepare the proper channels along which we wish, or ought to wish, to make it flow.

On looking back, do we not remember how in certain contexts we approached influential people and begged them to give us sundry 'recommendations'? There must have been instances where a word put in

FROM REPENTANCE TO REVELATION

here or there by obliging friends really served some useful purpose. But did we ever pause to ask ourselves: What was that 'something' in us with which we hit the recommending person first and caused a chain of further hits till the wished for object fell into our lap? Was it not true that the ultimate source of our success undoubtedly lay in that 'something',—its unique potentialities, and the direction of our initial blow, rather than in any special virtue found only in the recommendation? Looking at the value of 'self-effort' from this particular angle, we shall gradually arrive at a point where we can widen the concept to include even what devotees call 'God-vision' and resulting 'boons'. The central idea is that 'thinking' is a 'natural' process of drawing in Cosmic creative energy and transforming it to achieve human 'goals'. Every exercise in mental purification is in itself a special mode of incoming grace,—a present enjoyable experience to be knowingly and thankfully accepted as such. It goes without saying that when inner purification is complete or when the personality is wholly harmonized there must ensue a special receptivity to higher truths,—a luminosity transcending but not violating the normal two-eyed vision. This may be heralded by the experience of mystic forms, corresponding in some convincing way to the deities of mythology or the values of philosophy, accepted as a satisfactory basis for spiritual disciplines by each individual earlier. To the person concerned the experience would be so comprehensive that he would fail to notice henceforth any justification for doubting whether the forms contacted were

objectively real or only his own subjective fancies; for at least the 'gifts' or 'virtues' got as 'boons' would exhibit a permanency all their own!

In our younger days we listened to an interesting discourse. The subject was the way Śuka and Sārana, knowers of Law, employed by Rāvaṇa, tried to spy upon the monkey army of Rāmachandra. They wanted a suitable disguise, said the story-teller; and what should it be? One suggested, "Let us be dogs. None takes stray dogs seriously. We can move about among the enemy soldiers, picking up crumbs of eatables dropped by them. We of course, should not forget to smell odd stones here and there, in true dog fashion, lift one hind leg and so on." At this stage the narrator comically imitated the way the dogs do this. Allowing us to laugh, the scholar suddenly gave the objection of the second spy. "But," said he, "friend, you know the usual fate of such creatures?" Here followed the imitation of how mischievous children creep stealthily from behind with stones in their hands, take sure aim and then hurl them, often breaking a hind leg of the poor animals. That was enough. The dog-plan was given up, and as a brighter alternative a mosquito-plan was conceived, followed, of course, with equally unanswerable objections, though of a different kind,—till at last both agreed upon becoming monkeys themselves. They could thus remain indistinguishable from their enemies and carry on their appointed task. Unfortunately, said the narrator, Angada's troops had been just then carrying out a "Stand Still" drill, something like the attitude adopted during

the singing of the National Anthem. Since the spy-monkeys had no knowledge of it they began moving about, with the consequence that they were forthwith detected and mauled somewhat,—the commotion ultimately leading to their being taken to Rāma himself who graciously pardoned them and helped them to see fully his military strength! At this stage, a side-lesson was driven home by the narrator: Do you think a better body than yours is the one another has? When you leave this and try that body, or situation in general, you will soon come to see its limitations and dangers. You will then badly repent, increase your wisdom a bit, and then commence a wearisome struggle at least to get back your previous state!

This is what happened to Karkatī when she had been through the absurdities of her "pinship". She said to herself: 'Where is that towering stature reaching to the sky, and what is this newly-earned contemptible form of a needle? Where is that mouth, vast as the vault of heaven, and what is this miserable hole of the needle I have got in exchange? Alas! How lean have I grown! But who is to be blamed for an act of my own doing?'

Repentance becomes creative when it is emotionally connected with our own painful experiences. Every time we repeat the mood of repentance, irrespective of the word-formulas in which we express it to ourselves, or which we use internally to whip it up, we are in fact reassembling our thought forces on a firm background with the intention of becoming wiser. Thus it was with Karkatī who lost no time in re-

¹ Nītināu Śuka-Sāranaū niśicarau Rakṣhodhirājājnayā
Gatvā vānara-vāhini-parisaram, vijnāya tad-vaibhavam
Kīśair-āśu nipīditau karuṇayā Rāmeṇa muktau tadā
Lankām-etya ca sādaram kṛta-natī sāśankam ityūcatuḥ.

² Kvākārombara-pūrakāḥ, kva ca navam tucchātma-sūci-vapū-
Rodo-randhra-samam kva vā' sya-kuharam; kvedam ca sūci-mukham?
Kva grāso bahu-māmsa-bhāra-bahulaḥ kvāb-bindunā bhojanam,
Sūkṣmā'smyetad-aho mayalva racitam svātma-kṣeye nātakam!

Yoga-Vāsīṣṭha, Utpatti, LXXI. 42.

turning to the previous mountain top and plunging herself into the deepest concentration. The story says in beautiful language that even trees and creepers sympathized with her,—indeed who will not, seeing a holy ascetic, and a female one at that, near by? They shed blossoms, and the wind did his kind share in wafting excellent pollen to the eye of the needle that corresponded to its mouth. But Karkatī was adamant this time; how could she afford to stray away from her devotions when wisdom was the goal? And as mental purity mounted up, it is said even the entire mountain throbbed with the glow of her rising holi-

ness. What is it that one-pointed aspiration cannot accomplish? And what harm if the ultimate realization is a bit slow in coming and a few more obstacles have to be surmounted by the aspirant? Brahmā did appear, in due course, and the old body did return, but not the old mind. It had changed once for all with the dawn of insight. But difficult encounters yet remained to be gone through before the new qualities became tested, verified and strengthened. That is an almost universal law; and about this later.

मग चरैवेति।

SUBANDHU

EAST-WEST SYMPOSIUM AT BRUSSELS (My Experience)

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

The UNESCO and the Belgian National Commission of the UNESCO, Brussels, are to be warmly congratulated for conceiving the idea of an East-West Symposium as a part of the International Exhibition and World fair at Brussels and realising it in a remarkable way. The Symposium was held from June 26th to July 3rd, the inaugural session in the vast exhibition grounds and the succeeding sessions in the Palais du Congrès, rue Ravenstein. The exhibition which brought together the great scientific discoveries of the world was a pointer to the future of Man and an interrogation. It asked the question: what modern man is going to do with the new power he has gained by the help of science. The UNESCO, in a certain sense being the brain-trust of the world, wanted to answer the question not by itself but through the testimony of representatives of the East and the West. These representatives by a confrontation and mutual appreciation of their cultural and spiritual values were to create a climate of thought and understanding in which ways and means for a mutual en-

richening and reorientation of outlooks can be forged. There were representatives from all parts of the world and from all horizons of opinion: from Japan, Iran, India and Ceylon, from Russia, Turkey and Poland. India was represented by Mrs. Mehta, Delegate to U.N., Geneva, Mr. Dhingra, late of the UNESCO; Professor Nikam, of the Institute of Ethics, New York, and myself. Ceylon was represented by Mr. Malalasekharā, now Ceylon's Ambassador at Moscow. He presented the Buddhist point of view. There were doctors, philosophers, scientists, and religious men, both as participants and observers. The deliberations were not open to the public.

The symposium was to address itself to the task of bringing together on the basis of comparative study the criteria of evidence of cultural values of the East and West under three heads: (1) Idea of time and historic duration. (2) Idea of life. (3) Notion of value, moral and spiritual. The UNESCO in a note explaining the plan and purpose of the symposium indicated that

the consideration of these topics should involve not simply a rational point of view, but an equilibrium between the rational and the non-rational. The note was apologetic about the word non-rational, but preferred it to super-rational and extra-rational. Once these comparisons have been made, it was intended to arrive at conclusions capable of useful application for both the East and West, *inter alia* in the fields of education and intellectual or moral training.

The inaugural address was delivered by Mr. Maurice Lambilliotte, General reporter of the Universal exhibition and managing editor of the review "*Synthèse*", on the "advancement of the intellectual, moral and spiritual values of the modern man". The address created a profound impression. Mr. Lambilliotte emphasised that along with the new power given to us by science, it has given us the heritage of a new search for an equilibrium of consciousness, an equilibrium which would not be content with mere intellectual realities, but would demand an interiority and certitude in the depth of man's being. He said that the need to-day is to "situate" man, which means evaluating him spiritually. To this end he suggested that the "confrontation of the values and more exactly of the methods of awakening of consciousness, such as the East has elaborated and lived them, and the values and methods more specific of Western civilisation, takes a new importance. East and West, each represents one of the ways of knowledge. Their dialogue might reveal the concrete possibility of a two-fold activity of our faculties of intelligence, analysis, scientific research, and, those more specially bound to our inner consciousness and less dependent upon notions of space and time". The speaker concluded that the Symposium will come to grips with certain mechanisms of awakening our consciousness and hoped that it will help in laying the foundations of a more human civilization, of a new humanism.

The next session was devoted to the discussion of the main points raised in the inaugural address. After the remarks of a few speakers, Dr. Godel, late of the Beyrouth University, Lebanon, asked whether a representative of Indian thought could precisely give its specific characteristics. On being invited by the President to answer the question, I said that the specific characteristic of Indian thought is its interiority (*antarmukhata*).

A reference was made, I continued, to the quality of interiority as a quality of consciousness in the inaugural address. Interiority though it is the pronounced feature of Indian thought, is not the monopoly of India. The existentialist thought which bridges the gulf between being, essence and existence, is an attempt at achieving interiority. All that can be said is that there is a difference in emphasis; there is a greater emphasis on interiority in India. This interiority of being is gained when we cultivate the attitude of the witness. The real in us is not only the witness of the external world but of our thoughts and feelings. We are the witness of our mind and intellect. This vision of the witness which is a stereoscopic vision, reveals the real depth of our being and creates interiority. The certitude of the witness is made possible also by the fact that we are the point of intersection between the rational and the irrational. In empirical life, we often feel a kind of strangeness. This strangeness is caused by the rational and irrational mixing together and making a third dimension of experience. All that we can say about this strangeness is that it is an inexplicable feeling which is neither real or unreal, nor both. The moment we feel the strangeness we step back and look at it and feel that it is an exteriorization of ourselves. This becomes possible only because of the quality of interiority and the capacity of the witness in us. I concluded by saying that man, in essence, is the witness of civilization and

when we look at him in that way there is neither West or East, but one civilization, and man as both the witness and maker of it. I was happy to find that my accent on interiority became the centre of interest for several speakers of that afternoon.

In the general discussion that followed, the role of the rational and the non-rational figured prominently. The Western participants, with a few exceptions, were more inclined to deify reason and install her as a goddess, insisting that modern man should rationalise life to the finger-tips. There was nothing very surprising in this trend of opinion. The West has been, beginning with the Greeks, cultivating a distrust in nature and placing faith in reason-made and man-made institutions. Since the Renaissance, human mind, instead of the human soul, occupied the centre of civilisation. The evolution of the human mind, was considered the main purpose of civilisation. Religion became one of the factors of civilisation, instead of the contrary, and the results are well-known; secularisation made inroads into all branches of life. Those participants who swore by reason were only reflecting this aspect of Western thinking which is not the whole of the Western outlook. There is a trend in Western opinion which emphasizes the need of realising the role of the non-rational.

Some of the Western colleagues discovered in the centre of man's established predilection for rationalisation, a sense of admiration for nature and for nature's beauty, comparable to the child's sense of wonder and awe. This sense of wonder or admirability, they averred, was the point where the non-rational came in and touched the rational. Professor Calo, of Florence University, made a deep impression by insisting that the process of rationalisation can be arrested only by cultivating the cult of sacred personalism where devotion is given to a spiritual personality. Mrs. Mehta and Mr. Dhingra made contributions to the discussion by presenting

the Indian view-point. Mrs. Mehta said that the rational had its own place in Indian thought. The Naiyayikas (Indian Logicians) insisted on a rational approach to reality. Indian thought was careful to define the limits of reason and keep it within bounds to serve the purposes of a spiritual research. Mr. Dhingra said that the Oriental does not cut life into compartments and think in terms of fixed concepts like black and white, but is influenced by a wholeness of vision which he brings to bear on the tasks of his daily life. Whether it is painting, sculpture or music, it is this total vision that pervades the Indian approach, this living touch with the cosmos which expresses itself in his daily prayers. The Islamic point of view was presented by Mr. Ulmi Zya Ulken, of the University of Istanbul and the Sufi by Professor Smith of New York.

The following day, the topic for discussion was time and historic duration. The various approaches to time were presented; psychological time, historical time and metaphysical time. Explaining the Indian approach to time, I said that Indian thought insisted that true value to time can be given only when it is viewed against the background of the timeless. When life is seen as the intersection of time and the timeless, it induces an awakening. The smallest measurement of time is time between two thoughts or between two states, waking and dream. An attempt to measure or grasp this smallest span of time, ends in a direct perception of reality. For what appears to be time between two states, is Reality or the timeless. When Sri Krishna in the Gita says: 'I am time', he is identifying himself with the timeless Reality. The attempt to know time which ends in a perception of reality can be figured by a vertical movement. And historical time, which can be symbolised by a horizontal movement, is spoken of in Indian thought by the notion of the yugas and the kalpas. The most effective way of picturing these two move-

ments, the vertical and the horizontal is by means of a spiral. A spiral has no beginning or end. It comes from the non-manifest, and goes into the non-manifest; and so the beginning and end of time are invisible and unknown. Thus to know time as beginningless and endless (as in the case of the spiral) that is to say, as part of the non-manifest, is to see it as timeless reality, or eternity.

I pointed out that it is possible to discover this spiral movement of the timeless reality in every thought. Every act of consciousness is an act of self-consciousness, according to Vedanta. This means that thought moves in a vertical movement to grasp reality. There is also a horizontal movement, because every thought endeavours to express a value in society or in the external world. So if only we try to find the interiority of every thought, it contains reality both as a vertical and a horizontal movement. Mr. Nikam of the Institute of Ethics, New York, made a contribution to the discussion by saying that time is like an arrow shot into the future. Time is a necessity, no doubt, and we are pushed by time. But it is possible for us to take time in both hands and go forward.

There was an interesting intervention from a Western participant towards the end of the discussion on time. He said that the West has discovered time and space. What has the East done?

Replying to the question, I said, that it cannot be correctly affirmed that the West has discovered time and space. To use time is not to discover it. Suppose somebody is hurrying to his destination in a car. He is making use of time, and he is in it. Time is a necessity for him. Another person standing on the roadside who has no rendezvous to keep up, is observing the other person calmly and coolly. The second can see time flowing and is not caught up in the flow. He is capable of discovering time and not the one who is hurrying to his desti-

nation. He practices the witness attitude which is necessary to discover time and until that attitude comes in on us, we cannot say we discovered time or space.

The following day was devoted to the consideration of the notion of value. Professor Raven, Vice-Chancellor of the Cambridge University, made an impressive speech on the falling moral standards in public life and specially among the student population in England and pointed out how urgent was the need of bringing religious values before the conscience of the younger generation. Mr Nikam underlined the immediate need of formulating a universal ethics along lines of non-violence practised by Mahatma Gandhi in an age when the development of nuclear weapons for universal destruction threatens the world any moment.

The fourth day, the notion of life came in for discussion. Mr Dhingra presented the Indian view of life as one influenced by the sense of the sacred. Mr Ulken explained the Islamic view and Professor Mori, of the Tokyo University, dwelt on the Japanese view of life which, he said, is largely influenced by the traditional Chinese view. The biologist view of life was presented by A. M. Dalcq, Professor of Embryology, Brussels University, which was much appreciated. He dwelt at length on the directing and organising capacity of the human cell and its continuity. The human cell does not change, and does not show signs of degeneration or extinction since it has appeared on the horizon of evolution, whereas the cells of animals change and have become extinct as in the case of the class of animals called dinosaurs. Human cell is even intelligent, only it cannot create thought. How thought is created, is a mystery for the biologist. Here metaphysical considerations come in; and no biologist, if he is honest, can remain to the last, a materialist. The statement of Mr Dalcq created much enthusiasm and discussion.

I took the cue from the biologist view and said that if continuity of the human cell was taken for granted—as the biologists must—then death cannot put a stop to this continuity. We search in vain for a confirmation of this continuity in Western religion. We find it only in the abstraction of a promised eternal life. If the promise of continuity is not to be wasted, we have to believe in the continuity of lives implicit in the Hindu theory of Karma and reincarnation which is given scant credit in the West, except in some of the Greek thinkers and in a modern writer like Dostoiévski. I said it is interesting to study how sin in Christian religion introduces discontinuity into life, because sin in Christianity is a theological dogma. But in Indian thought, sin is an empirical discovery, and a start for spiritual research. That does not introduce discontinuity. The West may do well to copy this idea from the East.

The fifth and last day was dedicated to arrive at conclusions capable of useful applications for both East and West, *inter alia* in the fields of education. Professor Meylan, of Lausanne University, read a scholarly paper on the theory of education and on the tasks ahead of humanising education with certain suggestions for changes on the secondary level. Mrs Mehta drew the attention of the symposium to the education of the educators and woman being first and last the educator of the child, woman's edu-

cation deserves immediate attention. Mr Nikam explained the philosophy of integral education in the thought of Aurobindo. I said that if India can give anything to the West on the theory and science of education, it is the master-disciple relationship which is the hub of education in India. This relation was not simply in the domain of religion, but in art and music and other branches. The master or the Guru was not simply there to transfer information to the disciple, but to transform the disciple's personality, by the juxtaposition of his being. Education in India is a change of being. The Guru destroys the prejudices and predilections of the disciple, and builds a new personality. If cultural exchanges as envisaged by the Symposium, I said, are to have a lasting effect, our prejudices must be broken and an open-mindedness and accommodating spirit must be cultivated.

The Symposium was a great occasion for the representatives of the East and West to meet under the wings of the world-fair and discuss, and make cultural exchanges with an idea to re-orient mutually the mechanisms of thought and consciousness. One should resist the temptation of exaggerating the role of the Symposium more than that of a cultural exchange. We were neither politicians nor legislators meeting to change the course of world events. No doubt, we have made some progress towards East-West understanding and harmony.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

This being the month devoted to Devi worship, the *Editorial* draws a few lessons from the scripture to solve some of the individual problems of man.

The fresh rendering of the Devi-sukta will be read with interest, this being the month of the Devi-worship. Dr. Abinash

Chandra Bose has given the sub-title 'Vak on herself' to the Devi-sukta. As the Rishi of the hymn is said to be also Vak, daughter of Abhrina, Sayana has understood the speaker to be the lady. The Atharva Veda, however, takes Goddess Vak as speaking on herself, and names the Rishi as Atharvan.

There are some who take the Rigveda hymn to have the Rishi's daughter as the seer, but say that the 'I' in the hymn refers not to her but to Goddess Vak who reveals herself through her. This method was used elsewhere also, e.g., in the same way Indra speaks through a sage. As these differences of opinion belong to commentators and not to the text, Dr Bose has not referred to them in his *Notes*.

Mr Shamsuddin, M.A., B.T., M.Ed., is an educationist of Dungargaon, M.P.

NATIONAL EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION AND VEDANTA

After independence we often hear talks of unity of India. The cause of our anxiety is the sad experience of partition of the country and the resulting suffering of a large section of humanity. Other centrifugal forces are also active due to disparities in language, region, religion, economic status or political belief. So it is necessary to think about this problem and find out the ways and means to check the divisive tendencies and foster unity. Whatever leads to unity must be availed of; and this effort must be made on all fronts. Recently the University Grants Commission organized a seminar on national integration. Rapid economic development, equality of opportunity, reduction of inequalities of income and wealth, extension lectures on unity, teaching of other Indian languages, translation of literatures, simplification of grammar, lessening of scripts, observing of national days and of course, discouragement of communalism, casteism and linguism, were mentioned as some of its recommendations.

All these efforts, no doubt, will go a long way to inculcate the desired idea of unity among people. But it will be fortified if an intellectual basis is provided for unity itself. Its necessity has been forcefully put forward by Prof. Humayun Kabir, Central Minister for Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, in his essay on 'National unity and group isolation'. There he wrote:

Sri T. S. Raghavan, M.A., of Madras is an old contributor.

Swami Vimalananda is an ex-Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*.

Sri Ramani Kumar Datta Gupta, B.A., B.L., is long connected with the *Udbodhan*, our Bengali journal.

Swami Nityabodhananda is a former editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*. Recently he took part in a UNESCO conference at Brussels. He gives his impressions of the East-West symposium elsewhere in this issue.

This risk of fragmentation is greater where there is no intellectual basis for the cohesion among the different groups. A sense of unity based on emotion alone cannot stand the test of time, as emotions are on the whole less stable than intellectual attitudes. This has been proved in Indian history both positively and negatively. The cohesion of Hindu society in spite of the innumerable sub-groups into which it has always been divided was possible because the philosophical basis of such cohesion had been worked out. One may or may not accept the doctrine of *Samsara* and rebirth, but there is little doubt that this doctrine, reinforced by belief in *karma* has given coherence and unity to Hindu community life. Perhaps the greatest triumph of the Aryan synthesis was the intellectual integration of different ways and outlooks.

But Indian society could not succeed in integrating the Islamic group, which is evident in later development of the latter's animosity. This attitude, however, is inevitable, for minority groups are always afraid of missing their share, and so cultivate an agitational approach. Hinduism effected a synthesis of different races and faiths through its theory of reinterpretation, giving a higher explanation to the existing thoughts and beliefs. The medieval Hinduism might have partly lost its vigorous dynamism. But the more important cause of failure was the extraterritorial affiliation of the Muslims in religious matters and constant replenishment of adventurers from other Muslim countries.

The Indian process of synthesis was slow and imperceptible. But it was nevertheless active. This is clear when we look at Sufism and the efforts of Akbar, Nanak, Kabir, Dadu and others. Moreover, unless disparity is lessened in economic and social fields also, dissatisfaction can be created at any time by interested groups. In that sense no society or nation is absolutely integrated, not to speak of countries where different racial and religious groups inhabit. So absolute uniformity is impossible, specially in a country like India. Moreover, it is not necessary also. Unity of outlook, the feeling of belonging to a nation is what is essential. That basic unity India had, more or less, down the ages. But with the spread of vigorous propaganda for various conflicting economic, political and religious issues that unity has been disturbed, for there is no time to effect the synthesis. So a counter-movement in favour of synthesis is necessary. All the different ideas can be synthesized by allowing free, distinctive expressions to different groups with their own manners and customs. It was precisely because of this that ancient India succeeded in the Aryanization of the entire country.

So while trying for the emotional integration of the nation, we must apply this process of least resistance which we have been practising for centuries. Some people may be tempted to force the emotional integration of the nation by coercive methods. It may be possible through thorough secularisation of life and regimentation of ideas. Secularisation may help in removing different opposing religious notions and creating a mind free from all ideas and inhibitions, good or bad. To fill up the vacuum another idea will be necessary but there also there are conflicting theories. One theory can be inculcated only by force and regimentation. The process will not be easy. The result will be worse than the malaise. Moreover, it will go against the democratic aspirations of people. Hundreds of years of religious

training and free thinking cannot be set at naught overnight, if at all possible.

So the only way is the way of co-existence, harmony, synthesis. It is just to allow all the expressions of human thought and behaviour to remain side by side. Only they will have to be supplied an intellectual basis and harmonized. Thereby the irksome edges will be rounded off and smooth life will follow. Such a philosophy was applied by the ancient Indians and it was the Vedantic idea of the unity of existence. That one entity is at the root of all creation is a cardinal doctrine of Vedanta. When this is accepted, all causes of friction will vanish. We shall realize that we and our neighbours are basically the same. Its usefulness has been forcefully pointed out by Pandit Nehru in a thought-provoking essay in the *Economic Review*, entitled 'The basic approach'. In it he says:

If we really believed in this all-pervading concept of the principle of life, it might help us to get rid of some of our narrowness of race, caste or class and make us more tolerant and understanding in our approaches to life's problems.

Another corollary of Vedanta flowing from this basic idea is the unity in variety. It says that when the same entity is behind all, there may be variety in manifestation. In the religious field the theory of one God taking different divine forms and the method of higher interpretation of religious practices will facilitate unifying the minds of people.

When we say that the Vedantic idea of unity of existence will supply the intellectual basis for all unity and so it must be vigorously preached, we do not ignore the practical steps that are necessary to inculcate that unity, for a mere idea cannot go a long way. But the importance of Vedanta lies in its capacity to liberalize the mind and prepare it for accepting measures which may not be palatable to particular groups.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PHILOSOPHY OF PROGRESS AND PERFECTION: By Swami Prajnanananda (Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama, Darjeeling, India). Pp. 276. Price Rs. 8.

The metaphysician dichotomises Reality into the Finite and the Infinite. The office of Religion is to bridge the gulf between the two and to detail the way in which the Finite grows into the Infinite. The Infinite is the Perfect and the approximation to it in Time is Progress. In relation to the Perfect, there is no difference of opinion about its content and character among philosophers. But there are diverse views in regard to Progress in the dual aspect of its reality and about its duration. There is also the question whether Progress is linear, spiral or cyclic. This variety of views finds exponents both in the East and in the West. Swami Prajnanananda reviews the several schools of thought dealing with the idea of Progress from the biological, historical and metaphysical standpoints. Progress connotes also an ethical significance and that is what distinguishes it from a mere physical process. All these features of the concept of progress are dealt with in this book by the learned author who is thoroughly at home in the philosophies of the world. Among the Western philosophers whose views on progress are expounded in this book, are the Evolutionists like Lamarck, Darwin and Spencer, Idealists like Hegel, Bosanquet and Bradley, Realists like Alexander and Russell. Indian thinkers are represented by Dr Barua, Dr Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo and Vivekananda. Being a devout student of Swami Abhedananda, the author expounds his views with great clarity and approval in regard to the Vedantic interpretation of the idea of Progress and Perfection. The Sankhya, Vaisesika and Buddhist interpretations of the concept are also explained as Indian opposite numbers of Western views.

Progress requires a different connotation according as whether it is looked upon as effort to reach something that is not yet or it is conceived as an effort to realise what is always but has been missed in the welter of beclouding experience. In the former view, progress becomes a temporal process which must be unending, the perfection receding before every achievement. In the latter view, according to which progress is towards awareness of one's own real nature, progress frees itself from the clutches of time and

Vedantic view of Progress and Perfection is developed by the Swami in the latter part of this book. Says he: 'The vedantic perfection or mukti is an eternally accomplished fact. It cannot be produced by any activity, because actions are useless in regaining perfection.' It is a plenal experience in which the ideal becomes the actual so that upon the annulment of the gap between the actual and the ideal, progress towards perfection is transformed into subsistence in perfection as is exemplified in the life of the jivanmukta to whom the normative becomes the natural.

Progress in so far as it relates to man has an ethical and religious significance. It must be willed and determined by certain disciplines, which are known as spiritual practices. The author reviews these spiritual practices in the last chapter of the book as 'a necessary precondition for the flashes of the Divine' which in its turn is a precondition for the attainment of perfection or mukti and refers also to the contributory factors of God's grace and human effort, Isvaranugraha and purusha-prayatna.

A perusal of the book will reveal the unsatisfactoriness of all views which look upon progress as a temporal process and the soundness of the Vedantic view of self-realisation lifting the concept to the transempirical realm. It is the latter that can invest human endeavour with an optimism about the realisability of Perfection which is conspicuous by its absence in the former view. Swami Prajnanananda's book is a very instructive thesis on this subject which has been one of the persistent problems of philosophy. Students of metaphysics will find it extremely helpful as it brings together all the classical and contemporary views on it, expounding them with remarkable lucidity.

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

LIGHT OF SRI SANKARA: Compiled by Prof. V. A. Thyagarajan. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Kerala State. Price 38 nP.

THUS SPAKE SANKARA: By Swami Rajeswarananda. Published by Swami Kesava Tirtha, Sri Rama Tirtha Seva Ashram, Piduguralla Post, Guntur Dt. Price 60 nP.

Golden precepts of Sri Sankara have been collected and collated by the authors of the books

Sankara's message to Humanity. It is solace to go through these precepts, so readily made available to the public in handy editions.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES Vol. I: By M. Hiriyanna. Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore. Pages 149. Price Rs. 7.50.

The volume under review is the fifth collection of essays of the late Prof. Hiriyanna, and forms a very valuable addition to the Indian philosophical literature. It includes very valuable essays which throw some light on certain obscure points in Indian Philosophy. In the essay on 'The place of Reason in Advaita' the author argues that the final criterion of truth is neither reason nor revelation but one's own intuitive experience. In the same way the essay on the Advaitic conception of time succeeds in establishing a few points which Advaita has of time. 'An Indian View of Present Time' is equally instructive. Essays on topics like 'Bhartr-Prapanca', 'Samavaya', 'the Problem of Truth', 'Ramanuja's Theory of Knowledge' are all very instructive contributions. Prof. Hiriyanna's writings are always characterised by a certain thoroughness of study combined with lucidity, though occasionally they tend to become a bit heavy depending on the nature of the topic. The 'Extra Notes', given at the end of some essays are rich in references and add much to their importance. The book is well got-up and this handy volume is a necessity in every library.

S. R. SASTRI

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF INDIAN METAPHYSICS AND LOGIC: Pp. IV plus 252. Price Rs. 8 (Foreign 15 sh. net).

THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY—An Advaita Approach, Part I: Both by Susil Kumar Maitra. Pages VI plus 158. Price inland Rs. 5 and foreign 7 s. 6 d. net. Distributors: Chuckervetty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta-12.

Prof S. K. Maitra who is at present Director, Vaisnava Research Institute, Brindavan, does not require any introduction to students of philosophy. The two books which are reviewed here are of the same standing as his earlier works like 'Studies in Philosophy and Religion' and 'The Ethics of the Hindus'. The exposition of the subject in both is lucid; the analysis of the problems involved is thorough; and the treatment is scholarly.

In 'Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics and Logic' the author discusses the fundamental questions of philosophy as they are treated in the different schools of Indian Philosophy. There are already standard works on Indian Philosophy which discuss the problems of philosophy from the standpoints of the different schools, system after system. The special merit of this book is its topical treatment of the subject. This is, therefore, a welcome addition to the literature on the subject. The book is divided into two parts, Part I dealing with Metaphysics and Part II dealing with Logic. Prof Maitra discusses as many as 25 topics in Part I and 26 topics in Part II. In presenting the discussions, the author has closely followed the original works in Sanskrit.

In 'The Main Problems of Philosophy' Prof Maitra deals with all important philosophical problems from the standpoint of Advaita Vedanta. This book forms Part I of the work; and Part II wherein the author proposes to discuss some special problems like 'freedom', 'immortality', 'God', etc., in detail will come out shortly. In the introductory portion, Prof Maitra discusses the subject-matter and the problems of philosophy, the relation between philosophy and science, on the one hand and philosophy, psychology and different methods employed in philosophy, viz., logic, on the other. He passes in review the the rationalistic method, the empirical method, the analytic method, the critical method of Kant, the dialectical method of Hegel and the method of intuitionism advocated by Bergson. Philosophy, says Prof Maitra, is the interpretation of experience. Hence it includes, in addition to the study of the axioms and presuppositions of the special sciences, logic, epistemology, metaphysics and axiology. The author devotes one chapter to each of these. In the first chapter entitled 'Philosophy as Logic', there is a general discussion about the nature and types of judgment from the standpoint of Bosanquet. Explaining the characteristics of judgment mentioned by Bosanquet, Prof Maitra maintains that 'the objectivity or necessity, which every judgment claims is only an apparent objectivity or necessity, i.e., one that appears as such only in the context of our present knowledge and is liable to give way to a higher objectivity or necessity in a fuller context in the light of a richer experience..... We thus come to a concept of objectivity which is that of the Sankarite Advaitin, viz., of the objective as the indescribable in the sense of *sadapad vilaksana*.' He objects to the equation between the objective and reality and

says: 'While Hegelians like Bradley will interpret lower and higher objectivity in terms of higher and lower reality, we shall talk only of grades of falsity or *mithya* and not of grades of reality. . . . Reality does not admit of grades and the talk of anything being more or less real, because more or less consistent, seems to us to be unmeaning verbiage.' In Chapter II entitled 'Philosophy as epistemology', Prof Maitra states the definition of reality from the standpoint of the Advaita and explains the nature of *adhyāsa* or superimposition. This is followed by a critical examination of the different varieties of realism, old and new, European and Indian and of idealism of Berkeley and of Hegel. In Chapter III entitled 'Philosophy as metaphysics', the author discusses naturalism, mechanism and teleology and the different theories of evolution such as Spencer's theory of cosmic evolution, the theories of organic evolution of Lamarck and Darwin, the creative evolution of Bergson and the emergent evolution of Lloyd Morgan and Alexander. The treatment of the mind-body relation also finds a place here. In the last chapter entitled

'Philosophy as axiology', Prof Maitra discusses the relation between reality and value and critically examines the theories of value propounded by thinkers like Santayana, Hartmann, Moore, Perry and others.

Both the books will be very useful to students of philosophy in the degree and post-graduate classes as well as to research scholars—the one as a text-book of Indian Philosophy and the other as a text-book of General Philosophy.

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN.

PERIODICAL (Hindi)

SIDDHANTA: Special number on the System of Caste. Published by Siddhanta Karyalaya, Sanmarg Press, P.B. No. 50, Varanasi-1. Pages 444. Price Rs. 5.

This Special Number of *Siddhanta* discusses the system of varna or caste from various viewpoints. It is timely that a Special Number has been devoted to the topic which has been debated on public platforms too.

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL, ALMORA REPORT FOR 1957

Along with running the journal *Prabuddha Bharata*, the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, Almora, has been running also a charitable Hospital from 1903.

The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor department was 233 of which 161 were cured and discharged, 63 were relieved, 6 were discharged otherwise or left, and 3 died. In the Outdoor department the total number of patients treated was 19,454, of which 12,503 were new and 6,951 repeated cases.

The management while thanking appeal to the public for donations as the hospital is situated in a remote corner of the Himalayas and the people of the locality are too poor to help the institution financially.

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The birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Krishna was celebrated with puja at night on

Saturday, the 6th September, 1958 and a Tamil lecture on the following evening by the famous scholar Brahmasri Sivaramakrishna Sastrigal of Mayavaram. The lecturer spoke on 'Sri Krishna Vaibhavam' with profuse quotations to illustrate his points. He began with the eulogy of the human birth and the path of devotion as the supreme *sadhana*, and pointed out the indispensability of God's grace for attaining salvation. Devotion to God is acquired by contemplation on the unique grandeur and power and other countless Divine attributes that manifest themselves in the lives of the Avatars of God, especially in that of the incarnation as Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna was an ocean of compassion and the saviour of *samsara*-ridden souls irrespective of their sins and demerits. The very repetition of His Divine Name affords protection to devotees in their hour of distress as in the case of Draupadi. His supreme condescension to grant liberation to the treacherous Putana that came in the guise of a guileless maiden to suckle Him with her poisoned milk was the crowning act of His grace unfathomable.

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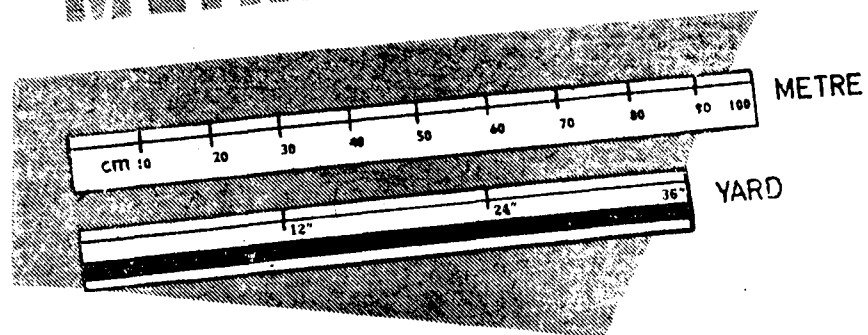
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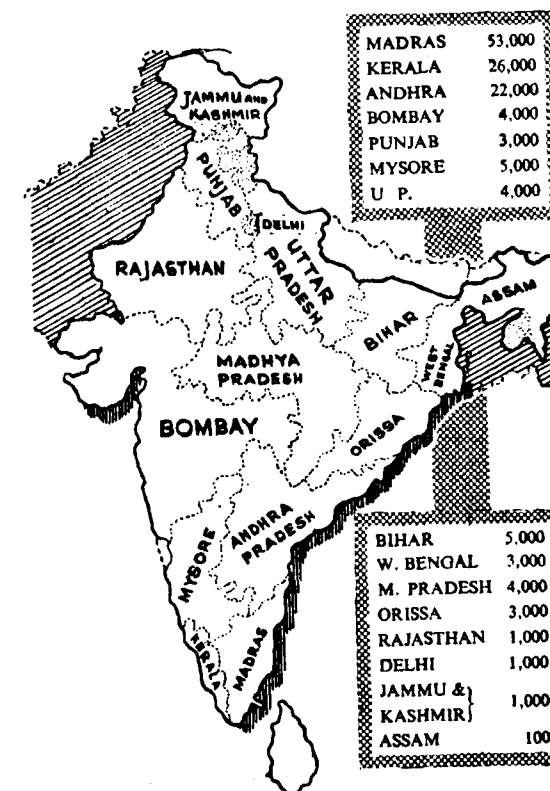
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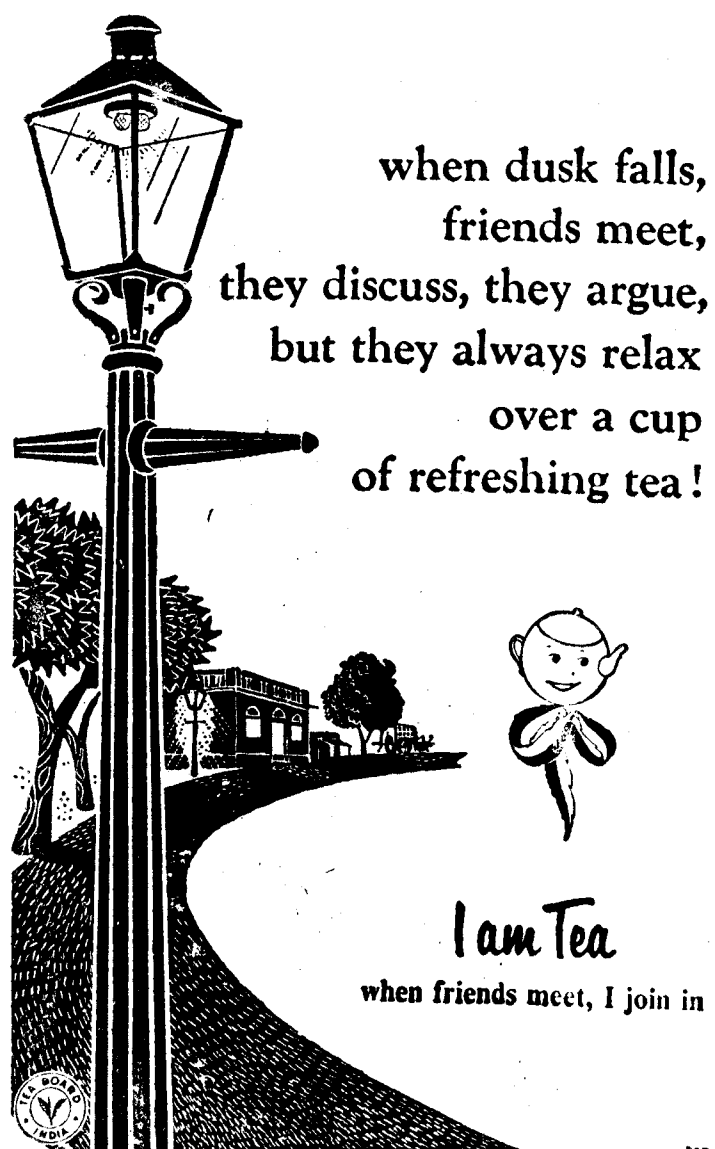
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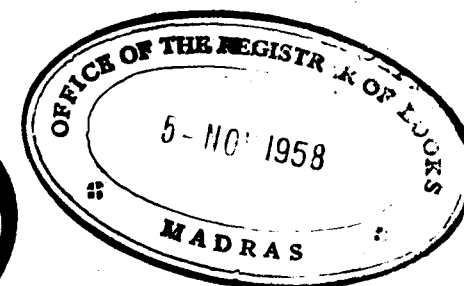
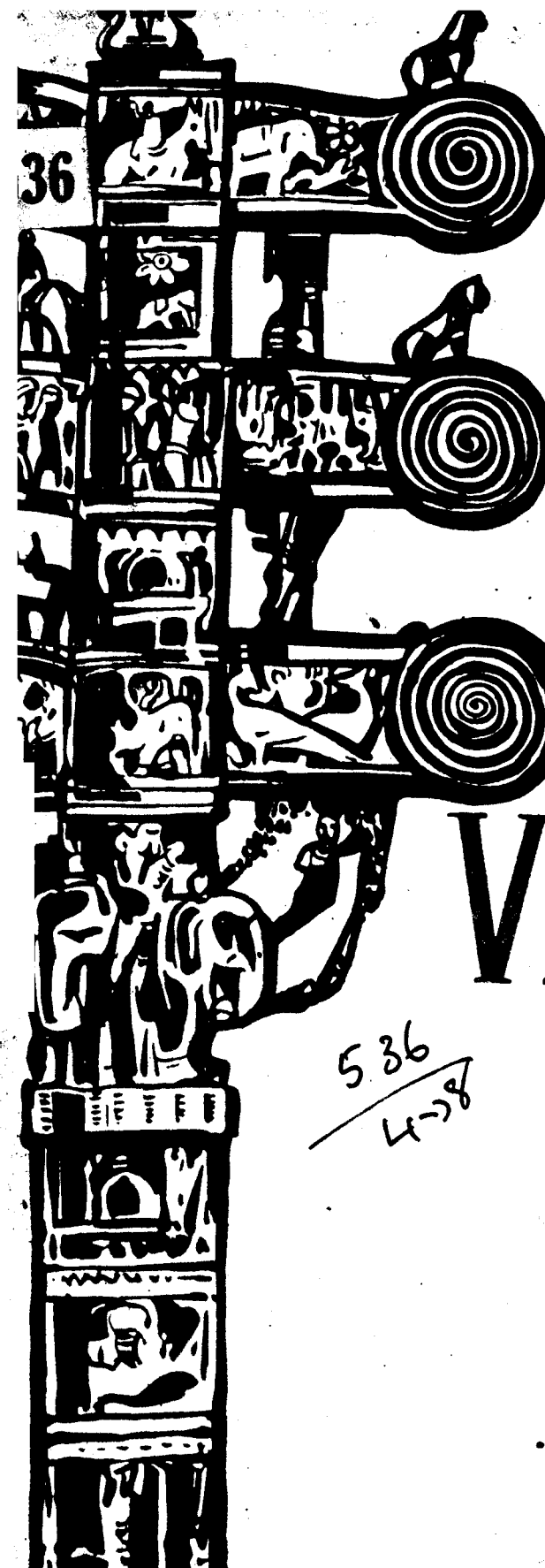
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when friends meet, I join in

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KUNDALINI YOGA*

SRI JAYACHAMARAJA WADIYAR,
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It is a pleasure to welcome Sir John Woodroffe's (Arthur Avalon's) book on 'Serpent Power' brought out by Messrs. Ganesh and Co. A unique and very helpful and useful method employed in this new edition is the inclusion of separate indices for the author's verses, citations and words. This thoughtful addition will be of enormous benefit to scholar and savant and ordinary reader alike. The book is well got up, the illustrations are excellent, and we become aware of the fact that Indian printing is second to none, thanks to the labour of love that is bestowed on this book by the printers.

Kundalini Yoga is one of the most important of Sakti Tantras. It is spoken of in the Yoga Upanishads, in the Agamas, and other esoteric works. The Sakti known as Kundalini is one which is found within everyone. Kundalini Yoga is the method by which that which is coiled, at the root-centre, is aroused by means of Yogic practices, so that the Bhujangi can be taken through the six psychic centres within the human body to reach the realisation which leads to release from bondage. We are told that man is in essence "the powerholder or Siva", 'pure consciousness' as compared with 'Mind and Body' which is the manifestation of 'Siva's Power'—the 'Sakti or Mother'. Therefore, in essence man is of the nature of both Siva and Sakti. "He is", we are told, "an expression of Power." Kundalini-Yoga is the means by which the power within ourselves is raised to its "perfect expression", as Avalon remarks and "is perfect in the sense of unlimited experience." He (the Sadhaka) then attains Bliss.

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It is the end of this Kundalini-Yoga to absorb into its motherly womb the child escaped from the protection of its mother's loving care. Such a sublime philosophy lies behind our Tantras. May the Kundalini grant us strength to be re-absorbed into the womb of the Brahman where we rightly and legitimately belong.
—Extracts from a Review in *The Hindu*, Madras.

* *The Serpent Power* by Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon) with Sanskrit Text, Transliteration, Translation, Commentary, Introduction, Notes and several Indexes. 17 illustrations, 750 pp., 1958. Rs. 25/-. Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17.

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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

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WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA FROM FORM TO FORM DIVINE

"God is One ; His Names and Forms are Many."

Go ! Seek a friend of God ! When you have done so, God is your friend.
(The Masnavi)

Govinda Ray, an ardent lover of God, came to the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. Day and night he was engaged in worshipping God according to the teachings and mental attitude of the Sufis, a sect of Islam.

(The Great Master)

When the mirror of the heart becomes bright and clear, you will see pictures other than those of water and clay. You will see both, the pictures and also the Painter.

For the outer form there is the mirror of steel ; but the mirror of the soul is naught but the face of the friend : the face of That friend who is of That Country.

When your eyes became eyes for my heart which had been unseen, became drowned in eyes. I saw you as the Universal Mirror eternal. I saw my own picture in your eyes. And my picture called to me from your eyes : 'I am thou, thou art I, in union.'
(The Masnavi)

Sri Ramakrishna, charmed with Govinda's sincere faith and love of God, thought : 'This too is a path of Realization. I must see how through it the sportive Mother makes those, who take refuge in Her, attain their desired end.' He became initiated by Govinda and began practising Islam. Sri Ramakrishna said : "I then devotionally repeated the mantra 'Allah', wore cloth like the Arabic Muslims, said 'Namaz' thrice daily, and felt disinclined even to see Hindu deities not to speak of saluting them. The Hindu mode of thought vanished altogether from my mind. I spent three days in that mood and had the full Realization according to that faith." The Master had first the vision of an effulgent impressive person with a long beard. Then he had the knowledge of the all-pervading Saguna Brahman and merged finally in the Nirguna Brahman, the Absolute.

(The Great Master, p. 264)

IS AUSTERITY NECESSARY IN NATIONAL LIFE ?

Has the spirit of sacrifice lost its appeal to post-independence India? Are even the youths becoming more and more selfish? These questions are often asked by social workers, by journalists and by leaders. During the days of struggle for independence thousands of men and women, both younger and older, sacrificed their career in schools and colleges, in offices and other fields of activity. Swami Vivekānanda once said that unless thousands of young men sacrificed their life for the sake of the country there was no freedom for it. It literally came true. With the ushering in of this century revolutionary parties grew up and scores of young men joined them, who did not hesitate to lay down their life for the sake of their motherland. The national political party also became more and more assertive and ready to suffer. With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi the movement had an overwhelming expansion. With his new technique he converted the party agitation into a mass struggle. Thousands of people came forward to sacrifice their all at his command. It is true there was an immediate objective in which people of all strata of society were vitally interested. But the excellence of character, the quality of life was superb. High moral tone, austere personal habits, sustained interest in constructive fields were also the order of the day. Simplicity and austerity gained a great prestige so much so that even not so idealistic people practised some austere habits and even anglicized or well-to-do people preferred coarse dresses rather than more enjoyable garments.

But alas, in a few years after independence all this is practically gone. The old attachment to foppish dress and habits has come back to the sophisticat-

ed people. Boys a few years ago rebelled against the foreign dress, now they revel in them. The leaders of society, the officials and others have learnt the style from their big bosses and others in their turn from them. Excepting a few politicians or their workers, nobody is particular about it. As a result of this, the unhappy incident in the Ashoka hotel took place, where a gentleman was refused entrance because of his national dress. It may be argued: what is there in a dress? But the point is not what you wear but what carries the prestige. That shows the working of the national mind. India was always famous for its catholicity in allowing varieties of dress, food and other ways of life. If that is not possible in particular circumstances, if uniformity is desirable, will it lead to the indigenous or not? That is the crux of the problem. Different newspapers have commented on the incident differently. We are not interested in the incident. And if it were a fact that the non-Indian dress was prescribed for dances, it is well and good. This practice is the legacy of the foreign tradition. If some Indians are anxious to keep it, let them have the other thing too. But what is objectionable is the attitude towards the indigenous dresses. It speaks of a mind that is slowly losing its national moorings. It is of course quite possible to have love for the country and its essential heritage even if one does not accept the externals. But the masses do not look at things that way. Whatever the higher strata of society accept becomes the pattern. Masses wish for those things. And as they find that all these will be beyond their reach in near future they develop an animosity for people well placed in life. Independence has created great expectation in

mass minds, as Pandit Nehru has pointed out:

I want you to feel this human element in our thinking, in our continuous strain and struggle. No doubt you have to look at these problems from the point of view of resources and the money and all that. That is important. One cannot function in the air. But even more important is the human element and more important is the tremendous ferment going on in the minds of hundreds of millions of people which cannot be easily controlled by resolutions of conferences, this or any other conference which you hold anywhere. For Asia is, and will continue to be in an explosive state because recent changes during the last few years or so have unleashed a giant kept tied up for 150 years or more. I am pointing out the vast urges in the minds of people. Often they make mistakes, they go in wrong directions. Let us try to restrain them from going in the wrong directions. Let us try to understand all these long suppressed urges coming up. But are we to criticise if people want better food, better clothing and better living conditions? We want them to have it and all of you want them to have it.

(*The Hindu*, Oct. 7, 1958)

Till we are able to provide some amenities for the common man, austerity will have a great use. It is clear from the experience of the Gandhian era that austerity in dresses and habits can be made covetable and even fashionable, if idealism plays a role. If idealism dies out in the more fortunate people it must be injected in them with due stress by leaders on the imperativeness of such conduct. The desire to share with all the joys of life, at least to a limited extent, must be there. If China could inspire her people to be enthusiastic in this regard, why not India? But then the question will be, China is a totalitarian country. But that is not the whole reason. It is clear from the views of people who have visited the country. R. H. Crossman wrote recently an

article entitled 'Chinese Communism in action', where he says:

During my fortnight in Russia no one, whether taxi driver, waiter or porter, refused a tip. During my three weeks in China, no one accepted one, despite the fact that the service I received was of quite a different class from anything I met in Moscow. I once telephoned for a taxi after midnight, and the taxi man walked 300 yards through winding alleys and driving rain in order to find the house where I had been dining. He proudly refused a tip, and so did the hotel staff, who only wanted a testimonial in the enormous book they keep. Were these workers afraid, or were they acting on Puritan principles? Probably they were 'doing the right thing' through a mixture of motives. But a change of social behaviour of this kind cannot be achieved merely by compulsion from above. It is a product of a mass movement, inspired by a strong conviction of moral superiority over the infidel.

(*The Hindu*, Oct. 3, 1958.)

It may be questioned why there should be so much stress on everything indigenous, specially when a world culture is envisaged. The reason is, the generality of people in the country are not conversant with the 'scientific' and 'universal' ways which have relativized every aspect of man's life. Uneducated and simple folk as they are, they judge people not by what they say or even do for them but often by the life they lead. The nicety of reasoning that a man is to be judged by the efficiency and brilliance he shows in his field of activity and not by the quality of life according to the accepted norms of society does not at all appeal to them. A professor may have great brilliance and may be liked by some of his pupils for it, but he cannot earn the general esteem unless his life also is blameless. An officer may be a good administrator but unless he is honest he will not evoke affection in the hearts of the people. Even such a noble welfare measure like prohibition

has been virulently attacked on such a ground. The position is pathetic if not, ludicrous. You cannot depend upon an intoxicated man, however efficient he may be, who has no control over himself. The intoxicating habit will drive him to other vices and to dubious methods of finding money for it. And his demands will be unlimited, for intoxication makes a man reckless. The effect on mass mind of unrestrained life of the vast number of second or third line of leaders of society, both political and non-political, is disastrous. It creates distrust and jealousy. The latter in their turn create animosity for all the people placed above them. Because of their awareness of individual rights and privileges it is impossible to satisfy the modern masses unless the leaders share some of their lack of amenities. In the case of common man it may be forced but in the case of better placed people it must be voluntary, for they are the people who are to introduce and execute all improvements. The cult of hatred appeals to people very easily. It has become a common saying that you can organize the people more quickly through hatred and fanaticism than through love and reasoning. So austerity in habits must be practised,—not by the top leaders merely,—but by the second line of leaders, people in-between the vast masses and the top leaders.

Restraint is a peculiar thing, once you disturb it in the traditional habituated field, you cannot introduce it in other fields, except through batons of course. Habits of austerity and self-abnegation become voluntary and automatic through generations of practice. It is better we do not disturb them all on a sudden and violently. The mass mind in India is changing at a tremendous speed. Hunger for the amenities of life is increasing fearfully. But it is not possible

to satisfy that hunger in a few years. So at least for the sake of expediency, we must proceed very cautiously till amenities are found for all. Some may argue that the masses had terrible want but the bane of India was that they did not feel it. If they were made more conscious they would work harder and progress of the country would be quicker. Well, the logical conclusion of it is revolution and this method is followed by some too. They want to create tremendous unrest and overthrow the slow government and when in power, by sheer necessity, force discipline by controlling life on all fronts. But that is not the way of democracy. If the democratic frame-work is not to burst out, frustrations must be lessened. And the best way for that is to minimise the difference among the people. There is a common saying that it is not enough if you do a good thing it must appear to be so. Austerity in life and habits, sharing with the common man at least some of his inconveniences, will go a long way in generating trust and hope in him. Austerity gives stamina and some extra capacity to serve the people. That is why Rajaji appealed to retain the austere habits of some communities. He said :

Must change be chaotic?
Must we always throw away the good things with the bad?

Of course, not. There cannot be any difference of opinion on this. Yet in practice we see this wisdom disregarded. We do not see young people do the right thing in this regard. We see around us in the South that along with necessary social reform, good and healthy austerity practices which were traditional among significantly large communities are being given up by increasing numbers of young men and women. The desired abolition of caste distinctions has not yet happened; but even before that consummation, several good age-long disciplines are being given up on a pretty large scale.

I appeal to the young officials in government and in commercial and industrial concerns who are not yet addicted, not to lose the inheritance that has devolved on them from their parents and grandparents, which no government can confiscate or put a tax upon.

(Swarajya, Sept. 13, 1958.)

When looked at from these two points of individual's gain and social ferment, Rajaji's exhortation acquires a special significance. Otherwise it will be considered a mere reaction of the older people to the newer changes.

Though we have discussed the urgency of practising austerity and following the current social norms because of the danger inherent in the modern awareness and unrest, we do not minimise the role of idealism. It is idealism which can evoke desire in man to make voluntary sacrifices. That will be spontaneous, and so of the best type. There is no lack of that idealism and unselfishness. Otherwise who could have ever thought that a movement like the Bhoodan could evoke so much enthusiasm. It is true that only highly idealistic ones could come out giving up all their prospects and become wholtime workers. But there are scores of people who would willingly do some sacrifice if a climate is created for that. It is true that the highest ideal of sacrifice is complete unconcern for name and recognition. But the sacrificing workers are human beings with some of the foibles of that tribe. Unless there is some recognition for it nobody, excepting the stout hearts, will feel equal to it in spite of their admiration. So a prestige must be created for sacrifice, as was created in the Gandhian decades. Broadly speaking, there are three types of men, one for definite self-seeking, another for total sacrifice and the third which includes the vast majority of men is in-between. If leaders can create enthu-

siasm, this group will be willing to sacrifice at least partially. Of late, there is a tendency to belittle sacrifice and boost up efficiency. It is because of this, so much of corruption is now met with. Efficiency is very good and necessary but sacrifice is more valuable. If a combination of the two is available, it is of course best. But if we are to choose between the two, we must definitely like the sacrificing spirit, for efficiency can be hired but not honesty, simplicity and unselfishness.

The ancient India had a grand solution for this problem. It bracketed sacrifice and knowledge with prestige, and execution and efficiency with enjoyment. The higher the honour the greater the sacrifice. We have made the arrangement topsyturvy. We have given both honour and enjoyment to the same group of people. And daily we are to increase them more and more for providing incentive. No, it is not necessary. Hundreds of years of India's experience shows that prestige is a greater incentive, may not be for all people but for quite a good number of people. And after all, only a small section of the community looks after its needs. We are aware that with the development of the doctrine of individual enjoyment it may be difficult to introduce it fully. But to a great extent it is possible to do so among the leading sections of society. As we prize our democratic way of life we must exhort people to do it. If the thinking people do not voluntarily do it, their thinking is sterile. When asked what he gained from philosophical thinking, Aristotle replied, 'To do without being commanded what others do from fear of the laws'. If their thinking does not lead them to willing sacrifice, discontent will increase and aggressive people advocating the idea of controlled democracy or totalitarianism may gain support. To pre-

vent its coming democratic and Vedantic values of equality and dignity of individuals must be kept before the national mind. This has been advocated by Acharya Kripalani in a lecture on 'Democracy and Sarvodaya', where he says :

The equality, freedom and dignity of the individual are recognised in the political field by democracy. This is the basis of the philosophy of one citizen one vote. If in practice this equality is denied by unequal economic, social and other arrangements, it is held that effort must be made to remove such inequalities. All round

equality of the citizens is the logical goal of political democracy. In other words too democracy is based upon moral principles of justice, fairplay and the progressive realisation of truth and non-violence in the internal affairs of a nation.

(Vigil, Oct. 4, 1958.)

Hence austerity, sharing the inconveniences with the masses, at least as long as all cannot be provided with some modicum of amenities, must be practised by all the better placed people and in this they should be dictated by their own conscience or else they will be compelled by the circumstances.

SPIRITUAL ADMONITIONS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

P. SESHADRI

Who cares for spiritual realisation? Ordinary man is engrossed in the things of the world which cater to his sense enjoyment. His mind is constantly tossed to and fro with thoughts of living a luxurious life with his wife and children. He hurries restlessly in quest of momentary enjoyment.

Rare indeed are those who really believe that there is one Supreme Being who sustains the universe. Many do not even care to believe in the existence of God. How they can take to a spiritual life of prayer and meditation with all their heart and soul to realise Him, discarding the pursuit of other things?

When a man is beset with various misfortunes, troubles and tribulations and finds no relief elsewhere, he turns to God to help him to overcome his difficulties. Very rare are those souls who seek God of their own accord, led by an inner prompting alone. The majority of mankind are absorbed in the pursuit of the pleasures of the senses. Those who care not for such pleasures and give them up, seeking God alone are but a handful.

There is not even the faintest trace of selfless devotion in the minds of many who are engaged in the external observances of religion. The men of the world can seldom call on God disinterestedly. With every salutation to God they harbour many selfish desires. They are not sincere in their devotion. They are shopkeepers seeking return with compound interest for every service they render.

To call on the Lord is not a joke. It is because they carry a big cart load of evil thoughts and tendencies in their hearts that ordinary men cannot turn their minds towards God. The desire for sense-enjoyments takes a man away from God. The mind of man is restless and strays about seeking the objects of sense gratification. So he cannot concentrate on God. As long as evil tendencies sway him, he cannot turn a new leaf and become spiritual. The man of the world wastes his whole life in the vain pursuit of sense-pleasures. If he could but spend a sixteenth part of his time in the thought of God, he would be reformed and regenerated.

Very few are really convinced that misery predominates over happiness in this world.

Such only will try wholeheartedly to break the bonds of samsara (relative existence). Unless one feels in the core of his heart that the vanities of the world are transient, one cannot realise God.

You are still young. Worldly thoughts have not taken a firm hold on you. If you do not exert now, you cannot have spiritual realisation. We had the great blessing to associate with Sri Ramakrishna from our early days and hence we have been saved from the afflictions of worldly life. Did any one prompt us to go to Sri Ramakrishna? It was an innate intuition that attracted and eventually led us to him. We were not advised by any one to seek him and strive for religious realisation.

If we learn to mould our lives in purity and goodness, we shall be free from the ills of life which will never again worry us or throw us off our balance. What is there in the worldly life? Viewed superficially, this earthly existence is a bed of roses flowing with milk and honey. But there is no escape from its inextricable though bewitching coils once you fall in its trap. Hence, turn your minds Godward even from your teens. Call upon Him knowing that He looks after you more than you yourself. There is no peace anywhere except in and through Him. He is the source of all peace and blessedness.

No period of life is too early to begin to walk in the path of God. Childhood is the best time to take to spiritual practices. If one wastes that precious period of life, one will have to repent afterwards. With advancing age, the body will become weak and unfit to stand the strain of Sadhana. All sorts of disease creep in and destroy his mental poise. How can such a one fix his mind and concentrate on God?

The worthy candidate for pursuing the higher stages of Sadhana such as meditation is born endowed with a suitable body and mind. Ordinary men cannot sit in a steady posture for seven or eight hours consecutive-

ly engaged in the continuous contemplation of God. Only a handful can stand that strain and they are the fit Sadhakas. Their minds are steady, calm and introspective without the faintest trace of any evil tendency.

Those who are easily excited by trifling things or sink in despair at the slightest shadow of misery can never progress in the path of God. The minds of irritable nature are always unbalanced and can never become calm and steady. Can one concentrate on God with such a mind? The sick, the idle and the gluttonous can never hope to become real sadhakas. The body fit for practising sadhana is of a different type altogether. An unhealthy body is a great obstacle in the path of sadhana.

Sit up in the early hours of the day and night in a secluded spot and call on the Lord with a yearning heart. Pursue this steadily every day and you will progress. There should not be any relaxation in the practice at any time. It would not do to sit for an hour or two at a time and then turn to worldly affairs. You should maintain the purity of thought of God at all times.

The mechanical repetition of the name of God even during the whole of one's life without real yearning of the heart will not lead to much progress. Call upon the Lord with your whole heart and soul and pray to Him to free you from the shackles of Samsara. Individual souls falling under the trap of Maya feel helpless and miserable and turn to God hoping to be saved from their afflictions. But the observance of external forms without faith and devotion is of no avail.

The nature of the mind is such that it is very hard to keep it under control. When we are engaged in some work or when we are in the company of others, the mind would seem to be quiet and restrained. But as soon as we close our eyes and seek to concentrate on God, the mind begins to

stray and wander all over the world. The ramblings of the mind are so subtle that in many cases we do not know when it has strayed away from our control, wandering madly in the train of vain thoughts. The only course left for us is to draw back and fix it again on the contemplation of God. This has to be practised whenever the mind strays.

With the lessening of evil thoughts and tendencies, the mind can be easily brought over to the contemplation of the Lord. The sovereign means to drive evil thoughts and tendencies is to fill the mind with good thoughts. The reverent study of the lives and teachings of great souls who have realised God will keep the mind in a pure atmosphere; then there are powerful aids to steady the mind—the study of good and holy books, the contemplation on good topics and the company of pure, high souls.

The more we think good thoughts, the greater will be our concentration on God. If we keep up a continuous train of good thoughts, evil tendencies will gradually leave us for ever. There is no other means to check the mad course of the mind. Malice, deceit, and crookedness should be utterly given up. Without purity and sincerity, one cannot realise God. There is no use in following external observances if the mind has not been thoroughly cleansed. Internal purity is essential.

If the mind does not become steady when you sit for meditation, recite exalting prayers and cry to Him with a yearning heart. Keep a large picture of your chosen Deity (Ishta-Devata) in front of you and fixing your eyes thereon pour forth your heart in prayer. In the beginning, the mind is likely to be unsteady. Hence, prayer, japa and meditation with the eyes fixed on the Ishta-Devata will be easy, as the mind will not have to endure much tension. Continuous practice in this manner for a long time will steady the mind.

No sadhana is of any avail without chastity (Brahmacharya), purity and renunciation. There can be no progress without self-control, devotion to truth and purity.

In the early stages of Sadhana, the rules and observances thereof should be adhered to. Do you think that Brahmajñana will dawn upon you by practising japa for two or three days? Gossip, speaking ill of others, interference in matters not pertaining to oneself, the seeking of acquaintances and wasting time idly in the company of others, are very injurious to a Sadhaka. All these things distract the mind and drag it to the external world. It is only those who do not take to Sadhana seriously that indulge themselves in the above manner. Without practising restraint in food, sleep and talk, the mind will never become steady. It will not be difficult to concentrate the mind if one resorts to solitude and the contemplation of good thoughts from one's early years.

Japa does not mean the mere mechanical repetition of the name of your chosen Deity. You must fix your mind on the meaning of the mantra. You recite and see with your mind's eye the blessed form of that Deity, otherwise the mind's eye will not be concentrated.

Distractions and discomfitures are inevitable in the early stages. The mind cannot be brought under control in a day. It is only a few months since you began this practice. Can anything be accomplished in such a short time? You have to continue the practice unflinching with all your energy, year in and year out. If you have true spirit of renunciation, your perseverance will win and the mind will attain to concentration. Then there will be no break in the contemplation of your chosen Deity. The Sadhana of those who have faith, devotion and ardent yearning towards the Lord and who are not under the thralldom of evil thoughts and tendencies will never be in vain.

All sorts of evil tendencies accumulated in countless births, remain stuck up in the bottom of the mind. When we try to concentrate, they begin to rush out and toss the mind to and fro. They will not allow the mind to become concentrated. But these distractions are only in the early stages. One need not fret and fume over them. One should persevere vigorously with one's whole heart and soul. There is no cause for worry. Perseverance in Sadhana will gradually cure these ills.

If you maintain recollection and meditation on God even while performing your other works and studies, it will not be difficult for you to keep your minds steady. Hence, it is useful and beneficial to remember the Lord at all times even when you are not engaged in formal meditation and japa. To be absorbed in the contemplation of God at the time of japa and meditation, depends on the good thoughts you keep on during the whole day. If all the time is wasted in gossip and idle and frivolous thoughts, the mind will become restless and unsteady when you retire at night to contemplate on God.

What is ordinarily understood as meditation does not at all deserve that name. The mind is upset by various evil thoughts and tendencies and worldly matters try to turn the mind away from the contemplation of God. To attempt time and again to draw the mind inward and fix it on God is the usual state of the majority of spiritual aspirants. Such a state is ordinarily styled as meditation. Really, it is Pratyahara, drawing inward the outgoing mind. To keep the mind in the contemplation of similar thoughts for a short space of time is itself the result of its efforts of many days. This state is called Dharana, holding the mind to a certain thought. When all the outgoing tendencies of the mind are restrained and the mind flows continuously as a current in the contemplation of God, that stage is Dhyana or meditation. At that

stage the mind forgets all the external things and surroundings, even the body. The mind transcends the region of the senses and rises to the supersensual plane. Then Godly visions begin to unfold themselves to the Sadhaka.

What is the use of sitting in a yogic posture and closing the eyes, if the mind is occupied in attending to what takes place around you, to what others say and do? If you desire to listen to the talk of the persons near you, why do you pretend to sit for meditation? Hypocrisy is the deadliest of obstacles in the path of God. Is it to serve a selfish end that you pretend to be seekers of God? Sitting in a yogic posture and closing the eyes will not make for meditation. Otherwise, every one can be a perfect adept therein.

Meditation is not an easy matter. One who has truly attained to the state of meditation has well-nigh reached the goal of spiritual practices (Sadhana). Once that stage of meditation is attained the mind will no more be pulled down by the attraction of sensual pleasures. It will turn inward completely without any tendency to externalise. To have reached the stage of meditation is in effect to be on the step nearest to the indirect realisation of God.

Those who are weighted with a load of anger, hatred and malice can never rise to the stage of meditation. It is impossible for the wicked, the calculating, the crooked and the double-dealing to collect their minds in the contemplation of God. If there be the least tinge of sensual desire, one cannot concentrate on God. Discrimination and renunciation (non-attachment) must go hand in hand with the study of the scriptures. Otherwise it will lead to vanity and egoism and the man will only degenerate. Without Sadhana and control of the senses, the study of the scriptures is in vain.

To realise God, the proper method of Sadhana should be learnt first. A perfected soul alone can reveal the secret of

Sadhana. He alone is the real Guru. He who has not realised God cannot lead another in the path. To get a correct knowledge of Sadhana, we have to seek one who has had the direct realisation of God. It is a blessed privilege resulting from the earnest efforts and aspirations of many lives that one comes in contact with a perfected soul. Such souls who have realised God are not met with everywhere. They are very, very rare. Equally rare is the earnest soul endowed with the spirit of renunciation who truly hankers after Moksha.

Even though one is initiated by the greatest teacher, one has to exert oneself to reach the goal. What can the teacher do? He points out the proper path. But you have to follow his advice and tread the path with unflagging perseverance. If you do not at all care to heed to his advice and walk in the path, whose fault is it? Has any one attained to Moksha at any time without Tapasya, severe spiritual Sadhana. Every one from an Avatar to an ordinary Sadhaka has had to practise many rigorous austerities to attain the goal. And you want to realise God without any Sadhana whatsoever! Is it possible? Those who truly pursue their Sadhanas in the proper manner are very few. All others are but pretenders, making of it a mere profession or display to serve some sordid, selfish interest.

The experiences in Sadhana such as what you feel, what stands in the way of your attaining to concentration and the visions you have, should be revealed only to your own Guru. Do not go about proclaiming them to others. Otherwise your Sadhana will be hindered. The Guru, who has attained perfection, will give you proper directions to overcome the difficulties you meet with in the path. Such a Guru can unerringly detect the thoughts coursing through the mind of the Sadhaka. Implicit-

ly following the directions of such a Guru will ensure the reaching of the goal.

If the disciple is impure the blessing of even the great Gurus will not fructify. It is useless to impart spiritual instructions to impure souls. Merely receiving initiation is of no avail. Many evil tendencies are heaped up in the mind and hence there is no progress in Sadhana. It is sheer waste of time and energy for a Guru to instruct such disciples. Earnest souls filled with the spirit of renunciation and yearning for Moksha are the proper Sishyas (disciples).

The results of Sadhana depend on your exertions. It is unjust to blame the Guru for not attaining the desired end. If you work with your whole heart and soul exerting to your utmost, you will get the maximum result. Otherwise you will not advance one step. Those who have no desire for sense enjoyments and are pure in mind, keeping continuous current of good thoughts and call on the Lord with a yearning heart will progress. If the tendency to sense enjoyments is lurking, the counting of beads will be in vain.

Residence in the celestial regions with all enjoyments and the attainment of Moksha are two different things altogether. One has to descend down to earth even from those regions. If one has not realised the Self, one will have to revert to the cycle of births and deaths. Those who have realised the Self are for ever freed from the bondage of rebirth. They are released from the effects of works, including even the Prarabdha Karma which brought the present body into existence.

The object of human birth is to realize God. This state is attained by the effect of Sadhanas pursued assiduously for many lives. He who has attained to this state is the really blessed man.

THE RELATIONS OF TILAK AND VIVEKANANDA

(Based on Original Marathi Sources)

VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA

The personal relations between Lokamanya Tilak and Swami Vivekananda were marked by great mutual regards and esteem. In 1892 Tilak was returning from Bombay to Poona and had occupied a seat in a second-class railway compartment. Some Gujratis accompanied Swami Vivekananda who also came and sat in the same compartment. The Gujratis introduced the Swami to Tilak and requested the Swami to stay with the latter. After reaching his residence in Poona Tilak provided a separate room to the Swami.¹ He stayed for about eight to ten days in Poona. His personal belongings were very few in number. He used to keep quiet most of the time but he and Tilak used to discuss some problems. Tilak once took the Swami to the Hirabag Club meeting. On that day the late Kashinath Govinda Nattu introduced a controversial topic relating to metaphysics. Tilak requested the Swami to participate and Vivekananda spoke for full one hour and his speech was remarkable. Thenceforward the people of the town began to come to meet him and he gave discourses on the Gita and the Upanishads. The Gita had been the favourite book of Tilak and twice or thrice the two persons discussed the Gita. Tilak was intensely gratified to find that Vivekananda also agreed that Karmayoga was the central theme of the Bhagavad-Gita.² When many people began to come

¹ *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Lokamanya Tilak*. (In Marathi, Edited by S. V. Bapat, Poona, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 134-135.

² Tilak is reported to have said:

“स्वामीजी दोनतीन वेळां चर्चा केली आणि गीतेचे सार व मर्म निष्काम कर्मयोग च आहे अशी मजप्रमाणे त्यांचीहि निष्ठा असल्याचल माझी खात्री झाली।”

—*Ibid.*, p. 135.

to see the Swami he wanted to depart and hence went away one day. In 1893 both Vivekananda and Tilak obtained international recognition. The address of Vivekananda at the Chicago Parliament of Religions made him famous. In 1893 Tilak created a sensation among orientalists all over the world by publishing the *Orion*.

When Vivekananda returned from the west in 1897, Tilak wrote to him and invited him to come to Poona. Vivekananda was then very busy and promised to come to Poona after some time. But somehow the scheme did not materialize. After the Calcutta Congress of 1901 Tilak went to see Vivekananda at the Belur Math and was delighted to see the place.³ Although Vivekananda was a Vedantist, he was intensely interested in diverse types of current, social, educational and cultural problems. Vivekananda requested Tilak to renounce the world and devote all his energies to the work of popular enlightenment and religious renaissance. But Tilak emphatically replied that he would never take to the path of renunciation. Whatever social and humanitarian work he had to do, he would do them by being in the world and living as a householder.⁴ Tilak and Vivekananda also discussed the political problems of India and they seemed to feel that the political policy of the country should be based on the philosophy of self-help and passive resistance. Vivekananda offered refreshments to the Tilak party and the meeting increased the mutual affection and esteem of the two persons.

In July 1902 Vivekananda entered Mahasamadhi. On July 8, Tilak wrote an obit-

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 422-423.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 135-136.

tuary article in the *Kesari*.⁵ He recognized the great service rendered by the Swami in having brought to the attention of the western world the treasures of Hindu metaphysics. Vivekananda had had the vision of the universal propaganda of the knowledge of monistic philosophy. Tilak referred in his article to the service rendered by the monks of the Ramakrishna Math in the famine of 1896-97 in Rajputana. He also referred to the speech of Vivekananda in Paris in 1900. He acknowledged the great scholarship, eloquence, enthusiasm and perseverance of Vivekananda in the spread of the religion and philosophy of Vedanta. Tilak candidly stated that Acharya Sankara first took upon himself the work of the consolidation and propaganda of Hinduism. Vivekananda was another figure who had similar visions⁶ but he could not complete

⁵ Tilak's article in the *Kesari* bore the title:

“श्रीस्वामी विवेकानन्द हे समाधिस्थ झाले।”

⁶ Tilak's original Marathi words are:

“हिंदुधर्माचे उज्ज्वल स्वरूप कोणते, अशा प्रकारचा धर्म आमच्या देशांत झाला हेच आमचे अमूल्य धन व बल आणि त्याचा सर्व जगभर प्रसार करणे हेच आमचे खरे कर्तव्य असे बोलणारे नव्हे तर जगास सिद्ध करून दाखविणारे

his work due to his early death. Tilak lamented that India had lost her old political vigour and splendour. Only the old religion had been left as a sacred legacy. The modern world was a competitive world and it was necessary according to Tilak to put before the attention of the intellectuals our great treasures of religion and philosophy. Tilak regretted the early passing away of Vivekananda, who was bound to cast great influence on the National movement. He expressed the hope that the work left unfinished by the Swami would be taken up by others. He concluded the obituary article in the *Kesari* after mentioning that twice he had requested Vivekananda to visit Poona, but once because of illness and again because of some other reason, Swami Vivekananda could not come to Poona to deliver lectures. Tilak prayed to God that the kind Providence may make it possible to achieve the integration and harmonization of all religions in the Advaita system.⁷

सत्पुरुष हजारवारांशे वर्षापूर्वी एक शङ्कराचार्य होउन गेले, व त्याशतकाच्या अखेरीस दुसरे स्वामी विवेकानन्द झाले।”

“सर्वधर्मांचे अद्वैतमतांत एकीकरण करण्याचे श्रेय।”

TRAINING FOR LIFE

M. S. KALYANASUNDARAM

Cycling is not merely balancing and pedalling. The cyclist has to study conditions ahead, and keep an eye behind for faster traffic. He has to make allowances for the movements of other vehicles on the road. He has to think at the differing pace of the different vehicles. He has to come down humbly when the wheels get stuck in the tram-track (when the accident is unavoidable) and get up again with a face-saving non-chalance; he has to cut his way through sometimes, at other times, wisely go round obstacles. In fact, he has to take in the whole situation, maintain a balance of

mind, bring into play a sense of proportion, and be prepared to meet any trouble on the road.

Often, the cyclist comes out of his cycling troubles more gracefully, successfully and profitably than an ordinary man does out of his troubles in life. The reason is that the cyclist has been trained to handle a cycle, whereas the average man has not had much of a training for handling life.

Perhaps, a human life is a more expendable commodity than a bi-cycle.

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

The scientific approach

The ideals of character presented in the foregoing paragraphs are based on the timeless principles of religion handed down from past generations as a fixed pattern. There is a volume of scientific opinion, to-day, gaining momentum, which makes no disguise of the criticism that the transcendentalism of religion is merely wishful thinking. What people like to be there they believe must be there. Since the world falls short of the perfection which religion preaches, it cannot be tested phenomenologically. Whatever cannot be so tested is only a dogma and so an approach to the problems of human behaviour and conduct based on experimental data is a necessity. The uniqueness of the scientific method lies in its direct and complete reliance upon reason and confidence in its powers and values. Nothing outside the realm of observation, analysis, comparison and classification can be accepted for logical evidence. The knowledge of human personality discovered by scientific psychology is based on exact and immediately observable facts.

Psychologists of the present generation hold the opinion that man is a psychophysical unity. The bodily and the mental aspects belong to the same unitary organism just as the obverse and the reverse sides belong to the same coin. Mind is not a simple independent entity free from the effects of mechanical laws. The attempt to separate the mental and the physical would be as irrational as the idea of separating movement from the moving body. Organic structure and the working of the living organism constitute an indissoluble whole.

A living organism functions always as a very intricately integrated unity and it must be studied as a totality. Organs and functions of the body and mind exert reciprocal influence; and these again are affected by several hereditary and environmental influences. The sum total of all these internal and external influences make the personality of an individual. The inner life of thought and feeling which is called the mental life of a person is studied by psychologists as it is expressed through behaviour. Scientific psychology is concerned with the study of the human organism, as a phenomenon known here and now and leaves all speculation about its ultimate nature to religion and philosophy. This concept of man as a multiphase organism is responsible for the recent rapid advances in psychotherapy, in systems of mental hygiene, and in the field of education and training of children. The psychosomatic unity of the human organism is now established on experimental data. The following are some of the facts discovered by modern researches. Physical defects, diseases and injuries are clearly found to have produced profound mental disturbances and even behaviour disorders. Medical scientists have conclusively proved by strict evidence, that continued sleeplessness has resulted in loss of memory and emotional instability, that excessive fatigue has produced inattention and temper tantrums, that kidney diseases of long duration have produced delirium, and that brain inflammations have led to serious types of behaviour disorders. Victims of 'sleeping sickness' in early childhood are later found to be destructive and criminally inclined. Mental deficiencies are found to be the outcome

of numerically insufficient and poorly developed neurons. Mental efficiency, on the other hand, is observed to be closely related to the proper action of the glandular and nervous system. An established body of experimentally ascertained knowledge clearly reveals the influence of food, drugs and some other substances on psychoneural functioning. A well-co-ordinated harmonious activity of bodily organs is therefore found to be a necessity for the integrity of the nervous system and effective mental activity. There may be evidence from some cases to show that poor mental health may co-exist with robust physique. It must, however, be admitted in general that physical health and efficiency supply a ground-work for a healthy mental life. It is in this respect the social, political and economic systems working in a country have their indirect contribution towards sound mental hygiene and character education.

That the mental factors affect physical processes is also now soundly established on experimental evidence. Thinking, even when it is quite unemotional, affects the circulation of blood by exciting the nervous system. Intense emotional experiences like fear evoke well-known symptoms like trembling, irregular breathing and dryness of mouth. Emotional upheavals caused by anxiety, worry, grief and rage have been the cause of indigestion, heart and liver disorders, and susceptibility to colds. Sometimes peptic and gastric ulcers are traced to emotional stress. Evidently therefore on the psychological level sound health is possible only when the individual's reactions with the functioning of the entire personality is harmonious and well-adjusted. The psychological programme for character formation demands, as a result of this influence of the mental on the physical, a suitable adjustment of the individual's responses to his physical and social environments. Undesirable mental reaction patterns are caused by the individual's attitude towards

the problems emerging from his social and physical environments. His own psychic experiences as well as his attitude towards them are also extremely important in forming his patterns of reaction.

Human personality in psychology.

Springs of human behaviour are wholly or partly physiological, psychological and social. These are the constituents of the total personality in a total environment. Their operation may be conscious or unconscious and may be innate or acquired. The instinctual cravings and goal-seeking drives may be strong or weak as dictated by the needs of the individual and according to the influence of the experiences gained by him in the environmental settings. In every organism, first of all, there are certain innate wants or drives such as that of hunger, thirst, excreting foreign substances, removing sensory irritants, seeking pleasure-yielding experiences, self-preservation, propagation, relief from fatigue and exhaustion; automatic activities such as breathing and blood circulation, and mechanical response to external stimuli as seen in winking, coughing and sneezing. Secondly there are the psychological drives to action which include a wide range of goal-seeking activities. The second type of functions are meant to secure healthy conditions for maintenance of life. In every man there is the need for various kinds of security, for ego-satisfactions, for successful achievement, for acquiring new experiences, for possessing things, for staving off the feeling of frustrations and inadequacies. The first group of reactions result from fundamental organic needs and they are at the basis of life. The psychological and social drives are more intricate and are learned in the process of maturation. All our beliefs, attitudes and habits have their foundation in the motives behind the psychological and social drives to action. The stronger the motivation, the more powerful the intellectual and emotional habits become. The

habits and attitudes in their turn become motives to action again.

A proper integration of personality demands a satisfactory adjustment of the basic psychophysical needs of the organism. Until a person achieves inner harmony among the antagonistic tendencies in his mental life and learns to reconcile them with the demands of the society on which he is a parasite for physical and mental nourishments, distortions of personality in some measure is bound to exist. Education for character and the conduct of life must therefore point to the method of attaining and preserving mental health. The most outstanding criterion to judge the advancement of a community is to be found in the power which that community has in inducing favourable mental states in the members that compose it and in correcting their physical and mental inadequacies and maladjustments. Different fields of modern knowledge such as psychology, sociology, biology, medicine, hygiene, and education supply the necessary information and method for the prevention and cure of mental diseases and defects and for acquiring sound mental health, chiefly secured through the development of attitudes and habits conducive to healthy mental life, through the development of the individual's personality by inculcating and promoting proper conditions, and by the establishment of suitable environmental conditions, emotional attitudes and habits of thought.

The rules for shaping character.

Psychology offers many useful rules and techniques for the management of character in the best possible way. The scientific attitude gives full recognition to man's great prerogative of making himself what he wishes to be. Psychology defines character as the power to put aside some immediate pleasure in order to achieve an ideal goal or to maintain a principle. Not only for the personal benefits accruing but also for personal reasons it is worthwhile to resist im-

pulses for the sake of some ultimate gain. The true test of an individual's character lies in the capacity which he possesses to overlook immediate pleasure for securing future advantage. Reliable, persistent endeavour will be possible only for a person who is endowed with this capacity of the will to resist impulses; and the power of will is character in action. A strong character may be easily detected by observing the everyday activities of a person where he is not under supervision. The attitude of responsibility is sustained by strength of will alone and the lack or absence of the one indicates the weakness of the other. Discipline includes control and purification of desires and tendencies. One should choose the goals wisely and strive effectively to attain them. One has to bring the searchlight of knowledge to bear on the processes and activities of mental life and remove the errors growing there hidden. It is not enough to have some ideal goal or even a strong desire to become like that which an individual admires. There must be the constant application of the standard to oneself and a critical comparison and checking of one's progress. 'The finest flowers of character are produced' says McDougall, 'only by self-conscious striving after self-improvement.'

Character evolves through an individual's relationships with his own conscious states as well as his relations with external objects, persons and situations. One's own interest, impulses, and desires are to be properly adjusted among themselves and also with the social goals one has to keep before one's attention. Social tolerance and adaptability, besides being necessary for maintaining satisfactory human relationships, are valuable for the proper development of the personality. Social participation is necessary to develop healthy outside interests and to prevent unhealthy preoccupation with oneself and to stabilize one's emotions. Opportunities for practising mutual service, gratitude, and appreciation, adjusting one another with forbearance, understanding

and considerateness, self-abnegation and readiness to give and take, and other necessary virtues can be practised only in society. Although some social situations are responsible for mental distortions, the development and continuance of desirable mental and social characteristics through socialization cannot be under-estimated. Undue reclusiveness and seclusiveness often lead to maladjustments of character. Only through well-regulated social contacts and through the joyful and spontaneous participation in the life of the home, society and country a man can achieve the best satisfaction for his moral, emotional, and intellectual aspirations. None can be happy who lives in constant fear of humiliation, social ostracism, and loss of prestige and status in the eyes of persons of his own group. Educational, social and psychological workers therefore consider the social criterion of mental health and soundness of character as an important test of a perfect personality. The generality of mankind are at the mercy of the constantly changing society and hence it is necessary to help youngsters in their growth towards the progressive adaptation to socio-economic changes. A man thinks, believes, and accepts ideals and attitudes only as he is socially conditioned.

The value of reflective self-criticism is always recognized. Any individual free from congenital defects can acquire an ideal character through proper insight and understanding. A precise knowledge of an individual's motivations, actions, and feelings will go a long way in determining his character traits. Motives grow into fixed attitudes and these determine the trend of a life. Since attitudes are always acquired, an integrated, harmonious, efficient personality is for the most part the result of training and discipline. Knowledge of an individual's propensities, disposition, temperament and talent and an evaluation of his motives, handicaps, and peculiarities make an effective adjustment quite possible. Courage to face the problems of life square-

ly with frankness and in a straightforward manner must be counted as the prime quality to be acquired for a sound character. Evasion of duties, duplicity in speech, and deception in action would lead only to mental disintegration. A strong character alone can think without crookedness, feel properly and act boldly in the critical situations of life. A masterful personality adjusts itself intelligently to the changes of life. His character is consistent because he is never inconsistent in thinking, feeling, doing and speaking. Through logicity in thought and complete fairness and correctness in the estimation of events and persons will be possible only to a well-developed character. He alone can order and organize his intellectual processes in the most desirable and blameless manner. An integrated, harmonious, efficient personality is endowed with many fruitful characteristics; some of them are: self-control, confidence, industry, enthusiasm, endeavour, sincerity, fair-mindedness, frankness, co-operativeness, dependability, carefulness, alertness, seriousness, affability, modesty, sobriety, forbearance, chastity, temperance, humility, patience, faithfulness, honesty, impartiality, kindness, thoroughness, purposefulness, vigour, stability, calmness, poise, and truthfulness in attitude and behaviour. Negative traits such as self-love, cunning, deceit, meanness, hatred, jealousy, distrust, arrogance, pretence, uncharitableness, bias, and partiality are generally acquired and sustained by bad habit-formation and lack of discipline. Faith in one's capacity to achieve a worthwhile goal and determination and self-confidence are extremely helpful in building up a good character. A good man's life is all of a piece.

A sound mind in a sound body in a sound society is the ideal which psychology holds up. A mind which is at peace with itself is the foundation from which the rest can arise. To assure this the one indispensable factor is poise, tranquillity, and stability of emotions. Emotional security and mental health are often equated by psychologists.

Want of emotional security in childhood introduces into the mind irreparable distortions and deficiencies that are never made good with all subsequent care. Emotional insecurity can work havoc over the mind even in later life. A perfect character can grow only from the fertile ground of good habits of thinking, feeling, and acting. Well-regimented physical and mental habits as well as proper social attitudes and responses learned from childhood will help immensely the cultivation of emotional poise and proper emotional expression. A new-born child deprived of the companionship of genuinely fond parents, particularly the nursing at the mother's breast, is considered unlucky in its emotional growth. Children starved of the satisfactions which parents who know their needs and who are naturally sympathetic towards them are alone in a position to supply are likely to lack in their character, tenderness, love, pity, reverence, gentleness, considerateness, good manners, and good morals. Happiness in childhood, says Bertrand Russell, is absolutely necessary to the production of the best type of human being. He who would have a life secure and balanced must strive for emotional stability as early as he possibly can.

The religious and the scientific views are complementary.

From an unbiased study of the principles and methods of mental health and character-building discovered and enunciated by scientific psychology we will be convinced about the vastness, precision, importance and the practical utility of its contributions. There is a lot which all betterment workers have to learn from psychology whether they belong to religion and philosophy by training and calling, or to any other walk of life. The close co-operation between pastoral workers and psychologists in some of the occidental countries points to the possibility of combining the social benefits of psychology and religion. Recognition is

also not wanting from some of the front rank psychologists regarding the great importance of the mature religious sentiment in psychotherapy. From the standpoint of religion and ethics as well as that of psychology character is the art of living in the best way. For sociology and psychology it is mainly the art of living together in the best way. The basis of character whatever might be the view taken is in the harmonious integration of personality promulgated by religion long ago as singleness of heart, or purity. Undoubtedly psychology has shed light on many dark corners of the human personality and dispelled irrational superstitions, conscious and unconscious prejudices, and errors of ignorance. We are to-day enabled in the light of psychology to make a correct estimate of our motives and achievements and the path for self-criticism and self-estimation is made easy for us. Here again what is really significant for our purpose is not what we know, but what we are disposed to do with what we come to know. Without belittling the role of scientific psychology and allied branches of knowledge in increasing our understanding of the motives and behaviour of man, we must admit that religion in its pure form has to supplement the findings of psychology. Precise reasoning and disinterested, objective pursuit of truth are but late comers in the field of education and training. The power of suggestion, sympathy, and imitation has undisputed sway over all men's minds at the most malleable period of life and over the minds of the largest number of men for all time. Without the guidance of mature religion, which is the really binding force which subsumes under its domain facts, values and ultimate reality, the three above factors are likely to turn a dangerous weapon instead of becoming a most profitable instrument. Character and personality cannot grow by merely aiming at betterment or concentrating culture on ourselves. In life's situations the best ends are achieved often by for-

getting ourselves in a worthy objective, a great cause, or a worthy personality capable of absorbing all our powers. In the arena of life we are to do noble deeds rather than be spending all time and energy in investigating the minutiae of the mechanism of acting well. Good motives alone are as useless as an automobile that has no engine. Religion can enormously aid psychology in this matter not only by implanting worthy and desirable motives and purposes as well as ideals and goals winnowed by time from the beginning of history, but also by supplying great energy tapped elevated emotions. Only the mature religious sentiment can supplant undesirable motives with thoroughly desirable ones. Let us take an example: Modern civilization is largely possible for introducing into our lives a tendency to fritter away our time and energy in fruitless activities in the name of recreation or social fashion. No serious purpose can be achieved by a mind that has become habitually flippant. There is no remedy against the trivialities of a highly industrialised, regimented, mentally sick society except the serious call of a mature science formed under the impact of a genuinely spiritual religion. 'The man who centres his thoughts and hopes upon something transcending himself', says Bertrand Russell, 'can find a peace in the ordinary troubles of life which is impossible to the pure egoist.'

Conclusion.

Following the idea of the welfare state given at the beginning it is fair to conclude this paper with a brief reference to the needs of India at present. Side by side with the colossal efforts launched for the increase of national wealth, we ought to spare no efforts for the elevation of our individual and national character to as yet unattained heights. There cannot be an excess in matters like education in a sense of duty, cultivation of a high-toned social spirit, and the proper zeal for a careful ordering of

life based on the exalted sentiments of our hoary religion. Let every one, whatever his profession and calling, be imbued with the feeling that he should acquire the best knowledge and skill in it and improve and use that skill and knowledge to the full extent of his power. Attention, order, punctuality, regularity, and diligence in the work one has to do are extremely necessary to secure a high degree of personal effectiveness on which success and happiness depend. In a rather ill-integrated society like ours in which irritates and conflicts tend to develop on the ground of birth, status, and environment, good temper, goodwill, fair construction, and all-round courtesy are to be cultivated with special attention. We are often likely to look upon our religion only as a source of consolation in troubles. It must on the other hand help us to build a well-integrated character based on self-denial and endurance. A proper understanding of the motives of obedience and a cheerful, generous, unhesitating compliance to proper authority within its sphere can help a lot in raising our national character. He who cannot discipline himself cannot be strong enough to discipline or educate others. We have to resist manfully the temptations that lie thick and fast around us. Some of them are: greed for unlawful gain, vainglory, back-biting, wrath, evil supposition, secret hatred, opposition to what is right, irreverence, and insolence. There is a common gibe that religion does not make man good but that the good in man makes religion. The root of it may be sought in the moral impairment sustained by some through the unqualified worship of unworthy objects. No wonder people suspect religion when conduct fails to correspond to ideals. In our national character we have to combine the enthusiasm to conserve and transmit the wisdom and skill achieved in the past with the spirit of fresh and fearless adventure into new realms. The youth of India should neither be a prey to superstitions labelled

as religion, nor be slaves of worldliness envisaged by scientific dogmatism. Docility of religion and adventurousness of science are needed for a complete character.

A proper regard for healthy conventions in all human relations and attitudes is an invaluable protection for healthy character-

building. Let us seek knowledge which is a help for fuller knowledge and let us trust in patient thinking which ultimately repairs its own mistakes. It is the function of perfection to make us know our imperfections and to remedy them in the light of the former.

PILGRIMAGE TO SABARIMALA and the services of the Ayappa Seva Sangham

R. SUBRAMANIAN NAIR

The Sabarimala temple is one of the most important shrines in the Kerala State and is now well known throughout India. The presiding deity is "Dharma Sasta", worshipped as an incarnation or 'avatar' of the God Almighty. He is known as 'Ayappa' or 'Ayappan'.

The temple is situated on a small plateau, some 40 miles to the interior of an impenetrable Reserve Forest stretching across the Western Ghats. The Forests around abound with beasts of prey like tigers, leopards, bison, wild elephants and the like. There is no road, cartable or otherwise leading up to the temple. But a pathway two to three feet wide is cut through the bushy undergrowth every year during the season of the pilgrimage.

Every year thousands of pilgrims flock to the temple in spite of the privations of the journey. In recent times their number has swelled into lakhs. Thousands of devotees from all parts of Tamilnad also are now coming on pilgrimage. Special mention must be made of the fact that a good proportion of the pilgrims are from the educated class and the intelligentsia.

The pilgrim is required to undergo a 'Vrata' or penance for two months. The Vrata starts with the tying of a string of 'rudraksha' beads round one's neck, signifying absolute dedication to Lord Ayappa, the deity at Sabarimala. Thereafter the

devotee is only called an 'Ayappa' by others. This is Vedanta in practice. The Upanishadic dictum, 'All this is Brahman', is exemplified in this conception of identifying the devotee with the Lord. During this period of Vrata, the devotee must keep strict celibacy, avoid the company of women, altogether, abstain from taking fish, meat or alcohol and maintain absolute cleanliness of his body and spirit. This is well supported by the scriptures. As a saying goes: 'Half the merit is lost if one goes to the holy place by a conveyance or uses umbrella, shoes, oil, meat, etc., and all is lost if he leads a conjugal life on the way.' He must spend his leisure time in devotion. It is usual for devotees in each village to congregate at some place or other around a fire during the nights offering Bhajans and singing devotional hymns. The Vrata is strictly observed even today, so great is the awe and allegiance inspired by the Lord. And one feels a religious renaissance sweeping through Kerala during this period.

The Vrata commences with the first day of the month of Vrischikam (15th of November) every year. The auspicious day for 'darsan' at Sabarimala, two months after, is on the first day of the month of Makaram (15th of January).

The journey to Sabarimala starts towards the middle of the first week of January. Pilgrims in their thousands, travel by boat,

canoes, buses, cars and trains, to Kottayam, a town in central Travancore. The pilgrims chant hymns as they travel. On every street and road, one can see hundreds of pilgrims. Only one sound echoes in the air and reverberate the skies of Kerala at the time, the 'Saranam' of the pilgrims on their march.

To facilitate the journey of the overwhelming numbers of pilgrims the Ayappa Seva Sangham renders a very useful service. As it is the only service organization in the field it is proper to give a short account of it.

The Sangham is one of the premier Hindu organizations in the Kerala State working for the cultural, moral and religious well-being of the Hindus. But it had only limited objectives at first when it was formed 14 years ago. And the very name of the Sangham is indicative of its origin and objectives to some extent.

As mentioned before, thousands of devotees go on pilgrimage every year to the Sabarimala Temple. The route lies over a mountainous tract across a deep and inaccessible forest. Naturally the pilgrims had to face many difficulties and undergo great hardships on the route. The Sangham was founded originally by some devotees to afford some relief and help to these pilgrims. The pilgrim is called 'Ayappa' and since the object of the sponsors was to afford some service to the pilgrim, the association was called the Ayappa Seva Sangham. The work contemplated at first was rather one in the nature of a Red Cross organization, to be carried out with the aid of a number of volunteers impressed with a spirit of service and a missionary zeal and ardour. Readers may get some idea of the magnitude of service rendered by the Sangham in the course of this narrative.

Kottayam.

For days together, just before the pilgrimage proper begins, thousands of pilgrims arrive at Kottayam. The town cannot of

course accommodate such a large influx of pilgrims. The Sangham starts its work of service right from here. It constructs temporary sheds in front of the local temple for the pilgrims to rest. A religious convention on a big scale is also conducted here by the Sangham for a week at which well-known Sanyasins and speakers give lectures on the important aspects of Hindu Dharma every day. A number of volunteers of the Sangham are posted on duty here to look after the comforts of the pilgrims. They look after the sick, get them medical aid, arrange transport for the pilgrims, etc.

Erumeli.

The next stage of the journey is Erumeli, a small town on the outskirts of the Reserve Forest. Thousands of pilgrims arrive at this place by every available means of transport from Kottayam as also from other centres of the State. The Sangham runs an office here fitted with microphones for more than a week. Religious discourses and lectures are arranged here also every day. A small hospital with a doctor in charge is also run to attend to the sick. Volunteers of the Sangham also look after the comforts of the pilgrims.

The Reserve Forest.

After Erumeli, the entire route of the pilgrims lies across the Reserve Forest. Pilgrimage in its real sense begins here. The distractions of the home and the plains are forgotten. The deep stillness and calm of the vast forest instill a sense of peace to the mind of the pilgrim. And he grows more devotional. The fear of danger from wild beasts of prey on the prowl all along the route, makes him all the more conscious of the utter helplessness of man and the omnipotence of God.

The pilgrims now walk in a single file one after the other across the narrow path, each Ayappa singing hymns loudly as he goes along, with the image of Sasta in his heart and his ears dinned with the 'Saranam Vili'

of the pilgrims behind him and in his front, now reverberating throughout the Forest.

Inchiparakotta.

The path running through the forest lies across a difficult terrain, over high mountains and through deep ravines. And so the pilgrim is compelled to break his journey at a few places before he reaches Sabarimala.

The first stop is at Inchiparakotta on the crest of a hill four to five thousand feet high. Water is not at all available at this site and has to be brought from a stream in the valley a mile distant. The operation is attended with great risks as the area is infested with tigers, leopards and other wild animals.

The Sangham opens a camp here, before the pilgrims begin to arrive. Its volunteers clear the forest on the site at first. And it is here that the pilgrims come and camp for the night. Water is also brought from the stream in the valley and stored in a number of tanks made of concrete. As the pilgrims continue to arrive in thousands, it is really a heavy strain for the volunteers to maintain the water supply. In addition to providing cold water for cooking purposes, the volunteers also provide the pilgrims with hot water to quench their thirst as they reach the camp weary with the journey throughout the day. The volunteers also look after the pilgrims who fall sick. Patients who get serious are carried by the volunteers either to the Sangham's hospitals at other places or to Government hospitals in the plains. The volunteers are helpful to the pilgrims in many other ways also.

Karimala.

After camping for the night at Inchiparakotta, the pilgrims start in the morning for Karimala, the next stop on the route which they reach by dusk. Here again the camp is on the top of a hill several thousand feet high from the sea level.

The volunteers and office-bearers of the Sangham are the first to arrive and start a camp. A large area of the forest is cleared

in the first instance. Pilgrims reaching the camp, almost faint with thirst and hunger, are supplied with hot water. Here again water is not available. It is brought by the volunteers from a stream in the valley two miles distant. The strain of bringing water from such a site and storing it for thousands of pilgrims is indeed very great. People do not stir out of camps in the forest. The personal risks to which the volunteers are put may well be imagined when it is remembered that they have to penetrate a distance of two miles in the forest for water all alone.

The volunteers also attend to the sick. Patients who get serious are carried by the volunteers to the Sangham's hospital at Pampa. Bhajans and religious lectures are also conducted here under the auspices of the Sangham. The camp is run here for three to four days.

Pampa.

The next halting place is ten miles distant, on the banks of the Pampa River. Touching it on the south lies another sacred spot namely 'Triveni', a place where three rivers meet. Exhausted by the strain of the long march, the pilgrims settle down here for four to five days for a brief rest.

The pilgrims arrive here at first in a trickle but soon they descend upon the banks in a steady stream, chanting songs as they march along, thousands upon thousands each day. And towards the close of the second week of January, more than a lakh of pilgrims are settled on the vast camp.

The Sangham opens its office and camp on a small eminence on the banks of the river towards the end of the first week of January. This camp is the most important one on the route and is under the direct charge of the General Secretary and other office-bearers of the Sangham. Hundreds of volunteers are also at work. The volunteers here as elsewhere are themselves pilgrims to the Temple.

The volunteers help the pilgrims in clearing the forest and in putting up temporary

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huts thatched with leaves and grass. The Sangham is running two hospitals here where sick pilgrims are treated throughout the day and night. One can see frequently volunteers rushing out with stretchers to different parts of the vast camp to carry patients to the hospital. Last year it is reported that over two thousand pilgrims were treated in the hospitals at this base.

The Sangham is carrying on here an effective religious propagation with perhaps more emphasis on the Bhakti aspect. For this purpose the office of the Sangham is fitted with microphones with a number of loud speakers installed at different points of the vast camp. Kirtans and Bhajans are sung at regular intervals from 4 a.m. in the morning. Well-known Sanyasins and eminent speakers are invited here to address the pilgrims on the various aspects of Hindu Dharma and religion. In the vast camp, days and nights are spent by all the pilgrims in great devotion and prayer.

So great is the concourse of pilgrims that during rush hours, many pilgrims especially children get lost and part company. Such facts are immediately reported to the office of the Sangham. By announcements over the microphones they are invariably traced and restored back to the anxious relatives and friends. Instructions and advices are given to the pilgrims on many other matters over the mike as well. In addition to the above, the volunteers help to maintain sanitation in the camp. They also do a number of other jobs, all with a view to serve the pilgrims.

Sabarimala.

The sacred shrine at Sabarimala is about five miles off from the last camp. The great exodus from Pampa starts on the last day of the month of Dhanu when thousands of pilgrims march upon Sabarimala, chanting hymns on the way, their *Saranam Vili* echoing and resounding through the entire forest. Even before the pilgrims arrive, the vast

area around the temple overflows with the devotees camping there earlier with the beginning of the second week. Last year it was estimated that more than two lakhs of pilgrims at least visited the temple at this time.

Here again the Sangham runs a camp for a week. The volunteers help the pilgrims in clearing down the forests and in putting up tents and huts. The Sangham runs two hospitals here. With the aid of mikes, Bhajans and Harikathas are conducted. Religious discourses and lectures are also arranged every day.

The auspicious hour for 'darshan' is on the first of the Makaram (14th January) at the time of 'Diparadhana' in the temple. There is a regular stampede and a big rush at this time when thousands of pilgrims enter the temple. Yet the volunteers and the office-bearers of the Sangham, with the aid of hundreds of police, manage to preserve some sort of order and help each pilgrim to get a darshan of the deity. This work of the Sangham highly appreciated as it is, is proving a great ordeal.

From next morning, the pilgrims start on their return journey. The members of the Sangham are the last to leave the temple. The sick and the disabled are carried across the forest and admitted at the distant hospitals in the plains. In a few cases money is also paid to pilgrims for their return journey.

The Ayappa Puja or Bhakti is no sectarian cult. It is founded on some of the best principles of Sanatana Dharma. During the period of pilgrimage, one feels that a religious renaissance is sweeping the land. And many people believe today that it is the pilgrimage to Sabarimala that largely sustains Hindu religion in Kerala State.

Service to the devotees on pilgrimage to Sabarimala still remains the most important object and work of the Ayappa Seva Sangham. But its activities have now expanded and it has also other objects in view.

The Sangham is today a powerful organization with more than 180 branches throughout the State. The propagation of Hindu Dharma among the people is now a main object. For this purpose, the Sangham has been publishing a monthly journal called 'Ayappan' for the last six years. Religious conventions are also being conducted at present in different parts of the State under the auspices of the Sangham. The Sangham is also now authorised to effect conversions in the State. It has also assumed the management of some temples in the State. It is

also paying particular attention in renovating temples that have fallen into ruins. Besides the above, the Sangham is carrying on other allied items of work for the moral and spiritual welfare of the Hindus of the State.

Pilgrimage has all along been one of the most important and effective institutions of our religious life in India and elsewhere where people take to it seriously. Sabarimala certainly indicates how vital and creative it has become in our social life in this part of the country.

PERSONALISM

K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

Genuine Philosophy should be politically free, that is, it should be purely devoted to the search for truth regardless of political conditions. Among the politically free philosophies of great social importance, *Personalism* is one. The two basic problems of Personalism are that the metaphysical categories, the beams in the structure of Reality are rational ways by which the mind organises experience and they are true when and because the categories are the laws or relationships which are necessary for the existence of a kind or field of reality e.g., a relationship like similarity (or between two black cows) is not a property of the objects yet it is true in thought. Similarity is a way of thinking of two black cows. It presupposes the synthetic activity of the mind. In fact any explanation must start from the nature of the mind. Because I regard Personalism as a special kind of Idealism in the sense of making personality, Mind the basic Reality and all else derivative. For Personalism the self or person is the basic and typical reality. Of course it exists because it acts. The real is anything that acts and be acted upon and certainly the human self is an agent that can act. Personalism has

remained closest to the field of theism and has served most explicitly as a Philosophy of religion.

Personalism is one of the most practical, realistic, hard-headed, workable, verified philosophies. It may be considered the best of all. I earnestly trust that Personalism summarises the three important characteristics of metaphysics—it is coherent, inclusive and well evidenced concept of reality.

Most of the Philosophers in 20th century spend too much time on epistemology and Logic. One of the sad reasons for the decline of Philosophy in this century is the devotion of a wasteful and dreadful amount of time to special studies which cannot benefit mankind such as historical details of special problems of the past, language and Logical studies, etc. Too many Philosophers are like butchers who spend all their time sharpening their knives and never cut any meat. The most important problems in Philosophy pertain to metaphysics and human values and instead of drowning our talents in the sea of Logical and Semantic analysis we should bravely work at the main problems of the meaning of Life and of the ways to

live a total life. Our Hindu faith has much to contribute but we must of course select the wheat from the chaff.

I should like to deal here Absolute from the point of view of *Personalism*. The Absolute is not a person in the common sense of a self-manifesting through a biological body, although the absolute must act and manifest through his total being which is the universe. Now if person means the spiritual powers and aspects of the self, then the absolute must know or include personal experience within his total consciousness. Else he could not sustain it and develop it, but on the other hand the absolute in some of his relations (Creativity, infinite possibilities or potentialities for future expression in the range of his consciousness and such concepts)—his experience must in such aspects and perhaps others be super-personal, as we are sometimes in mathematical thought or Samadhi. In other words the absolute is personal in some of his relations (to men and other spirits) and in some of his relations his experience in super-personal, only in the sense that it represents higher developments than we have reached and as we develop we also may have experiences which are less loaded with emotional, private values

than most of our days now are. But I should call these higher developments personal or spiritual with the above limitations. Hence we could either say that the human concept of person is too small to contain him although he contains it; or we could say from the view-point of the Absolute as the archetypal person, we human selves are too poor to be called more than embryo persons. But I believe there is a basic kinship between the Absolute and human persons, and the vast differences represent differences in degrees of fulfilment, not in basic nature or possibilities. I believe that, if we knew about the personalities or selves which operate in the vast hierarchy of beings who have gone far beyond our selfic limitations on the way to the power, knowledge and bigness of experience which are characteristic of the Absolute.

I cannot hold to the view of an Absolute which has no kinship with, no casual relationship to, selves such as human persons are. The fact is that human persons exist and they must with the rest of creation, be expressions of the Absolute so that he must have personal sympathies to say the least, or, *vice versa*, he must experience some qualities that are similar to ours.

A PRAYER

(By A DEVOTEE)

If only you would will
My helpless sigh would smiles become,
My tear-stained eyes would glow
With the overflowing joy of your sight,
The avalanche of sorrow would turn
Into waves of bliss, my wailing
Would be drowned in the music of your
Beauty,

My darkest night
Would be bathed in light,
My wandering thoughts would lie at your
feet,

My fretful vision would gather itself
And see the effulgence of life's sun,

My longing for God would see
In every atom an object of worship,
The ashes of my ego would be blown away
And I would see your all-pervasiveness.

But would you will it so, My Lord?
For your grace I have waited many a life.
Shall I have to wait longer?
There is no limit to your loving solicitude
For your importunate slaves;
Vouchsafe me the end of all desires
That I may sin no more
And thus be made worthy of your grace and
love.

NACHIKETA—THE CHILD OF IMMORTAL BLISS

(A play: continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

SCENE V:

(Naraka Loka. Yama emerges out of his Tapas. Coming out, he meets Chitra.)

Yama: Harih Om! Harih Om! . . .
Chitra, the Tapas is over.

Chitra: Master! An extra-ordinary peace is playing on your countenance. The Tapas seems to have borne fruit.

Yama: Yes Chitra, it has! I was blessed with a remarkable experience! It was revealed that a radiant boy would soon arrive and that he would help me to achieve my liberation.

Chitra: Sir, a boy has arrived and he is extra-ordinary!

Yama: (bursting with eagerness) What did you say? A boy! . . .

Chitra: Yes Sir. Perhaps he is the same . . .

Yama: When did he come? When?

Chitra: It is three days since he has arrived Sir.

Yama: Harih Om! I hope he hasn't by any chance gone away. Show me where he is. Come, come! Hurry up!

Chitra: (Taking Yama a few steps to a side, and pointing) There Sir! He is sitting there. But, Sir, he has had neither food nor drink till now. He would not accept anything till he met you.

Yama: Chitra! This should not have happened. A guest, and that too a Brahmana Brahmacharin! Holy ones like this enter our homes, even as blazing fires. If they are not honoured properly, our virtuous deeds and austerities come to nought. All our merit would be reduced to ashes. Come! Quickly give me water for washing his feet and hands . . .

(Background chant: अतिथि देवो भव।)

Taittiriya U., I. 11. 2. A second curtain opens. Yama comes to Nachiketa, led on by Chitra. Chitra touches Nachiketa on the shoulder and attracting his attention, speaks)

Chitra: My boy, look! Here is the Lord Yamaraja himself.

(Nachiketa immediately steps forward ready to bow down, but looking at Yama's face, steps back in surprise.)

Nachiketa: Is this Yamaraja?

Yama: Yes, my boy! That is so. Why this surprise?

Nachiketa: All along I have heard that Yama is terrible. But you look different. Are you really Yamaraja?

Yama: Yes, my child! You may rest assured.

Nachiketa: (Feels satisfied but again gives a start) Oh! What have I done! I did not bow down at all. What an unpardonable blunder! (Bows down reverently.)

Yama: Get up, my boy! Get up. It is I who have really failed in my duty. Please accept these offerings now.

(Offers water for washing, and some refreshment.)

Forgive me, my boy, for keeping you waiting these three days.

Nachiketa: Lord! What is this! For you to speak in this fashion to a boy like me! . . .

Yama: Dear boy! When a wrong thing is done, forgiveness is to be sought, even if it be from a child. . . . And, as a penance for the wrong done, I am offering you three boons, one for each of the nights you were kept waiting.

Nachiketa: Where is the wrong on your part, Deya! Being given away as a gift to you, I had to come to you, and I have just

done only that. Why should I be offered these boons?

Yama: My child! It is for my own good, for my own satisfaction that I am doing so. By giving you these boons, it is I who would be benefited. Ask, Nachiketa! Ask whatever you please. I would gladly grant your wishes.

Nachiketa: (Aside) It was indeed to fulfil my father's words that I came here. Yet how much he must be missing me and suffering! My immediate and foremost duty is to see that he suffers no more. (To Yama) Lord! I have no doubt been given away to you; but on account of this, I have become the cause of my father's sorrow. For the removal of this sorrow, I would resort to the first boon. Bless me so that I may return to him, that he may recognize me and welcome me back with joy.

Yama: (Aside) Blessed is this boy! No selfish thought at all! Intent only on the welfare and good of others! (Salutes him mentally) (To Nachiketa) May it be so! I have accepted you as a gift and then given you back to your father. Return to him. Let him receive you back gladly. Let him sleep with an untroubled mind. . . . But you must return to earth before tomorrow. Otherwise they would think that life has departed from your body and cremate it. So, if you don't return within this limit, the boon would turn out to be useless.

Nachiketa: Yes, Deva! I understand. I shall return in time and gladden my father's heart.

Yama: What is the second boon you would like to have? (Aside) It is our good fortune that we can give boons to such worthy recipients. I am already feeling uplifted. (To Nachiketa) Ask, my dear!

Nachiketa: Deva! Returning home from your august presence empty-handed is not meet. . . .

Yama: Tell me what you wish to take. Gold, precious gems. . . ?

Nachiketa: Not for me, Lord! I wish to take something worthy to offer to my

father. The thing dearest to him is the attainment of heaven through performance of rituals. So I wish to be instructed about the secret of such a sacrifice. That is what I would have for the second boon.

Yama: All right! I would certainly instruct you in it. My boy! Seeing you, I feel inexpressibly happy. Have an additional boon, the fourth!

Nachiketa: A fourth one! I don't see any necessity at all for it. Three are more than enough, Lord!

Yama: You need not ask for it now itself. Take your own time, and utilise it in whatever manner you please.

Nachiketa: Everything is unexpected here!

Yama: Why?

Nachiketa: You are reputed to be the most terrible looking and cruel-hearted. But I don't see any sign of it. On the other hand, you are so compassionate, so full of grace. I don't know why people fear you so much.

Yama: My boy! It is their own sins that make people fear me. Those who are free from sins have no fear at all. That is why, pure-hearted as you are, you are seeing my true nature.

Nachiketa: But what about the sufferings, punishments and tortures of hell? Naraka at least must be terrible!

Yama: Nachiketa! There are punishments and suffering; tortures too. But they are only curative, only for the good of the Jivas. However, compared to the fierce hatred and jealousy, violence and fear stalking on earth, Naraka is indeed a sweet place! In devising more and more fierce forms of punishment, tortures and suffering, human beings are matchless!

Nachiketa: (Thoughtfully) Deva! May I ask you about something else?

Yama: Of course! What is it?

Nachiketa: Some say that man lives only so long as the body lasts and the moment it is reduced to ashes and dust, nothing else remains; and so the best thing

is to enjoy pleasures as long as the body is there, even if it means hurting others.

But our teachers declare that though the body is gone, man does not cease to be; that there is an immortal existence transcending birth and death, happiness and misery, and virtue and sin. Is this true?

Yama: Yes, my child, it is true.

Nachiketa: Then I wish to learn of the way to attain that immortality.

Yama: But, my dear child! This is a very difficult, subtle and deep matter. Ask something else.

Nachiketa: (Aside) If I can learn about this way to immortality, then I can share the knowledge with my fellow-beings! I should not lose this glorious opportunity.

(To Yama) Lord! It is you who have been compelling me to accept the third boon. So, I am asking you about the means to immortality.

Yama: My dear Nachiketa! Know for certain that I would never go back on my word. But please don't insist about this most intricate subject. Even the gods find it difficult to grasp. Choose something else.

Nachiketa: Is it difficult even for the Gods? Then, it is all the more the reason why I must learn of it, and specially when there is available such a rare teacher as you!

Yama: (Aside) This boy certainly is an aspirant after the highest truth. Perhaps he may be the very person mentioned by Narada and indicated in my vision. . . . If that is true, then by imparting spiritual knowledge to him, I would attain my liberation. Otherwise, by teaching an unfit person, I may even lose what spiritual powers I have! So let me first test him carefully and completely.

(To Nachiketa) Desist my boy, from this impossible wish. Ask for anything else, which your heart desires most. . . .

Children and grandchildren endowed with long life; cows, horses and elephants by the thousand; boundless wealth; limitless kingdom; supreme sovereignty of an empire . . . eternal life till the end of the cycle! . . . The most lovely damsels; Fleets of chariots wonderfully equipped and bedecked; troupes of musicians and dancers! Whatever you choose you shall have, and anything else also besides! Only don't ask about the mystery of the soul.

Nachiketa: Lord! I am indebted to you beyond words for all the love you are showering on me. But none of these can satisfy me. They are all but transient enjoyments and only wear away man's energies. . . . What shall I do with the troupes of damsels, music and dance? Besides, having seen you and become the recipient of your grace, I have no more fear of death! And, having come to you—the Lord of immortals—should I ask of you these paltry, mortal enjoyments? . . . No Deva! No! My heart is set on the attainment of immortality only.

Yama: (Delighted beyond measure) Blessed are you Nachiketa! Marvellous indeed! Only one or two out of a hundred million give up the pleasant and choose thus the path of the good. You have conquered the ocean of enjoyment in which others sink. What a steadfastness for the attainment of truth! Fortunate is the teacher to get such a wonderful pupil! . . . (Aside) The most blessed moment of my life seems to have arrived! (To Nachiketa) Come, my dear! I shall instruct you about the Supreme Spirit—the means of attaining immortality—which you are thirsting after.

(Takes him towards the rock)

CURTAIN.

(To be continued)

BEYOND THE ATOMS AND ELECTRONS

S. N. RAO

All that was hitherto considered basic and fundamental in the structure of our physical universe, has cracked when the atom was split, and finally collapsed when it is found that the atom is not an atom of matter at all, but a surprisingly complex system of whirling forces, of electric charges rapidly rotating round a neutral charge. Energy has ousted matter from its 19th century pedestal. The universe has become essentially vitalistic, ceased to be materialistic, and has become a huge complex of vitalistic movements, vibrations and pulsations. All cosmic energy is one; its forms are many. Not one form of energy is generated or created; it is only made manifest. All ultimate constituents like protons and electrons are only positive and negative charges revolving round each other or flying away from each other. Time and Space, in which all this is eternally going on, are mere abstractions resulting from that cosmic movement, because all movement and all phenomena must have particular time and a particular locus. Time and Space are projections, inevitable accompaniments in the world of movements, and are therefore relative to each type of movement. There is only one fundamental fact, and that is, motion, movement or energy by whatever name we call it. In this movement, there is formation, grouping and arrangement of forces or energy movements at various levels and in various shapes. At some levels and under suitable conditions, this movement gives rise to what we call life, mind and consciousness. These do come from somewhere, we do not know, and enter into that movement. Our universe is thus an energy-potential itself in manifest and unmanifest conditions. We do not see the unmanifest. What we see as gaseous, fluid and solid forms is the manifest condition of that energy-potential. In this picture, matter as we hitherto under-

stood, has lost its material content. Materiality is only an acquired quality, an appearance assumed by that cosmic energy itself in its cohesive and adhesive aspect. Neither the atom nor its nucleus is material. Each is a coherent system of energy movement, a system of regulated forces in marvellous patterns and formations. One Prof. Gotch writes:

The universe is throughout one seething welter of modes of motion, playing in space, playing in ether, playing in all existing matter, playing in all living things, playing therefore in ourselves. This eternal motion never ceases, is never dissipated, and is never created; it simply exists.

This cosmic play is unthinkable without intelligence and purpose at every point in the cosmic field.

This all-pervasive cosmic movement is the primary cause, and that cause is always present in all its effects, namely, in all evolution, in all existences, in Time and Space, and in Life itself. The idea underlying all these terms is the same, and is better expressed by the more comprehensive term 'manifestation'. They are all movements; forms only are different. There is always a beginning, a development and a growth, decay and disappearance, to every entity in manifestation. Time and Space govern and condition all phases of manifestation. Time, Space and Manifestation are thus ever-recurring cosmic trio, simultaneous both in their beginning and in their end, and are inseparable at all points. Neither the one nor the other is everlasting. Time must have a stop, Space must have a limit. Manifestation must have an end. Such is the structure of Cosmic-Continuum in its totality. It is a triplex of Time, Space and Manifestation. Space-time Continuum of Modern Physics is incomplete, and not a whole. As we conceive of Time, so we con-

ceive of Space; as we conceive of Space and Time, so we conceive of Manifestation, all the three limited by their dimensional quality. Time is a moving duration from one moment to another; Space is a moving direction from one point to another; Manifestation is a moving existence from its beginning to its end. In all the three, there is movement, and on either side of that movement, there is the Motionless. On either side of duration, there is the Timeless; on either side of an extension, there is the Spaceless; on either side of existence, there is the Unmanifest. Every entity in Manifestation has this dimensional and relative existence only, and that existence is always the middle with the Unmanifest on either side (Gita, II. 28). The concept of the Unmanifest is beyond the range of Physics, not accessible to scientific analysis and experiment. When we use the terms 'Motionless, Timeless, and Spaceless', we mean the Unmanifest only. We must posit the Unmanifest, because no manifestation is possible from a void and nothingness. The Unmanifest cannot therefore be a void. It is the source of all that was, all that is, and all that will be (Gita, VIII. 18). We do not know what this Unmanifest is. But, what and where can be the source of the emergence of the Manifest which is our phenomenal world? Either in Science, in Philosophy or Religion, in all our research, we must always posit or assume a pre-existing something. Here, that pre-existing something is the Unmanifest.

What is the nature of this cosmic movement? It is cyclic, concentric and rotational. Because of the concentric nature of the movement, what we call the force of gravitation arises and sustains the universe as one system in rhythm and harmony. It is the same concentric and rotational movement that generates all the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the universe. It is because of the operation and opposition of these forces that all integration and disintegration, all transformation and transmutation of matter or energy take place. The result is the

phenomenal universe as we see it. On this view, we have a satisfactory explanation why all celestial bodies are circular or oval, and their movement is also circular and oval. Even the curvature of Space arises because of this concentric movement. Curvature is only an appearance; Space is neither flat nor curved. Even when we take the concept of Time, it is not an arrow; it is also a movement, and that movement is cyclic. Our time-sense is always relative to a point of reference. Whether it is local, solar or sidereal time, it is always measured by the apparent rising and setting of our Sun, and that measurement is itself conditioned by the rotational movement of our circular globe.

If all motion and movement in the universe is concentric, there must be a centre, a cosmic centre. Where is that centre? What is that centre? It cannot be a geometrical centre with a fixed point and a fixed circumference. Swami Vivekananda once declared that 'Cosmic centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere'. This is a very revealing and illuminating statement. It contains a cosmic truth, a cosmic law. Every point in space is a cosmic centre, and every such centre is a centre of cosmic energy. These cosmic centres can have no circumference, because space is unending and has no boundary. What is it that moves in this cosmic movement? It is cosmic energy. What causes that movement? It is Cosmic Consciousness. What is this Cosmic Consciousness? We do not know. Physics too does not know. We do know, however, that each one of us has consciousness. We therefore move and have our being. Obviously, consciousness in man is individual, personal and limited. Cosmic consciousness on the other hand, must be universal, impersonal and limitless. The difference between the two appears to be one of degree, and not of essence. Cosmic Consciousness is probably the Unseen Power that causes all movement, the Eternal Light that illumines all cosmic energy. Without that illumination, there

could be no movement and no evolution. All evolution begins when the Light from that Consciousness flows into cosmic matter (Gita, XIV. 3). Life, mind and intelligence are higher stages in that evolution. When these stages are reached, the laws of Physics cease to have any application, and we enter into a world of Physics, a world which is beyond Physics, beyond the atoms and electrons. It is a different world order. It is the world of ideas and ideals, of values about which Physics knows nothing.

The world of Physics does not contain the totality of the universe; it is only a part purely on the matter-energy plane. Exploring the atom which is infinitely small, exploring the world of stars which is infinitely big, is a research which is undoubtedly necessary and has its value. But it is all on matter-energy plane. Evolution is not merely physical; it is psychical and spiritual as well. All evolution, past, present and future, is the totality of cosmic movement, which is the totality of cosmic action. (Gita, VIII. 3). In that totality, evolution is both a process and a progress, a development from the physical to the psychical and then to the spiritual. Man does not live purely on a physical plane. We may get some thrills from Sputniks, but they do not give us peace. We do not even need Sputniks for space-travel. We are already space-travelling all the time. We are simultaneously at rest and in motion. We are not aware of it; we do not even feel it; only, we are not tied up in space suits and imprisoned in oxygenated cabins. It is only in the world of values and in the realisation of those values that man can find his peace and happiness. All fundamental values in life, like truth, beauty and goodness, and all essential constituents of human existence, opposites like good and evil, love and hate, delight and boredom, they all belong to a different world order inaccessible to scientific analysis and experiment. And yet, they form a very significant part of the world we live in. Neither Science nor Religion, nor Philosophy

can explain the why and how of many things; for example, the variegated colours of a peacock, the spontaneous nesting of a robin, the fascinating song of a nightingale, the free flowering of a plant, or the self-luminosity of a glow-worm. They are the wonders of the universe, constituting the joy of creation. Science has its limitations; Religion has its limitations; Philosophy has its limitations. In all the three, there is an unending search to know the ultimate reality of things. In the process of that search, we may see the aid of Science, or of Religion, or of Philosophy, or of all the three.

And again, our universe is not only a world of movements, it is also a world of relationships, reciprocal and mutual. Not one entity can live or exist by itself and for itself. Sun and stars, man and woman, plant and animal are all inter-related and inter-dependent. The totality of existence is a co-operative totality, a co-operative co-existence. Because of this inexorable law of reciprocity, the universe is a system, an order and a unity. We find that order and unity at every level, from the atom upwards. At the atom level, we find that order and unity in the limited number of electrons revolving round a central proton. We find it in the world of stars and planets held together by force of gravitation. We find it in the human body in the inter-relation of its organs and the integration of their working. It is not a mere physical relationship; it is psychical and spiritual as well. If we are aware of this fact in all cosmic movements, if we can visualise that every point in the universe is a centre of Cosmic Consciousness stirring all cosmic energy in marvellous patterns and formations, if we can realise that consciousness in each one of us is of the same nature as the Cosmic Consciousness, though apparently isolated and individuated because of the adjuncts and the environment in which it is temporarily encased, that knowledge and that awareness will slowly reveal to us the centre to which we are moving and the goal to which we are striving.

चरैवेति

FROM MIDNIGHT THREATS TO MORNING PEACE

It is good to be trained in sports from childhood. It improves our physique and gives a healthy turn to our very outlook on life. The first lesson we learn is that foul play is evil. Is it creditable either to ourselves or to our team to break the leg of an opponent who happens to be more skilful than we are? Sportsmanship implies the acceptance of fair play alone under all circumstances. To be defeated in an honest game is never a source of shame. Rather it is an incentive to greater and better exertion the next time. Speed, vigour, cool-headedness, team spirit, appreciation of the excellence of others,—these are valuable assets for the whole of our life. What is needed is a conscious linking of the attitude of the sportsman, acquired in student days, with the activities of the adult stage in the house, office, society, nation and the wider world outside. All serious clashes come when ideas, opinions, emotions, and values of one individual or group are pitched against those of others. In such clashes what is it that wins? It looks as if duplicity, intrigues, arrogance, and organized brute force are the main factors that assure victory. They do seem to succeed here and there. But even that semblance is only for a short time. On the contrary, it is the force of love, of service, of protection that ultimately prevails.

Do we not remember the dramatic episode, narrated in the *Mahābhārata*, of Arjuna and Aśvatthāmā employing the supreme weapon, the Brahmāstra, upon each other? The story says that eminent sages saw unprecedented

destruction imminent. And they quickly interposed their spiritual energy between the rapidly approaching missiles. It was then asked why they had resorted to such a rash and extreme step. Earlier heroes had known this weapon but had never actually hurled them so recklessly! Aśvatthāmā had to confess that he had done it in anger and that he did not know the method of withdrawing it. Arjuna explained that he had used it only as a defence. Being more proficient, he forthwith neutralized both! In fact, before shooting his own, he had meditatively guided it, expressly mentioning that it was sent out only "for the safety of the Preceptor's son", then his own safety and the safety of everything else! That which is sincerely and resolutely aimed at protecting the highest values of all, irrespective of friend or foe, is bound to triumph over that which is planned on a less comprehensive scale. Then what to speak of those efforts which seek only the wanton destruction of physical entities, ignoring the mental forces that for the time may be using them as convenient vehicles?

Looked at from this angle, real success in life is seen to depend upon widening our outlook so as to get a lasting and convincing vision of the One unifying and saving Principle behind the manifold entities and clashing interests of the world of common sense. We may call it God-vision, if we like, provided we understand its all-inclusiveness. Or we may call it by any other term, Liberation, Wisdom, Illumination, Supreme Insight and so on. It is not words that matter,

¹ Pūrvam-ācārya-putrāya, tato'nantaram-ātmane, Bhrātṛnām caiva sarveṣām svastī'uktā parantapah . . . Utsasarja śivam dhyāyan-nastram astreṇa śāmyatām. Aṣṭika Parva, xiv. 5-6. Nāna-śāstra-vidāḥ pūrve ye vyatītā mahārathāḥ Naidat-astram manuṣyeṣu taiḥ prayuktam kathamcana. Ibid, 16.

but their content. How to attain it? Surely through the inward purity born of systematic discipline, *Sādhana*. Everyone needs it,—parents, teachers, officers, politicians, military leaders, as much as devotees and philosophers. Clashes will occur even after the attainment of such vision. But there will be a difference. When Bhīṣma takes the field against Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, is there no difference between their encounter and the squabbles, machinations, and aggressions of the selfish and the greedy? That alone is the true attainment when the vision of the ALL remains clear and intimate even when opinions or deadly weapons come into violent clash.

Let us now have a final look at the ways in which Karkatī's purified self remained shining steadily while mental and physical forces, emanating from herself and others, played around it in various inter-related, concentric and amazing patterns. First in her luminous field of awareness appeared the Creator to bestow on her his grace as well as the boon corresponding to her earlier desire to get back her giant shape. Discrimination spontaneously sprang into position within her. Said she to herself: 'It is true that for a long time I let myself be swayed by my own delusions, like a silly girl by ghosts imagined by herself. But now I know in its entirety what is to be known. The web of doubts has been brushed aside. My discrimination is fully aglow. So what is it that I can gain from another?'² But how could her erstwhile thoughts fail to take their

legitimate physical form? So the Creator uttered his infallible words: 'Be corpulent once again, O daughter! Roam about for some time more as the giantess of these forests of the Snowy Mountain! Knowing Truth, as you do now, you will not injure creatures any more. You will soar high like clouds of the *śarat* season, radiant and inwardly free. Liberated in life, you will strive henceforth to keep the flame of discrimination steady in your physical frame. But you will also get into the midst of people down below and endeavour to awaken them to true knowledge. For it is the natural characteristic of the high-minded to try to uplift the ignorant. But if anyone refuses to turn to better ways when so helped, be sure he is born for his own destruction. You may eat him up as your legitimate food.'³ Acceptance being the normal reaction of the wise, Karkatī calmly received the Creator's ruling and looked on unperturbed when her pin-frame quickly shot out different limbs and flowered into her former shape and size.

Some time later, she entered the land of the Kirātas. There, at midnight, she came upon Prince Vikrama and his competent minister. They were out to destroy enemies to public safety, particularly the evil influence causing Viṣūcikā! Karkatī said to herself: 'I shall test these men. It may be that they are wise. In that case I shall learn something useful from them. Surely one who meets wise people and fails to put questions to them is the worst of creatures. He who seeks genuine felicity, fame or long life ought to worship illumined men by

² Etāvantam aham kālam avivekena yojitā
Sva-samkalpa-samutthena vetālen'eva bālīkā.
Pūrṇāsmi gata-sandehā, kim vareṇa karomyaham?
Jnātam jnātavyam akhīlam, śāntā sandeha-jālikā;
Sva-viveko vikasitah, kim anyena prayojanam? *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, Utpatti, lxxv.
³ Pinā bhava punaḥ śaile Hima-kānana-rākṣasi...
Bādhām vidita-vedyatvāt na ca loke kariṣyasi,
Antaḥ-suddhā spandavatī śaradī'vā'bhra-maṇḍali...
Jivan-muktatayā dehe sva-vivekaika-pālikā...
Gaccha Karkatī mūdham-tvam jnānenā'su'avabhodhaya;
Mūdhottāraṇam eveha svabhāvo mahatām iti... *Ibid*, lxxvi.

offering them what they want. Such must be preserved even by the sacrifice of one's life. Even Death can be made friendly through the healing virtues of contact with the wise. If I, a Rākṣasi, protect such, who will not take it as a model,—nay cherish the good like a pure garland of pearls conveying holy thrills to his own heart? Endowed with virtues, the embodied great sportfully move about. They soothe the afflicted with their holy contact,—like the full moon with her cooling beams diffused from the earth itself.⁴ If, however, these men are thick-headed, with no mental stuff to match their lotus eyes, I can, with a clean conscience, make a meal of them.'

She opened the battle with terrible shouts. But the men calmly retorted: 'Stop those roars and shouts. Come down to business; what is it that you want? Behave like wise men, speak and reason clearly. But show yourself first!' She said to herself: 'These

are really knowers of the Self. Their features, speech, all proclaim that.' She then made it a battle of wits and asked them a number of questions regarding Cosmic mind, putting them in a style of little 'riddles'. To her surprise and delight, the minister and the prince satisfactorily answered them and thus the night wore off! They became thick friends, and she gladly taught them the formula for removing the deadly Viṣūcikā,—her own former self!

The story ends by saying that for long she protected the Kirāta people, sometimes from the hills, at other times even by staying amidst them. In due course, her physical frame perished. She was then installed on the hill side as the well-known Deity, Kandarā, also as Amangalā or Mangalā, as we may choose to call her, looking at her dominant characteristics of earlier or later days.

भगवैवेति।

SUBANDHU

⁴ Tad-etau samparikṣye'ham...
Akṛtrimam sukham kīrtim āyus-cāl'ābhivānchātā
Sarvā'bhimata-dānena pūjaniyā guṇānvitāh...
Api jivita-dānena guṇinam paripālayet...
Guṇavat-sangamausadhyā mṛtyur-apyeti mitratām
Yatrā'ham api rakṣāmi rākṣasi guṇaśālinam
Tatrā'nyaḥ ko na kuryāt tam hr̥dī hāram ivā'malam?
Udāra-guṇa-yuktā ye viharanti dehinaḥ
Dharātalandavaḥ sangāt bhṛṣam śītalayanti te. *Ibid*, lxxvii.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

With the coming of independence the stress on simple life and austerity is lessening. Even if simplicity as a way of life is rejected, it is essential so long as the country does not make some tangible progress in supplying the goods of life to the suffering millions. The *Editorial* tries to show the importance of its practice by the better placed citizens of India.

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STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE

The lack of discipline among students is a serious problem that preoccupies the minds of the thinking section of the people. The Government also is seriously considering its remedies. We had occasion to comment appreciatively about the Madras proposal of non-involvement of students in active politics. But politics is not the whole cause of indiscipline of the youth. It is part of the general indiscipline throughout the country. With the employees of different concerns, governmental or otherwise, resorting to strikes and threats, exhibiting lack of discipline, the community is always agitated. This naturally has a disastrous effect on young people who also prefer to resort to these means to redress their grievances, real or imaginary. Many people hope that it is only a passing phase, but still something concrete should be done to remedy this sorry state of affairs, instead of depending upon chance. The root cause of general indiscipline is the loss of a sense of direction and idealism, which is lacking in elders too. With the abundance of contradictory ideas it is difficult for average young man to decide his course. The stabilizing effect of the family is lessening due to lack of amenities in middle class homes in the city. Teachers, too engrossed in their financial worry, constitute a mobile folk. They have lost the grip because the problem has taken a vast form overnight. Moreover, students are not very serious about a study which is often attacked and which gives no surety to their future employment.

To ensure full growth of boys and girls discipline is necessary. And that must be all round. When we think of discipline we immediately remember the physical aspect of it. This is more easy and result also is visible, but intellectual and spiritual disciplines are more difficult and their effects are less tangible. The school or college study itself with a little wide interest will do for intellectual discipline. As for spiritual dis-

cipline, it is really very difficult to introduce it, specially in our present thought atmosphere. How to inculcate the different virtues of honesty, sympathy, obedience, respect and the like is a problem. A faith in the higher order of life and in God may easily give these virtues as a bye-product. But in the secularising and atheistic atmosphere it is practically impossible fully to inculcate that faith. The training must begin early in life. There must be a religious atmosphere in the family and society. Then it will be automatic. To facilitate this, the spiritual potentiality of man must be recognized. The ideologies of Darwin, Freud and Marx have made man an automaton. To counteract this 'insectification of man' it is necessary to assert his divine heritage. All religions, specially Vedanta with its theory of unity of existence, may remind men of it. This spiritual training will have to be given from childhood onwards. Then it will be natural and spontaneous. Otherwise, if selfishness and animal nature of man are stressed, it will be impossible to inculcate the higher virtues which are essential to run a group life and the necessity of which has become more imperative in the present world situation.

To remedy this, various smaller groups are making efforts according to their capacity. But the task being vast and our old social institutions being disorganized, there is a necessity of the Government coming in in the field. And it has done so too. It is trying its best to inculcate discipline through different channels. The national discipline scheme introduced by Colonel Bhonsle is a significant move. The importance of it has been well recognized by the Planning Commission as is clear from its allotment of requisite funds for the scheme. Of course, the scheme being ambitious in introducing the programme throughout the country, will require much more funds. The efforts are in the right direction, for the scheme aims at dis-

cipline of different aspects of a child's life. Though 'physical training, through drills, parades and sports, is basic' to this discipline training, the movement also 'seeks to impart, consistent with the child's capacity to imbibe, through lectures, demonstrations and tours, a sense of tolerance and understanding; the spirit of give and take'. The discipline will be complete if some training is given for imbibing poise, truthfulness, devotion and the like through silent meditation, prayer, devotional singing, telling of ennobling stories and reading of biographies. Some institutions including a few branches of the Ramakrishna Mission are trying this method. The idea is to bring out the best in a child. After some time, it has been found, a group of boys themselves take the responsibility of even planning and conducting. One advantage of this system is that only willing guardians send their children to take part in them. The boys in their turn too continue as long as they like it, though problems thereby are no less. This spiritual discipline is essential. If the educational institutions or the Government do not do this, the responsibility naturally devolves on the society. We think sufficient awareness of the problem is there in the society to make some selfless workers come forward in every area to work for it.

The above schemes are more or less for younger boys and girls. The adolescent period is a greater problem. Something must be done for students in their teens. We are glad to note that a definite step is being taken for compulsory social service by all students, as Dr K. L. Shrimali, Union Minister for Education, announced recently:

* We are already working out a scheme for the whole country, such a scheme, embracing as it must, several lakhs of young people, is not easy to work out in details. ... Meanwhile, rural institutes could take the initiative in this matter and work out a scheme for compulsory social service for their students as a pilot project.

For the latter purpose a committee has been

formed. When the experimental stage is over we hope it will be made compulsory for all the teen-aged students at some stage or other. Over and above giving some discipline training and turning out some concrete work, it will help students feel that they have done something tangible, which urge often takes them to undesirable fields.

The above discipline trainings are for normal students. For delinquents specialized education will be necessary. Another dangerous youth problem not yet common in India is being reported now and then from some of the advanced countries where some reckless young men have become culprits engaged in all conceivable types of lawlessness. The new names coined for them in various countries, reports T. R. Fyvel in *Thought*, are 'Teddy Boys' in Britain, 'Half-Starke or the Half-Strong' in Germany, 'Skin-knutte or Leather-jackets' in Sweden, 'Tai-yozoku or Children of the Sun' in Japan, 'Stilyagi or Style-Boys' in Russia and 'Rebels without a cause' in America. This problem probably will have to be dealt with by the police and the social scientists. Of course, nobody can show the whole reason of this type of lawlessness. When all explanations are given, says the writer,

a residue of youthful lawlessness remain which cannot be easily explained. After all why should this lawlessness be so pronounce in the United States, Britain, Germany and Japan where urban standards of living are high rather than in countries with far worse slums and poverty? Above all, why should youthful cynicism and nihilism have become such a problem in Sweden, the wealthiest country in Europe, untouched by the war and with enviable welfare state institutions? ...

What seems clear, however, is that such gangs are found wherever in the rougher parts of London there is a concentration of public houses, cinemas, cafes and pin-ball machine saloons.

(*Thought*, Oct. 4, 1958.)

The writer mentions early failure and neglect in home and school, broken homes and prevalence of divorce as some of the

causes. But as all these are defects of detail he raises the main question :

Is there something to be remedied in the fundamental moral and cultural values of our society—our mid-20th century society? For on the one hand the hold of religion and the authority of the churches has been weakened, and so has parental authority. On the other hand the young, especially the big city young, are continually exposed to questionable influences; to the cynicism of the sensational press, the over-stimulation of too much cinema and television, the open eroticism which inspires much of our advertising and entertainment. Can it be wondered if some of the young, especially insecure young people, take these latter values as their ideal? That this may be the root cause is suggested by the fact that the problem of contemporary delinquency, not so much of ordinary criminality but of the aimless anti-social rebellion exemplified by Teddyboyism, is found not in the poorer countries where traditional society is still strong (as, by and large, in the Roman Catholic world), but in some of our most advanced states—in the United States, Britain, Germany, Sweden, Japan, and the like. In other words, the problem of the delinquent minority of youth is part of the problem: 'Whither the culture of our modern World?' a problem never solved, but always absorbing.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HINDUISM: Its meaning for the liberation of the spirit. By Swami Nikhilananda, New York — Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1958. Pages 196. Price \$ 4.

This book forms Volume XVII in the World Perspectives Series planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen as part of a programme to bring to the public short books in a variety of fields by the most distinguished contemporary thinkers. The purpose is to reveal basic trends in modern civilisation and to contribute to a deeper understanding of the inter-relation of man and the universe.

Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Rama, Krishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, gives in this book a brief account of Hinduism in both its theoretical and practical aspects. He

This observation of the writer is revealing and bespeaks of the urgency of religious training. Dr. Radhakrishnan recently stressed again on the imperative need of society to return to religion and recover faith. A noted Madras daily beautifully sums up his view in an editorial note thus :

The grand theme running through the very felicitous discourses that Dr. S. Radhakrishnan delivered in his all-too-brief stay in Madras City was the imperative need for a return to religion which alone could give meaning and purpose to life. He gave us the warning that the real values that sustained any society worth the name were spiritual and not material. Only the religious spirit could inspire men and women to right conduct and selfless endeavour. Dams and other mechanical and engineering projects should no doubt be implemented without delay in order to enable the people to get the simple necessities of life. And commerce and trade would increase the national wealth. But, Dr. Radhakrishnan pointed out, these constituted merely the outward shell which would collapse if the spirit within was neglected and allowed to decay. The Vice-President of the Indian Republic had, therefore, no hesitation in laying down that religious instruction should form a part—an important part—of our educational system.

(*The Hindu*, Oct. 14, 1958.)

observes: One cannot understand India without understanding Hinduism. If India gives up religion and takes exclusively to politics, science and technology to build her future, she will be courting disaster. All of her national activities must be inspired by religion. The ideas of Hinduism here presented on the nature of God, the soul, creation, ethics, spiritual disciplines, popular religious practices and inter-religious relations, all hang together and give an integrated view of life from its first wandering into the phenomenal world to its attainment of the journey's end.

The author gives to the reader a wonderful glimpse of the vast dimensions of the Hindu religion, how it is catholic towards all systems of religious and philosophical thought; how its

rituals and myths, besides quickening spiritual life, have enriched Indian art, architecture and literature; how its temples, priests and pilgrimages have kept Hinduism alive through the dark periods of her history; and finally how in the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna, the different trends of thought have found their harmonious fulfilment.

We shall do well to take note of what the author says in his foreword: 'one religion is not the enemy of another, but all religions are faced today by common enemies; scepticism, atheism and perhaps worst of all, serene indifference. Only if the religions of the world stand together, will they preserve themselves. In their survival, they will help to bring about a new manifestation of the world spirit for whose sake humanity is patiently bearing its present travail and uncertainty.'

'ANNA'

KENA UPANISHAD: By Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pages 40. Price 50 nP.

The booklet under review which forms the Jayanti Series No. 3 is a very valuable addition to the Vedanta Philosophy, based on Sri Sankara's commentary. It raises fundamental questions about the Supreme Self and answers them remarkably, elucidating the Truth that lies beyond all such queries. The learned author has handled the subject with such dexterity and skill that he has brought to bear on it his inherent capacity of being well understood.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

MIND AND ITS ANNIHILATION: By Kuber Ananda Rau, Ullal Gardens, Dongerkeri, Mangalore-3. Pages 20. Price 50 nP.

This small book deals with Mind in all its aspects. The author places before us a succinct survey of the power of the Mind and the part it plays towards the attainment of Moksha. He pleads for the practice and effort to realise what seems to be impossible. Only then does it become possible. Control the Mind, for it is the cause of bondage and release. This is the central theme of the book, which is well written and is worth a serious reading.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

TAMIL

SRIMAD KAMBA RAMAYANA VACHANAM: By Sri M. S. Subramania Iyer. Pp. 496. Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Price Rs. 5.

This is a marvellous rendering into easy prose of Kamban's immortal classic, in the Poet's own

words, on the model of Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, by a Tamil writer of great eminence and experience; and one may take it as amongst the most authentic versions of Kamba Ramayana, comprising all the Kandas upto Rama's Coronation. The author has skilfully interwoven into the story, the substance of nearly all the well-known stanzas; about 184 of them have been reproduced and translated,—all magic casements, opening on the pierian springs of what has rightly come to be known as "Kamba Rasa."

Kamban has literally grown out of Valmiki although a by no means laudable attempt is being made in Tamil Nad to belittle the one at the expense of the other, and for this purpose even scrap out Kamban's benedictory verse on Valmiki! But it is true to say that excepting for a few deviations, the Tamil poet has followed the main threads of Valmiki's narrative. In some contexts, like Sumitra's message to Lakshman and the first exchanges between Maruti and Rama and Lakshman, the words are almost a translation. In a word, Kamban's is Valmiki embellished and enriched with his own metaphors and metaphysics. Valmiki is a biographer concerned with the chronicling of events and of facts both pleasant and unpleasant. But to Kamban Rama is Param Purusha (as indeed even Sarabhangha regarded him in Valmiki) and the Absolute. Ram Nam is greater than Rama. Sampathy directs the assembled Vanaras to sing Ram Nam and lo! his wings grow (P. 283). Sita does not worry whether Hanuman is a Rakshasa or Deva; he is a friend, because just when she was about to immolate herself, "he has been uttering her Lord's name" (P. 317). Vali consoles Angada not to feel distressed at Rama's killing him; for he is the "remover of re-birth." To the astonished Sita, who could not conceive how he could have crossed the ocean, Maruti replies, (p. 322) 'Those who always think of your Lord's feet, can cross the ocean of Maya. Could I not jump over the sea in a trice?' 'The valour of thy arms I saw when you demolished Subahu and Maricha; the sanctity of your feet I now witness' exclaims Viswamitra when Ahalya is reclaimed by Rama.

Like Valmiki's Kamban's metaphors reflect his mood and musings. He was all for a life of renunciation, and like Sankara, set store by renunciation, as the only means to liquidate the bondage of earthly life. Thus Dasaratha says, (p. 73) 'Death is inevitable. It is a vast ocean, birth and death, which can be crossed only with the

ship of renunciation.' Again (at p. 149), 'The victim (of rebirth) caged in the prison of rebirth, can fly out of it only with the wing of asceticism.' 'Death stalks the land. Performing Dharma and renunciation of all attachments, alone protect the humans.' (P. 150). 'The lamp of life is lit with the ghee of good deeds. The wick is 'kala' or time. Just as the lamp is extinguished when the ghee and the wick are spent out, so death happens as soon as both the good deeds exhaust themselves and Time steps in.' (p. 150)

'With the advent of the seasons, the dark clouds disappeared even as Maya is extinguished on attaining Brahma jnana' (p. 263), 'Destiny is powerful', says Rama, 'My going to the forest is fate-ordained. If the river goes dry, it is not the fault of the river.' 'The waters of the river Sarayu filled in each lake and tank and pond, even as the Supreme Being though One, is called by different names by the different persuasions.' (P. 5) 'He who generates limitless devotion and love at sight, is verily a Bhagavan.' 'In Ayodhya, all were learned and well to do. Their learning was the seed, which grew into a tree with numerous branches of enquiry and discussion. Then the leaves, which represent austerity came forth, yielding the cherub, which was kindness and blossoming later as the full bloom flower of Dharma, yielding the fruit of enjoyment.' (p. 5) 'The youths guarded the sacrifices, as carefully and meticulously as the eyelids protect the eyes.' (p. 36) 'Rama, when told of his banishment felt as free as the two bullocks unyoked from a heavily laden cart.' The similes are not always heavy. In the hell conjured up by Bharata a place is reserved for those who charge compound interest on loans. (p. 130)

Vali's castigation of Rama is one of Kamban's highlights; the irony of it was devastating. 'In Ayodhya you gave up the throne to your younger brother and repaired to the forest and thereby made your father die. Here, in the forest, you have killed the elder brother and crowned the younger.'

Rama alludes to Sita's sweet words of speech thus: 'Brahma first created the flute. Then he made the Vina, then the squirrel and the parrot, the baby's lisping numbers and finally Sita's speech.' (p. 274)

Kamban deviates from Valmiki in his picturization of the love episode of Sita and Rama (p. 33-35). Bharata castigates his mother before Guha (p. 142) and not in Bharadwaja asrama.

Indrajit's exaltation of Rama and Lakshman before Ravana and exhortation to him to give up Sita (p. 452) and Vibhishana's account of Maruti's valour at Lanka city in his first visit to the astonished Rama, are the other instances. The mortification of Parasurama was one of the mighty feats of Rama, but Valmiki does not mention it subsequently on any occasion. The gap is filled in by Kamban who refers to it all the time he recounts Rama's valour.

The book ranks as the most outstanding work in Tamil in recent years, and merits recognition by the State as such. The printing and get up enhance its value. One hopes that it will be translated into English and all the regional languages at not distant date.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

KANNADA

AITAREYOPANISHAD: By Swami Adidevananda. Published by the President, Sri Ramakrishnashrama, Mysore. Pp. 40, Price 50 nP.

MANDUKYOPANISHAD (with Gaudapadakarika): By Swami Adidevananda. Published by the President, Sri Ramakrishnashrama, Mysore. Pp. 116, Price Rs. 1.50.

TAITTIRIYOPANISHAD: By Swami Adidevananda. Published by the President, Sri Ramakrishnashrama, Mysore. Pp. 118, Price Rs. 1.50.

The Upanishad under review is the sixth flower in the 'Upanishanmale' or 'Garland of Upanishads' that the Ramakrishnashrama, Mysore, is placing before the Kannada-knowing people. These have been greatly applauded by the press and the public alike and welcomed by all interested students of the ancient religious lore as fulfilling a need keenly felt. Besides presenting a crisp conspectus of the respective Upanishad in the introduction, every book is flanked with a gist of the commentary on it by one Sri Valshnavite commentator. This feature helps the reader to know the standpoint of another school of Vedanta in juxtaposition with that of Sankara's, according to whose commentary the texts are annotated. None can dispute the relevance of this juxtaposition in these days of religious harmony.

Unlike other Upanishads, the dignified cadence of this Upanishad lends itself to chanting, and hence intonation marks have been given to facilitate those who are eager to learn it.

The printing and format of the book are fine

as in the foregone ones. Slowly but surely we hope the series will be completed. A. C.

LALITASAHASRANAMA (with commentary): By Swami Adidevananda. Published by the President, Sri Ramakrishnashrama, Mysore. Pp. 286, Price Rs. 4.

With the Navaratri festival — when the divine Mother is worshipped joyfully all over India — only a few days ahead, the publication of this book cannot be adequately appreciated. A book of this kind endued as it is with several merits ought to find its way into every home in Karnataka. The compact and scholarly introduction sets forth the importance of Sakti-worship with its subtle esoteric significance, the story of the origin of the thousand names of Lalita and their profundity, and the special light thrown by the

commentary of Bhaskararyamakhi. Then follows the first part of the Sahasranama serving as the background. The names are first given in the form of Slokas followed by explanatory notes according to the commentary. Then follow in succession a list of the thousand names, the *Trisatistotra* and another list and the famous *Syamaladandakam*. All these features blend beautifully to give an overall idea of the worship of the divine Mother. No need, of course, to repeat that as in the case of other works published from this Ashrama, this book too is neatly printed and attractively got up. As Sri M. Govinda Pai, Poet-Laureate of Kannada Literature, characterizes it, it is 'an exceedingly good and useful edition of that great Stotra which is so famous in our religious literature.'

A. C.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, NARENDRAPUR

REPORT FOR 1956 & 1957

Started in 1943 in 18 Jadulal Mullick Road, Calcutta as a Students' Home, the Ashrama had a phenomenal growth during the last few years. Recently it has been shifted to a place called Narendrapur, 10 miles from Calcutta, occupying an area of about 75 acres. The Students' Home had 189 students in 1957, the majority of whom were displaced persons. The residential multi-purpose school was started this year with 80 students in class IX. A residential degree college with only honours courses will be started soon. Along with the education and religious training the students receive training in Dairying, Pisciculture, Bee-rearing and Poultry-farming also. To spread education amongst the masses, the Ashrama is conducting the Institute of Social Education and Recreation which, through its ten centres situated mostly in rural areas, is helping to promote adult literacy and social education. In 1957 the daily average in Adult Literacy section was 369 and the number of illiterate adults made literate was 140. The Vivekananda Social Welfare Centre is engaged in various kinds of welfare work in slum areas in North Calcutta. It runs a Pre-Basic school, a Basic school as well as two adult education centres, a co-operative society and a charitable dispensary.

The original buildings in Jadulal Mullick Road are going to be shortly disposed of.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION TUBERCULOSIS SANATORIUM, RANCHI

REPORT FOR 1957

The institution was started in 1951 with 32 beds. At present, with its 177 beds, it occupies a recognised position among the Tuberculosis Sanatoria in the country.

It is situated on a picturesque plot of land in Bihar at an altitude of 2,100 feet. In 1957, 303 patients were treated, including 53 patients who were treated free of all charges. As to expansion during the year, an annexe to accommodate 10 beds and a new ward to accommodate 6 beds were completed; construction of the new kitchen store, laboratory and quarters for workers was begun. The proposed expansion of increase in the number of free beds, a proper after-care and rehabilitation centre, a suitable building for accommodating ex-patients, when they come here for their check-up and an infirmary for the incurable T.B. patients, a small Indoor General Hospital for the benefit of the staff and the members of their family and so on, and specially Ex-patients' Colony deserve attention of sympathisers. The management appeals for funds for the running of the Sanatorium and for its expansion.

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF HAWAII

In August 1958, Swami Vividishananda of Vedanta Society, Seattle, Washington, visited Honolulu, Hawaii, having been invited to be the guest of the Vedanta Society of Hawaii. During his stay he carried on Vedantic work by conducting lectures and classes, by giving individual instruction, and by conducting daily meditation sessions and vesper services. Four lectures were delivered to the public at the Y.W.C.A. building on 'Yoga—Its Deeper Implications', 'Power and Peace in Meditation', 'Subconscious Mind and Superconscious Vision', and 'Man's Destiny and Reincarnation'. Also he addressed a public audience sponsored by the Baha'i Assembly in connection with a religious institute programme. He participated in a symposium on the subject of 'Religion as Experience' presenting the Vedantic viewpoint together with Buddhist and Christian ministers who in turn presented their respective viewpoints. It was a very interesting event attended by a lively and attentive audience.

At the termination of his stay Swami Vividishananda was joined by Swami Pavitrananda who was on his way to his Vedanta Center in New York on a return trip from India. Swami Pavitrananda was honoured by a reception where he spoke, answering the many questions of students.

THIRD EAST-WEST PHILOSOPHERS' CONFERENCE

In an attempt to apply the work and results of the East-West Philosophers' Conferences held at the University of Hawaii in 1939 and 1949 to the general area of practical, social thought and action, the University of Hawaii will conduct a Third East-West Philosophers' Conference from June 22 to July 31, 1959, at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, Hawaii. The theme of the conference is 'East-West Philosophy in Practical Perspective'. The purpose of the conference is 'to consider the practical implications of comparative philosophy for cultural institutions as a basis of world understanding and co-operation'.

The unique significance of this conference lies in the belief that real understanding can be achieved only through knowledge of the fundamental conviction, of the pupils of the East and West, in the effort to explore the philosophical basis of world understanding comprehensively and intensively, and in the attempt to promote more comprehensive perspective in the field of

social philosophy as well as in the more technical areas of metaphysics and methodology.

The work of the conference will be divided into six one-week sections as follows:

1. The Relation of Philosophical Theories to Practical Affairs.
2. Natural Science and Technology in Relation to Cultural Institutions and Social Practice.
3. Religion and Spiritual Values.
4. Ethics and Social Practice.
5. Legal, Political, and Economic Philosophy.
6. Conspectus of Practical Implications for World Understanding and Co-operation.

In conjunction with the conference eight special courses will be offered in the Summer Session of the University of Hawaii—two in Western Philosophy, three survey courses in Asian philosophy (Buddhist philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy) and three comparative courses (Philosophy of Religion, Legal and Political Philosophy, and Ethics and Social Philosophy).

For further information write Charles A. Moore, Director, East-West Philosophers' Conference, University of Hawaii, Honolulu 14, Hawaii.

OBITUARY

We announce with deep sorrow the passing away of Swami Sekharananda at the age of 71, after a short illness. Born in 1887 as the fourth son of Sri Krishnapillai Asan and Nangeli Devi of Aranmula, a village in Travancore, the Swami was known as Raman Pillay in his pre-monastic days. After the completion of his studies in the school, he was employed in an office for some time. In 1918 he joined the Tiruvalla Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama and was initiated into Sannyasa by Swami Nirmalanandaji in 1923. He worked for a long time in the Quilandy Ashrama and started the Sevashrama at Calicut. For some years he worked in the Kaladi centre also. From 1951-55 he was the President of the Tiruvalla group of Ashramas. When he had an attack of T.B. in 1955 he was treated in the Trivandrum Sevashrama Hospital. He was an unassuming monk of simple habits and a sincere worker. The Ramakrishna Order is poor by his loss, which resulted after a few days' fever. He was removed to a nursing home at Mavelikkara. He was aware of his approaching death and was consciously getting ready for it. He breathed his last at 2 a.m. on Saturday, the 27th September, '58. May his soul rest in Peace!

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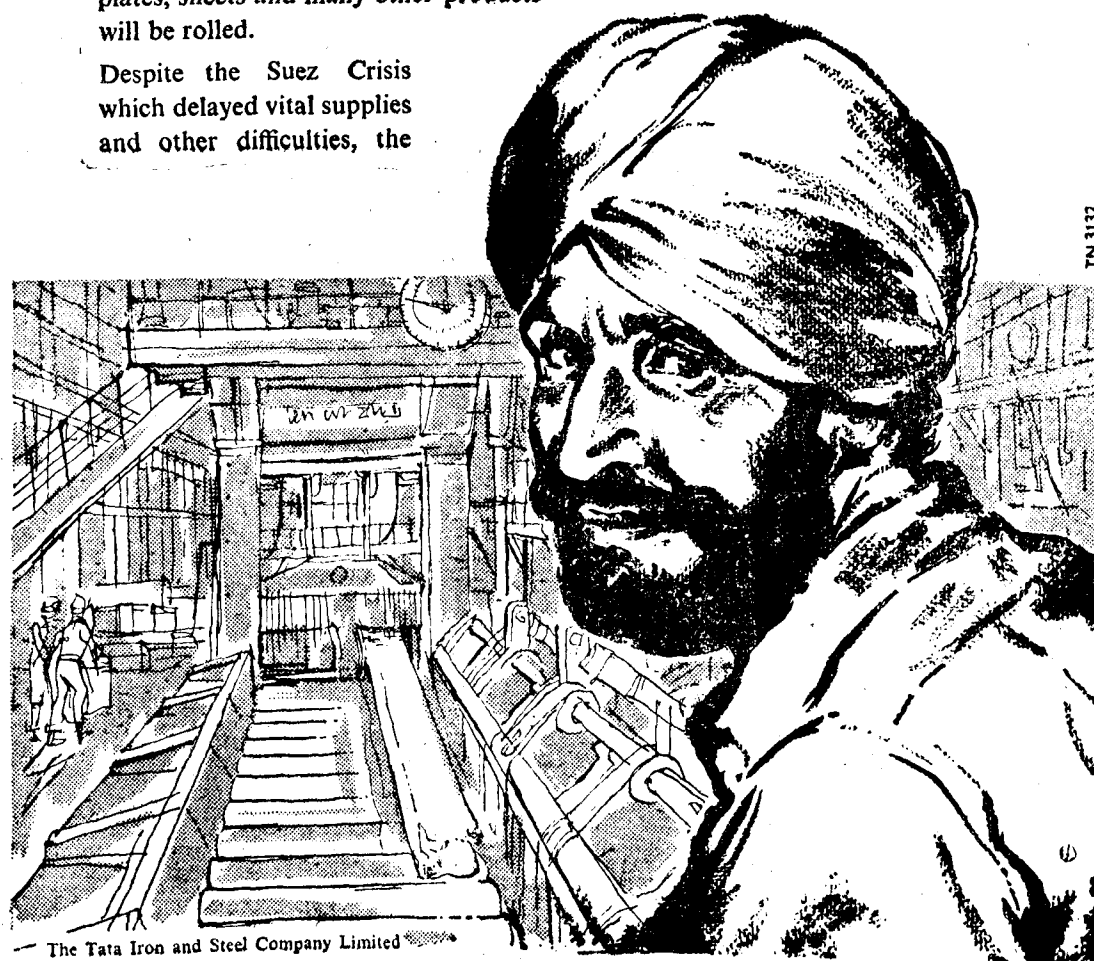
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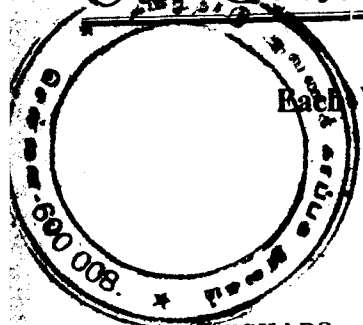
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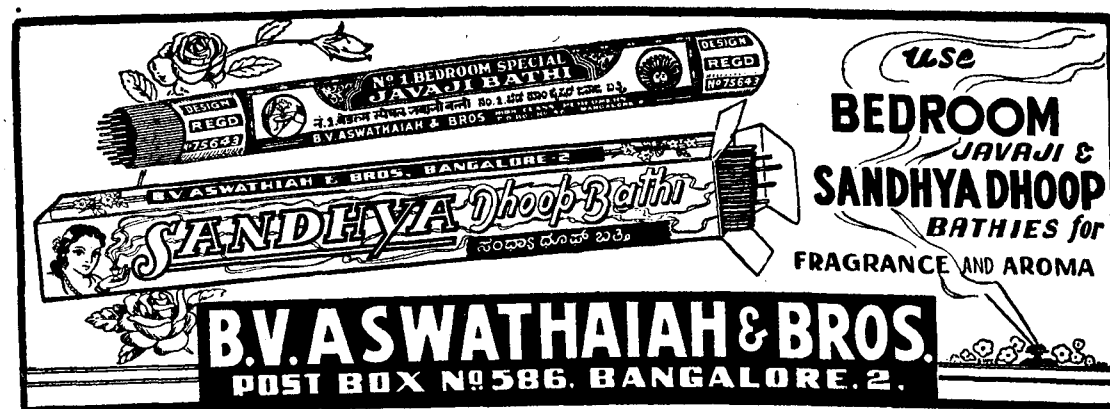
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VOL. XLV

DECEMBER 1958

No. 8

WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA FROM FORM TO FORM DIVINE

"God is One; His names and Forms are Many."

I, John, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice saying: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and what thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia.'

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his hand upon me saying to me: 'Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.'

(The Revelation of St. John, 9-18)

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that one day looking intently on a picture of the child Jesus sitting on his mother's lap and thinking his extraordinary and pure life, he felt as if the picture became living and effulgent. Rays of light coming forth from mother and Child, entered into his heart and changed for three days all ideas of his mind. At the end of the third day, walking under the Panchavati, the Master saw a marvellous God-man of very fair complexion coming towards him. The Master seeing the extraordinary divine expression of that handsome face, wondered who he was, when from his heart came with a ringing sound the words: "Ishamasi! Jesus the Christ, the great Yogi, the loving Son of God, who gave his heart's blood to deliver the beings from sorrow and misery!" Jesus then embraced the Master and disappeared into his body; the Master entered into ecstasy, and remained identified for some time with the Omnipresent Saguna Brahman.

(Great Master, p. 299, 300.)

1958

THE GITA IMPERATIVES

The Vailuntha Ekadasi, the day on which Bhagavan Sri Krishna gave His Gita message, falls this month. It is a memorable day for the entire humanity, for it was really the people of all the lands who were addressed by Sri Krishna through Arjuna. His message was valuable in the past but it has acquired a greater value now, for it is a message of hope and strength. Life in the contemporary world is full of many threats. The problem modern man faces is global in character. Factors unpredictable and uncontrollable are often involved therein. As a result, man is apt to be diffident. This outlook spreads to other departments of life too. A negative attitude towards the affairs of life becomes dominant. Hence is the imperative necessity of cultivating a positive thinking. It may not be possible to control the external trends by an individual or a group. But there is no meaning in extending its effects to other walks of life. This can at least be resisted by individuals. On its essential necessity Swami Vivekananda once said :

No negative, all positive, I am, God is, everything is in me. Be conscious and bring it out.

Anxiety is mental, often its root is in our pessimistic thinking. Even when the social condition or world situation is not favourable, we must practise a constructive outlook to keep our life going, for it minimises much of the draining off of our vital energy. So Swamiji says :

We should cultivate the optimistic temperament, and endeavour to see the good that dwells in everything. If we sit down and lament over the imperfection of our bodies and minds, we profit nothing ; it is the heroic endeavour to subdue adverse circumstances that carries our spirits upwards.

Cultivating a spiritual attitude towards life will help us much in achieving hope, calmness and poise. God is the sheet-anchor of our life. If we link our life to Him, it will be easier for us to defy the feeling of uncertainty and the resulting worry. Even physical extinction will not be able to scare us if we really can convince ourselves of the immortal nature of our soul. The Vedantic realization is the realization of one's identity with the indestructible Atman. Even a glimpse of it will dispel all fear. Hence the Upanishads proclaimed :

The knot of the heart is cut asunder, all doubts are dispelled and his karmas perish, when the higher and lower Brahman has been realised. (*Mundaka U.* 2. 2. 8.)

When we say this we do not mean that there is no existence of the cause of fear. It is there and it is real. People will have to try individually and collectively to remove it. But many improvements are not possible within the span of a man's life. Then what idea will sustain him and release him from tension ? An attitude of detachment can only do it. The detachment idea is a special contribution of the Gita. In various ways it explains the philosophical attitude to be cultivated for the purpose.

A bold attitude towards life is the gift of our scriptures. As Swamiji says :

It is only in our scriptures that this adjective is given to the Lord—*Abhih*, *Abhih*. We have to become *Abhih*, fearless, and our task will be done.

Gita is a mine of strength. Bhagavan Sri Krishna exhorts man through Arjuna to shed all his nervousness and cowardice and fight the battle of life, boldly but calmly. So strength is what is necessary, said Swami Vivekananda :

Thinking all the time that we are diseased will not cure us ; medicine is neces-

sary. Being reminded of weakness does not help much. Give strength and strength does not come by thinking of weakness all the time. The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness but thinking of strength.

And again :

Whatever you believe, that you will be. If you believe yourselves to be sages, sages you will be tomorrow. There is nothing to obstruct you.

Thoughts must be met by thoughts which have great influence on us. If we change our thoughts, we can radically change our life. To effect that change we must follow the imperatives of the scriptures and for that we must have faith. As the Gita says, 'Man consists of his faith ; he verily is what his *sraddha* is', 'yo yacchsraddhah sa eva sah' (xvii. 3). Through faith we get clarity of vision, peace of mind and vitality of life. Our happiness and effectiveness depend upon the thoughts we think. Hence is the urgency of changing our thought patterns. We must throw out unhelpful thoughts, thoughts that create unhappiness, fear, jealousy and the like. If thought is a suction, if our thought regarding others effect us, we must think only good thoughts, thoughts of goodwill, love and sympathy. Many of us might have developed the habit of complaining, grumbling or finding fault with others. We must recondition our thoughts to gain health, balance and happiness. It is the findings of modern psychology that a vast number of people become sick because of their thoughts, full of resentment and illwill.

Holy words have wonderful power. There is no limit to the creative force of an active idea. So it is better to commit the slokas containing potent ideas to memory and repeat them until they are indelibly printed on the subconscious mind. By holding the faith thought, the positive thought, an atmo-

sphere propitious to success is generated. It will do good to us if we follow the meditational practice of burning all sinful thoughts or we may drop out one by one every destructive thought, every fear, every worry, then think the waves of bliss permeating the body and mind and lastly fill the mind with the thoughts of God.

As the Gita passages are charged with special power, it will be very useful to soak our mind with a few ideas contained in some slokas which may be described as Sri Krishna's commandments or the Gita imperatives. That can easily be done by repeating the slokas now and then on appropriate occasions. These are the words of the Bhagavan Himself. For centuries they have been repeated by thousands of devotees and holy men. The latter fact itself is enough to charge a passage with a special power. If repeated with devotion our mind can feel this power more easily. Schooled for centuries with the idea of Gita's holiness, we can easily be brought into the proper mood. So it is not a drawback that we do not repeat the idea in our mother tongue. Of course, it will be necessary to know the meaning of particular couplets chosen for our purpose. There are scores of editions in different languages and we can get at their meaning easily.

Among our scriptures the Gita is most widely read and repeated. The *parayana*, the methodical reading itself is capable of creating a spiritual mood of devotion and poise in us. If it is done with understanding the result will be better still. It is true that scriptures should be used as guidebooks, as something like a Railway Time Table, as a thinker once said. But even reading without understanding but with devotion will create an atmosphere which can render a calmness to the mind. What spiritual realization devotion all

alone gives can be seen from an anecdote of Sri Chaitanya mentioned in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. When Sri Chaitanya went on a pilgrimage to South India he saw a devotee hearing the reading of the Gita and profusely shedding tears. He asked him afterwards what he liked therein. The devotee informed that he did not understand the meaning but whenever he listened to the reading of the Gita he saw Sri Krishna standing on the chariot and giving His message to Arjuna.

But here we are advocating positive thinking by soaking the mind with scripture passages. So an understanding of the meaning will be necessary. How many people have been comforted by the Gita passage like 'Kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati', 'Arjuna, know it for certain, my devotee never perishes' (ix. 31). It works like a tonic to a despondent soul.

A few more such passages applicable to different situations of our life may be noted.

It is our common experience that often we feel unequal to our task. As a result, we become diffident. Arjuna had the same feeling on seeing his strong opponents as well as relatives on both sides ready to kill one another. And he said to Sri Krishna :

Seeing, O Krishna, these my kinsmen gathered here eager for fight, my limbs fail me, and my mouth is parched up. I shiver all over, and my hair stands on end. The bow Gandiva slips from my hand, and my skin burns. (I. 28-29)

Then smiled the Lord and exhorted Arjuna with the famous words: '.... Klaibyam masma gamah Partha naitat tvayi upapadyate...'

In such a crisis, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Arya-like, disgraceful and contrary to the attainment of heaven? Yield not to

unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies! (II. 2-3)

These lines are charged with such power that they can raise us too from our drooping spirit and infuse in us enthusiasm, courage and hope..

The Lord then explained the world process and said that Arjuna's opponents were already killed by their karma, Arjuna was only to be an instrument, 'Nimittamatram bhava savyasacin'.

Therefore do thou arise and acquire fame. Conquer the enemies, and enjoy the unrivalled dominion. Verily by Myself have they been already slain; be thou merely an apparent cause, O Arjuna. (XI. 33)

It is God's plan that sets forth everything, so one must work detached. So Krishna says :

Renouncing all actions to Me, with mind centred on the Self, getting rid of hope and selfishness, fight,—free from (mental) fever. (III. 30)

Therefore, cutting with the sword of knowledge, this doubt about the Self, born of ignorance, residing in thy heart, take refuge in Yoga. Arise, O Bharata! (IV. 42)

In life too we often find that it works better if we are free from the worry about the results; then our mind remains clear, thinking faculty is at its best. So in all our undertakings, specially when things seem unfavourable, let us follow Krishna's advice, 'Yuddhyasva vigata-jvarah', 'Fight being free from mental fever' (VII. 30). While doing this, we may fail but what does it matter? Striving is all that matters. The main imperative of the Gita is detached action :

Therefore, do thou always perform actions which are obligatory, without attachment;—by performing action without attachment, one attains to the highest. (III. 10)

But then we feel if we are so indifferent to the result, can we work? Sri Krishna reminds us that we work impelled by our nature. Our senses will drag us to activity. If that is so, why not we be willing workers and work to the best of our capacity? It may be argued that when we know of certain failure, is there any meaning of fruitless labour? Sri Krishna is quite definite about it. If all life is a yajna, a sacrifice to the Divine, whatever work a man does becomes fruitful, for it is God who sees the effort and helps him. So He says : 'Svalpam api asya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat'.

In this, there is no waste of the unfinished attempt, nor is there production of contrary results. Even very little of this Dharma protects from the great terror. (II. 40)

Not only is a man spiritually benefited, God sends definite help too. As Sri Ramakrishna says, if we go one step towards the Mother, She comes forward a hundred steps towards the devotee.

Even in the so-called secular work, a man must remember Him and strive, 'Mam anusmara yudhya ca', 'Think of Me as well as fight' (VIII. 7). Not merely to think of Him but to work too. Every goal has some special way of sadhana. If an enemy is to be conquered, fight is necessary. If an examination is to be passed, study is essential. But along with effort, there must be thought of God also. That will release us from tension, endow us with extra energy and some mysterious power may help us too.

No discipline is palatable in the beginning. 'That which is like poison in the beginning but like nectar at the end' is the best happiness, says the Gita (XVIII. 37). Sadhana requires practice, constant practice without flurry; 'Abhyasen tu kaunteya vairagyena ca

grihyate', 'By practice, O Arjuna, and by calm detachment are things attained' (VI. 35).

Much of our energy is wasted because of our restlessness. So we lose all peace. The Gita points out :

No knowledge has the unsteady. Nor has he meditation. To the unmeditative there is no peace. And how can one without peace have happiness? (II. 66)

Hence our mind must be made steady by regular practice, so that we can command the best of our innate power. So a poise, a calmness must be practised. And then with a joyous, optimistic mind we must face our problems and sorrows. As Sri Krishna says :

In tranquillity, all sorrow is destroyed. For, the intellect of him who is tranquil-minded, is soon established in firmness. (II. 65)

We waste much of our vitality by brooding over the past mistakes or worrying about the future gains or losses. It is futile. Sri Krishna says, 'Gatasun agatasun ca na anusocanti panditah' (II. 11). The wise grieve neither for the living nor the dead, they neither grieve over the past nor worry about the future.

The secret of work, according to the Gita, is yoga and yoga is nothing but equanimity, balance, poise. It is also union with the Godhead. 'Yogah karmasu kausalam' (II. 50) and 'Samatvam yoga ucyate' (II. 48).

Being steadfast in Yoga, O Dhananjaya, perform actions, abandoning attachment, remaining unconcerned as regards success and failure. This evenness of mind (in regard to success and failure) is known as Yoga.

This sloka gives three requirements for perfect work. First, perform work as yoga, secondly, don't choose the nature of your work and thirdly, don't be anxious for the result. Whatever work

is given by God is good. We must do it as svadharma, as our duty. If we develop the habit of liking our work, the discontent will melt away. Thereby we will work better, feel less tired and our life, free from constant complaints, will be sweeter.

Jealousy is a great weakness of human character. It can be lessened if we realize, as Swamiji says, for one moment that whom God raises, rises and whom He drops, falls. The Gita also says :

Whatever being there is great, prosperous or powerful, that know thou to be a product of a part of My splendour. (X. 41)

Having attained to the worlds of the righteous, and dwelling there for everlasting years, one fallen from Yoga reincarnates in the home of the pure and the prosperous. (VI. 41)

Much of our relationship breaks up because of our lack of patience and tolerance. A little more mutual understanding, a little more consideration can make things better. If necessary, even unilateral tolerance will be ultimately paying. It will change the other person or at least it will keep us in peace. 'The number of s is three in the Sanskrit alphabet', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'as if to say to men,—tolerate, tolerate, tolerate'. Sri Krishna too says, 'Titikshasva Bharata', 'Bear them patiently, O Arjuna' (II. 14).

In life it is impossible to avoid suffering, however much we might try. The period of life when diseases overtake us one by one, is really a trying one. Then we can follow the behest of Sri Krishna, 'Duhkheshu anudvignamanah', 'In sorrow with mind unruffled' (II. 56). That is the only way. Or we may follow the man of realization :

Resting in Brahman, with intellect steady, and without delusion, the knower of Brahman neither rejoiceth on receiving what is pleasant, nor grieveth on receiving what is unpleasant. (V. 20)

Mortal as we are, often death takes its toll in our families. Near and dear ones sometimes leave us. The Gita reminds us 'Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh'.

Of that which is born, death is certain, of that which is dead, birth is certain. Over the unavoidable, therefore, thou oughtest not to grieve. (II. 27)

It is not mere fatalism. The imperishable Atman is there always, only bodies are transitory.

As are childhood, youth and old age, in this body, to the embodied soul, so also is the attaining of another body. Calm souls are not deluded thereat. (II. 13)

Death may be terrible, but it is real, it is certain. So it is better to prepare for it too. How to do it? The Gita says :

And he, who at the time of death, meditating on Me alone, goes forth, leaving the body, attains My Being : there is no doubt about this.

All the worlds, O Arjuna, including the realm of Brahma, are subject to return, but after attaining Me, O son of Kunti, there is no rebirth. (VIII. 5, 16)

Leading an ideal life is always difficult. The youthful natural enthusiasm often sags. Then there is an urgency of an incentive. Power, position or popularity no longer attracts a man. For him Sri Krishna supplies the incentive, 'Lokasangraha', 'setting an example to the people at large' (III. 20).

World brotherhood is our dream. Men of the whole world are our own. This feeling we can imbibe if we remember the Divinity in all creation. 'Sarvasya caham hrđi sannivishtah', 'I am in the heart of all creation' (XV. 15). The wise know this. As the Gita describes :

Relative existence has been conquered by them, even in this world, whose mind rests in evenness, since Brahman is even and without imperfection : therefore they indeed rest in Brahman. (V. 19)

Many of us are too dependent by nature. We may have many desires, but no energy to work for their fulfil-

ment. And we think that by mere supplication to an unseen power we may get the result. But that is not the Gita way, for it says : 'Uddharet atmana atmanam', 'One must raise up oneself' (VI. 5) ; no short cut. As a Sanskrit saying goes, 'No animals enter as food to the mouth of a sleeping lion'. The lion must make efforts, then it can get its food.

But then, there is a stage in the evolution of a man when God Himself takes up his burden. That is possible when he lets go all his sense of doership and surrenders himself completely at the feet of the Lord. God then sends all his requirements, 'Yogakshemam vahamyaham', 'I bear the burden of find-

ing and protecting his wherewithal' (IX. 22). That is the ultimate step a devotee can take, surrender all and wait for His mercy. Sri Krishna asks such devotees to sacrifice everything and take His refuge. 'Sarvadarman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja', 'Giving up all duties and efforts, take refuge in Me alone' (XVIII. 66). If we take refuge in Him and daily surrender to Him to remind us of our pledge there will be every time a surge of spiritual power which will drive off all fear, lethargy and despondency.

The Gita is a book of positive thinking. Let us absorb a few of its life-giving thoughts and make our life happy, peaceful and spiritually progressive.

OUR ETERNAL BANK ACCOUNT

S. N. RAO

Every one of us, even the poorest of the poor, carries an Eternal Bank Account running from life to life without any break. It is real, non-stop, never closed. There is no withdrawal ; it is always an accumulation, both on the credit and on the debit side. The rich man who has his earthly cash account in an earthly bank can never carry it along with him when he dies. It does not enrich either his body, his mind or soul. But ours is eternal, always with us and never failing. It is the only thing we take with us when we die. The content of our Eternal Account is our thoughts, words and deeds.

Every good thought that we think, every good word that we utter, and every good deed that we do, all these go to the credit

side. Every bad thought that we entertain, every bad word that we utter, and every bad deed that we do, all these go to the debit side. There is no balancing, and there is no cancellation of the credit by the debit, nor of the debit by the credit. Both bear fruit, the difference being that one is sweet and the other is bitter, one takes us to the world of joy and the other takes us to the world of misery. Both the worlds are here only, and it is for us to choose one or the other. If we are conscious of the never failing presence of this Eternal Bank Account in our own pockets, that consciousness will carry us a great way in our life struggle. Such is the inexorable working of the law of Karma for the layman's understanding.

HAVE A SPIRITUAL BREAKFAST EVERYDAY

By A DEVOTEE

Swami Vishuddhanandaji, the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, related this thrilling story of a scavenger at Dakshinেশ্বর. This scavenger saw hundreds of devotees coming and meeting Sri Ramakrishna daily. His caste, he felt, was cheating him out of contact with Sri Ramakrishna. 'Had I not been an out-caste', he would think, 'I too would have enjoyed His blessed company and would have had his blessings'. His devotion to Sri Ramakrishna grew steadily and, one day, as Sri Ramakrishna was passing that way, he could contain himself no longer. He fell prostrate at Sri Ramakrishna's feet and cried 'Amar ki robe?' (meaning — 'what will become of me' — in Bengali). Much moved by the fervour of his devotion, Sri Ramakrishna asked him to have no anxiety on that score, as He Himself had taken over that burden.

Now, a householder, burdened as he is with all kinds of care and responsibilities of family life, often feels like this scavenger, and asks himself 'What will become of me'. Every question has an answer and here is what the Holy Mother—the Divine Consort of Sri Ramakrishna—advises her householder devotees. 'The easiest and best way of solving the problems of life' she said, 'is to take the name of God, of Sri Ramakrishna, in silence. ... If you pray to Him constantly before His picture, then He manifests through that picture. The place, where that picture is kept, becomes a shrine'. Each person can pray in his own residence or in a shrine, or in a temple, or in a mosque or in a church, according to his faith.

Even great scientists admit the need of and effectiveness of prayer. Dr. Alexis Carrel says, 'Whenever we address God in

fervent prayer, we change both soul and body for the better. It could not happen that any man or woman could pray for a single moment without some good result. When we pray, we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the Universe.'

Next comes the question about the time to be spent in prayer each day. The average man spends about five minutes for it, as Dr. Peale, after questioning many a person, says: 'Some pray more than that; some less—most people probably less. Let us try a little arithmetic. The average person is awake about sixteen hours a day. That means, he has 960 minutes at his disposal. If he uses only five minutes to pray, it means that he is praying only one half of one per cent of his waking hours. There was a time during prohibition days when according to an Act of Congress one half of one per cent of alcohol in a beverage was legally declared to be non-intoxicating. This percentage is non-intoxicating in religion also. Raise the daily percentage of time you spend in prayer if you expect to experience its power.'

Swami Paramananda says, 'In this human body, there are certain definite centres which correspond to our various stages of consciousness. When our mind dwells persistently on lower centres, we exhibit anger, fear, envy, jealousy and all manner of physical ills and mental unrest'. The one way to lift the mind from the lower centres is by clinging to the Lord's name and meditating on Him now and then. Otherwise the tendency of the mind is to sink.

We classify individuals according to their dispositions. The word 'disposition' refers

to the manner in which we are disposed to react to situations and people. If our automatic reaction is irritable or haughty, it impairs or even destroys our relationships. The quality of the disposition depends on the inner spirit.

Comes a time once in a while, when we feel despair. At such times, one gives the impression that one is literally crawling through life on one's hands and knees. The reason for this feeling of wearisome despair is not far to seek. What is the first thing the average person does in the morning? Reading the newspaper, of course, which contains mostly exciting, war-mongering and depressive news. No wonder the mind gets affected, when it is daily fed on such thoughts, the first thing in the morning.

Let me suggest the prescription of saturating the mind with creative, dynamic and

life-changing thoughts that are contained in the Scriptures, which will slowly and surely heal and refresh the mind and overhaul the entire personality. If a person takes to this prescription, the first thing in the morning, say, for about 15 minutes a day, which I would call as a 'Spiritual Breakfast', there is bound to be a change in him and in his disposition. Let him read the newspapers or anything after some time, but not the first thing in the morning.

Most unhappy people feed the mind with exciting and fearsome thoughts, the first thing in the morning. Any slight adversity will make them agitated and desperate. Usually, it ends by making the situation worse and their minds always restless. On the other hand, they can lead a comparatively healthy and happy life and do better in their jobs by helping themselves to a 'Spiritual Breakfast' for 15 minutes daily.

BASIC CONCLUSIONS OF PROF. TOYNBEE

SRIMAT PURAGRA PARAMPANTHI

The VEDANTA KESARI kindly published in the March 1958 issue my summary of basic conclusions of Prof. Toynbee's Six-volume Study of History as outlined by D. C. Somervell at the end of his abridgement of the six-volume Study. To complete the work I summarise below the basic conclusions of Prof. Toynbee's remaining four-volume Study of History as outlined by D. C. Somervell at the end of his abridgement of the same. The interested readers are requested to study the excellent two-volume abridgement of D. C. Somervell of Prof. Toynbee's monumental ten-volume Study of History.

Universal States And Higher Religions

1. The universal states are not the final phases of civilizations but prologues to further developments through manifestations of higher religions.

2. The universal states are not immortal and when they disappear the institutions

reappear as ghosts of their former selves; e.g. the Roman Empire of the Graeco-Roman world as the Holy Roman Empire in the affiliated society of Western Christendom. The explanation may be found in the fact that a universal state marks a rally after a time of troubles.

3. The institutions of a universal state fail to preserve its existence ultimately but serve the purposes of the higher religions of the internal proletariats.

4. Thus, the institutions of a universal state such as (i) the conductivity, (ii) the psychology of peace, (iii) serviceability, (iv) communications, (v) garrisons and colonies, (vi) provinces, (vii) capital cities, (viii) official languages and scripts, (ix) law, (x) calendars, (xi) standing armies, (xii) civil services, and (xiii) citizen-

ship serve the purposes of higher religions ; exp : the Roman institutions for the development of Christian religion.

5. Since religions grow in the decaying conditions of universal states they are naturally regarded as cancers, both by their contemporary opponents and by a school of modern historians. This view is examined and rejected. For, higher religions tend to quicken the sense of social obligations in their votaries.

6. Each of the civilizations of the third generation alive today has its background a church, through which it is affiliated to a civilization of the second generation. The indebtedness of the modern Western civilization to the Christian Church is analysed.

7. The rise and fall of civilizations are compared with the revolutions of a wheel whose ultimate purpose is to carry forward the chariot of Religion. The higher religions of today have difficult lessons to learn if the forthcoming unification of the world offers a chance of a further advance. But the record of the Churches seems to disqualify them for the role here assigned to them.

8. Religion must surrender to science every province of intellectual knowledge to which science can establish a title. Religion and science are concerned with different kinds of truth and the modern psychology of the Subconscious Psyche throws a profound light on the nature of the difference.

9. The distinguishing mark of the Churches is that they all have as a member the One True God ; this differentiates them from all other societies, and the consequences of this difference are elucidated.

10. The Hellenic civilization served as the overture to Christianity.

11. The break-away of the affiliated civilization from the Church is due to the false steps on the part of the Church, and these are an inevitable consequence of the em-

bodiment of the Spirit of Religion in an ecclesiastical institution for the purpose of 'militancy on earth.' Three types of false steps are noted : a political imperialism, the economic success and the idolization by a church of its corporate self.

12. Religion cannot promise Golden Age ahead at the end of the journey. It may be possible in another world perhaps because the Original Sin presents an unsurmountable obstacle in establishing such a Golden Age on this earth.

The Heroic Age

1. An heroic age is the social and psychological consequence of the crystallization of military frontier, between the universal state and the trans-frontier barbarians—a social barrage.

2. The pressure on the barrage increases as the trans-frontier barbarians learn the military techniques of the civilization that they are up against. Finally they strike at the heart of the Empire.

3. The triumphant barbarians are inevitably ruined by their success. None the less in their agony, they give birth to heroic legends and ideals—Homeric Aidos and Nemesis and the Umayyad Hilm.

4. The heroic age of disorder is followed by a 'dark age' in which the forces of law and order gradually reassert themselves. The 'terregnum' ends, and a new civilization begins.

5. An explanation of how demonic women came to play so conspicuous a part in the tragedies of heroic ages, not only in legend but also in fact.

Contacts Between Civilizations in Space

1. Civilizations, which can be studied adequately in separation from each other in their phases of genesis, growth and breakdown, cease to be intelligible fields of study in their final phase of disintegration.

2. The author proposes to examine the encounters between the Modern West and all other contemporary civilizations.

3. The modern period of the history of the Western society can be dated from two events—the mastering of the technique of oceanic navigation (just before the close of 15th century, A.D.) and the break-up of the 'medieval' Western Christian Commonwealth which had been put together and held together by the Papacy (just after the beginning of 16th century, A.D.). The reformation was a stage in a long process of evolution beginning in the 13th century and ending in 17th century A.D.

4. The author proposes to step backward in time to examine the contacts of the West in its 'medieval' phase with two rival societies which it encountered ; and then the contacts of the Hellenic society, concluding with a glance at some earlier contacts of the same order. Yet it should be remembered that these chapters of history are unfinished and leave off on a note of interrogation.

5. The Modern West and Russia : The original patrimony of the Russian orthodox Christendom had suffered from invasions and conquests at the hands of the Western parochial state from 14th century onward. Finally the radiation of Western culture was supplanted by one heretical Westernizing regime : communism.

6. The Modern West and the main Body of Orthodox Christendom : In this society, the modern Western culture penetrated from below upward from the 17th century onwards. Afterwards the nationalist movements prevailed to break-up the Empire into parochial states.

7. The Modern West and The Hindu World : Here the West imposed itself in the form of an alien universal state, replacing another alien universal state, the Muslim Moghal Raj, which had already gone into liquidation. The British Raj had

employed an Indian elite, which eventually succeeded in Indianizing the Raj while preserving it intact.

8. The Modern West and the Islamic World : At the opening of the Modern Western period Arabic and Iranic societies blocked the doors to the influence of Western and Russian societies. Now due to the change in the balance of power and due to the reversal of fortune to Islam's disadvantage the rulers of a number of states have been pursuing the policies of Petrine 'Herodianism' with varying degrees of success. The Islamic World embraces the homelands of three out of four primary civilizations of the old world. The West and Russia are now in conflict over the oil issue in this area.

9. The Modern West and The Jews : The Jewish Diaspora did not fit into the Western system of homogeneous territorial states. In this affair three phases may be noted ; in the first place the Jews were found useful though ill-treated because the Christians were 'Children in finance.' In the next phase, the Western Christians had learnt to be 'their own Jews', and the Jews were expelled. In the third phase, the Western society was financially competent enough to allow the Jews back again and to welcome their expertise in business. The liberal age has not been, however, the end of the story.

10. The Modern West and the Far Eastern and Indigeneous American civilizations : These civilizations had had no previous contact with the West before the West presented itself in its modern phase. To all appearance (though this may be deceptive) the American civilizations were completely obliterated. The stories of the impact of the modern West on China and on Japan run curiously parallel. In both the cases there is a reception of Western culture in its early religious form, followed by rejection ; and at a later date an impact of late Modern Western technology.

11. The Modern West and its contemporaries: Modern Western civilization is a 'middle class' civilization. Those non-Western societies which had developed a middle class welcomed the modern Western ethos. Where the middle class did not exist the ruler had to create an artificial middle class for his purpose in the form of an 'intelligentsia'. These people finally turn against their masters.

12. Medieval Western Christendom entered on a period of expansion in the 11th century followed by a period of collapse and withdrawal on some frontiers two centuries later. The crusaders and their Muslim adversaries had much in common. Norman Franks and Saljuq Turks were ex-barbarians, who were recently converted to the higher religions. The cultural radiation of the Syriac civilization into the less advanced Western Christian society affected poetry, architecture, philosophy and science.

13. There was a great antipathy between the medieval West and the Greek orthodox.

14. The Hellenic civilization had encounters with every contemporary civilization in the Old World. The results of the Hellenic radiation were not completed until several centuries after the Hellenic society itself had gone into dissolution. Its culture spread into Sinic world. The West was emancipating itself from its chrysalis religion while Hellenic civilization having no such religious chrysalis was becoming hungry for religion.

15. In pre-Alexandrine period the most important cultural conquest of the Greeks turned to be the Hellenization of Rome.

16. The author maintains that the only fruitful results of encounters between civilizations are the works of peace.

17. On the military level, a challenge from one side leads to a challenge from the other, and this, after redressing the balance passes over into a counter-aggression and pro-

vokes a retort in turn. A chain of such encounters between the East and West can be traced.

18. A military response is not the only one possible. Communist Russia reinforces armaments with ideological warfare. The conquered people can maintain their identity by an intense cultivation of their religion. A classic case of this response is that of the Jews. The supreme response is the creation of a higher religion which in due course takes the conquerors captive.

19. The social price that a successfully aggressive civilization has to pay is a seepage of its alien victims' culture into its own life-stream. The effect on the victims is of the same order. The attempt to introduce one element of an alien culture, while excluding the rest is doomed to failure.

20. The successful assailant succumbs to hubris and regards the conquered as underdogs. Thus the Brotherhood of man is denied. The heathen, barbarian and native underdogs may recover human status respectively by conversion (heathen) by passing an examination (barbarian) and by overthrow or conversion of the masters (Native).

21. The attribution of political and cultural significance to the terms Asia and Europe has led to nothing but confusion. 'Europe' is a sub-continent, with an ill-defined frontier, of the continent of 'Eurasia'.

Contacts Between Civilizations In Time.

1. The origin of the term 'renaissance' is stated, and the meaning given to it in this Study explained.

2. The later Medieval Italian renaissance, began earlier, and exercised a more enduring influence on the political plane than on the literary or artistic (Renaissance of Political ideas and institutions).

3. The revivals of the Roman Law in Eastern orthodox Christendom and in West-

ern Christendom and their consequences for Church and state are discussed (Renaissance of Systems of Law).

4. The revivals of the Sinic Confucian philosophy in the Far Eastern society in China and of the Hellenic Aristotelian philosophy in medieval Western Christendom were parallel events in several respects (Renaissance of Philosophies).

5. A conspicuous part was played by dynastic rulers in launching renaissances in this department (Renaissance of Languages and Literature). Renaissance cannot succeed until the society seeking to call up the Ghost of a dead civilization has itself reached the appropriate stage of development for performing the act of necromancy.

6. A number of examples are cited, besides the Western instance popularly known as 'the Renaissance'. The course of this last is traced in architecture, sculpture, and painting. In all three departments the ultimate result was to sterilize originality (Renaissance of the Visual Arts).

7. The contemptuous attitude of Judaism to its successful Christian off-spring, and the uneasy and ambiguous attitude of the Christian Church towards the Jewish ideals of monotheism and aniconism, are discussed (Renaissance of Religious Ideals and Institutions).

Law And Freedom In History.

1. The Law of Nature is distinguished from the Law of God.

2. The notion that History reveals the workings of a Divine Providence, as maintained down to the time of Bossuet, has since been discredited. But the men of science, whose Law of Nature has replaced the Law of God in most departments of enquiry, have felt constrained to leave History in a state of lawlessness.

3. The amenability of human affairs to 'Laws of Nature' is examined through a

survey of evidences—regularity of human affairs, the wave-lengths of trade cycles, the regular recurrences of war and peace cycles, regularities in the rout-and-rally alternations, the regularity of breakdown and disintegrating phases of civilizations, the concept of 'there is no armour against fate' and the growths of civilizations are discussed in this connection.

4. The uniformities that are seen may be due to the working either of laws current in Man's non-human environment or of laws inherent in the psychic structure of Man himself. These alternatives are examined, and it is found that Man's dependence on the laws of non-human Nature diminishes with Man's progress in technology. The laws of the subconscious Psyche are considered as an influence on the course of History.

5. As regards the laws of non-human Nature, Man cannot alter them, but he can harness them to his own purpose. As regards the laws affecting the human nature itself, a more cautious answer seems to be called for. The result will depend on Man's relations, not just with his fellowmen and himself, but above all with God his Saviour.

6. The recalcitrance of human nature to the laws of nature is illustrated by examples of 'challenge and response'. Faced with a challenge Man is free within limits to alter the pace of change.

7. Man does not live under the laws of nature only, but also under the Law of God, which is Perfect Freedom. Contrasted views of the nature of God and His laws are examined.

The Prospects of the Western Civilization.

1. The ensuing enquiry is specially done in view of the world-wide importance and manifestation of the Western society and the importance of the prospects of a 'Westernizing world'.

2. There was no reason for supposing, on pseudo-scientific grounds, that, because all other civilizations had perished or were perishing, the West was bound to go the same way.

3. The West has so far wrestled unsuccessfully with the disease of war and militarism which have been the most potent cause of the breakdowns of civilizations. The West has been, however, very successful in abolition of slavery, growth of democracy and education. It now displays on the one hand, the ominous division into dominant minority and internal and external proletariats; on the other some remarkable success has been attained in coping with the problems of diversity.

4. The mastery of Man over non-human nature and the accelerating rapidity of social change are both without parallel in the histories of earlier civilizations.

5. The prospects of the human race is compared with Heyerdahl's raft Kon-tiki, on approaching the reef. A future world-order would be inevitably something very different from the present United Nations

Organization. The qualifications of the American nation for leadership are discussed.

6. The triumphs of modern technology had led to an unprecedented demand for 'freedom from want'; but would Mankind be prepared to pay the price required for the satisfaction of this demand?

7. Modern technology had entailed a mechanization, or regimentation, not only of the manual workers, but also of their employers of the civil service and of the politicians.

8. The alternative approaches to social harmony of Russia, America and the West Europe are analysed and compared.

9. Social life is impossible without some measure both of personal liberty and of social justice. Technology tilts the balance in favour of the latter.

10. Suppose that the World Society found a successful solution of all these problems, would the human race thenceforth 'live happy ever after'? No, because 'original sin' is born again in every child that comes into the world.

COMMUNISM AND VEDANTA

G. D. KARKARE

Before I start an analytical discussion of the subject touching the good or bad, weak or strong points of each philosophy,—for make no mistake about it, Communism is a philosophy governing the life of hundreds of millions of people,—it would be advantageous to have a brief historical outline of each. Communism is a baffling problem; it has defied all attempts to conquer or subvert it; it has defied material modifications; it has in recent years, whether we like it or not, grown from strength to strength. To millions of poverty-stricken people, particularly in Asia and Africa, Communism

appears more as a friend than as a foe. Admittedly there is something dazzling about it. We should, therefore, first try to measure what Communism is and what it stands for, i.e. the ideas and men, as well as circumstances which gave rise to it.

Karl Marx is the founder or we may call the Pontiff of Communism. He was an Ex-German Count who spent a large part of his life in Paris. It was on 1st May 1848 that he declared through the Paris Commune the principles of Communism. He was a visionary but not all of his prophecies came true. His monumental work "Capital" is the

Gita of Communists even today. While his prophecy that the Locomotive will break the caste barriers in India has come true, his other prophecy that the proletarian revolution will take place first in industrially advanced countries has proved to be incorrect since both Russia and China are predominantly agricultural countries. The ideas of Marx were further improved upon by Engles and it was in the early part of the current century that the first Bolshevik Party was formed in Russia with Lenin as its Leader. Lenin's legacy was handed down to Stalin who ruled the Soviet Kingdom for over quarter of a century. We have now Khrushchev controlling destinies of over 800 million people, wavering between debunking and epitomising Stalin. In the meanwhile, Marshal Tito emerged as a Nationalist Communist and Mao Tse Tung as the Leader of new China with his theory of 'Let a thousand roses blossom'.

It may also be mentioned that as the ideals of Karl Marx spread in Europe, a number of Socialist Parties sprang up and these professed to bring about the dream of Karl Marx into a reality by recourse to democratic methods viz., through the ballot box and not by violence as was preached by Marx and practised by Lenin and Stalin. There were the Fabian Socialists and Guild Socialists headed by Harold Laski. We have thus Social Democrats and Radicals in most of the Western countries. These doubtless reflect the ideals of progressive groups in the context of the social conditions in the respective countries. These Socialists are, however, not to be confused with Hitler's National Socialists or Nazis or Mussolini's Fascists.

The essential principles of Communism are that all means of production, exchange and distribution shall vest in the State. It is true that some concessions have been or rather, had to be made in regard to small holdings and cattle to the Russian peasant, but these are more in the nature of excep-

tions than the rule. The emphasis is on collective farming and nationalisation of all branches of production of wealth. Nobody is allowed to own private property and every individual must subordinate his actions and will to the State. Deviationism is strictly prohibited and sternly dealt with.

The Vedanta philosophy is several thousand years old. Communism as practised is only 40 years old. Communism has, therefore, yet to stand the test of time. We cannot, however, ignore the fact that its votaries are as strong-willed in its propagation as the crusaders of the 12th century. Their enthusiasm can be easily compared to that of the followers of Islam who swept the whole of the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indo-Gangetic Plains, Africa and a part of Europe in the span of 400 years. The subtlety of Communist methods and their perseverance is akin to that of Christian Missionaries who have won for the Christian faith, the largest number of followers in the world today. The rapidity of the Communist advance has naturally disturbed the Christian Church more than anybody else.

The Vedanta philosophy was adopted as a way of life by the Aryans and is known as Aryan civilisation. This philosophy was evolved after a great deal of thought, experiments and research and emerged finally as the Aryans settled down in the Indo-Gangetic plains, after having started, as Lokamanya Tilak tells us, from the Arctic. It was in the pastoral era that the Aryans took to the worship of Nature, i.e. the Sun, the Lord of the Rains (Indra), the Wind God etc. They had become so much in tune with Nature that Varuna, the Lord of Water used to respond to their call and fill their pots, before they started their Yajnas. It was in the pastoral era that the Cow came to be looked upon as sacred as she was not only the source of milk but the backbone of their economy. It was then that the idea of property developed. When Vishwamitra asked Vashishtha to part with his Kama-

dhenu, he offered a billion cows or his own kingdom in exchange. We have further example of the cow being regarded as wealth in Uttar Gograhana when Duryodhana went to ransack the cattle of King Virata. We have it on the authority of Dr. Radhakumud Mukherji that as back as 6,000 B.C. the institution of King had been established in India and that the little republics of our villages used to give "Bali", land revenue in kind, as consideration for the protection afforded by him. The basic principle of Vedantic philosophy is that the present life is only a part of the cycle of life and death in the evolution of the soul which is in search of eternal and unalloyed bliss or happiness and therefore man should so conduct himself as to facilitate his own progress, *uddharet ātmanā ātmānam*. Vedanta means the philosophy which follows the Vedas. Vedanta philosophy has been moulded by thoughts of hundreds of rishis and seers. Even many kings, who turned into Rajarshis, have contributed to its development.

The one outstanding fact which emerges even from a cursory study of Vedanta philosophy is its irrepressible vitality. In the span of the last 10,000 years, a number of civilisations, such as those of Athens and Rome, Babylon and Syria, have risen and fallen. The Egyptian Civilisation represented by the Pyramids has also gone with the wind. Our Civilisation, the Aryan Civilisation which is based on Vedanta has had to face a number of onslaughts; it was badly mauled but was neither subjugated nor mutilated beyond recognition. On the other hand, it influenced the civilizations of the invaders. During the British rule, it had to face very critical days as the early products of Western education had begun to despise it. Its vitality again proved superior. In the post-independence era, it is facing a new crisis occasioned by a sudden relaxation of mental controls and new factors emerging from technological progress.

Dark clouds are gathering not only on account of aggressive activities of other civilisations but also because of self-imposed limitations of secularism. All the same, this land of Vyasa and Krishna, Tukaram, and Tulsidas, Ramdas and Dayanand will continue to produce men and women who will live and die for the Aryan Way of life. Macaulay has said:

How can man die better
Than Facing Fearful Odds
For the Ashes of His Fathers and
The Temples of his Gods?

When I say that the Aryan way of life as expounded by Vedanta philosophy will live for time immemorial, I am not actuated by an understandable or justifiable love of one's own civilisation. The Aryan civilisation will, in my view, live for all time to come because it is the best way of living, for all men, at all times and in all places. Every philosophy or science has to be tested on four touch-stones, viz. whether it is Utilitarian, Aesthetic, Ethical and Cosmic. Any philosophy which does not stand these tests cannot live for ever. You may force a philosophy for a time on a people by recourse to violence or other methods of imposing mental slavery; but the human soul refuses to be a slave of anything. It recognises only those limitations which are imposed by self-will.

Most of our educated friends in India are dazzled by the terrific technological advance of the West. They feel that Indian philosophy is a defeatist philosophy and has either no relation to reality or is unable to keep pace with the march of events. But this criticism is not justified. The first thing we have to recognise is that while the Vedic philosophy is a distinct entity evolved after the mature thinking and experimentation, Communism was not born as a Science or way of life by itself. It was a reaction to the growth of Capitalism in the wake of the Industrial Revolution of 1824 and the appalling conditions of life created in its

wake. Social conscience had not developed in those days and the privileged few were permitted by society to indulge in ruthless exploitation of the workers and peasants. Since Communism is a reaction to Capitalism, the former is as rational or scientific as the latter. Discussing the conflict between the Capitalism and Communism, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose once said:

To say that the choice before humanity is between Capitalism and Communism is to say that mankind has come to the end of all thinking.

The effect of the discovery of Atom and Hydrogen bombs, the science of electronics and the possibility of space travel is certainly benumbing but humanity has not and will not come to the end of thinking. Prof. Einstein's theory of relativity is both a return to and recognition of spiritualism and the basic equation, $A=B/C$ where X is the constant, points to X as the soul and the fact of other objects existing not by themselves but only in relation to the soul or the eternal being. The table does not know that the chair is there or vice versa; but you know that both are there, because you are there. The space required by the ant to travel is so small that it can never come across a square, a triangle or a circle, a mound or a slippery slope. Everything is flat and straight for it. We thus have different worlds for different forms of creation. The discovery of electrons, protons and neutrons by the smashing of the Atom is but a repetition of the Vaisheshika discovery made centuries back about Tryasarenum. The Vaiseshika's science as propounded by Kanada tells us that we have Paramanus i.e. the smallest invisible particles; the Dwyanus, composing of two particles, and Tryasarenum, comprising of 3 Dwyanus. The Vaiseshikas assert that it is only when there is a combination of 3 Dwyanus or six Paramanus that matter emerges. It is stupefying to know that our ancient Rishis could make

such discoveries without the aid of costly Research Institutes or without the equipment of full-fledged laboratories. In the same way, it is permissible to claim that the Tear Gas, Artificial Rain, Fire emitting guns like Big Bertha, the testing of aeroplane parts in tunnels through high velocity winds and the Atom or Hydrogen Bombs (against which there is no defence) are but the modern manifestations and applications of the Dhumrāstra, Parjanyastra, Agnyāstra, Vāyavāstra, and Brahmāstra respectively, though, it must be admitted that the techniques were all lost to posterity. While admiring the Russian Baby Moon (Sputnik), we forget that Vishwamitra actually started creating the parallel world (Prati Srishti) and we have it on the authority of a number of Rishis that in days gone by, there was inter-planetary travel e.g. Narada was credited with power to visit all the three worlds, viz. Swarga, Mrityu, and Patala, and Nachiketa, under orders of his father, went to Yama Loka to discuss the problems of life and death with Lord Yama. It is a quite different matter, undoubtedly one of shame, that due to lethargy and indolence as well as caste system and multitudes of Little Gods (which divided our loyalties and destroyed our unity), we lost the glory which we inherited from the ancients. At the same time, so far as the adherents of the Aryan civilisation are concerned, there is not much to surprise them in the inventions which are claimed by Western science and technology. The inherent drawback about all these inventions, however, is that they do not answer the principal test in Science viz. whether or not the conduct is ethical. When we remember that most of the modern inventions are only destructive in character, it will be too tall a claim to make that they are either utilitarian, ethical or aesthetic. They are certainly not Cosmic and hence they cannot bring either peace or comfort to man.

Geologists tell us that there have been 4 Eras and 7 Periods so far and that the total life of the earth is estimated at 205 crores of years. Our Shastras also tell us that there are 4 Yugas and 7 Manwantras so far, the period of Vaivaswata Manu is now current and that the earth's life is 196 crores of years. These facts should convince us that even without costly laboratories or protracted research, our Rishis could visualise Truth by sheer intuition.

Communism's main aim is to subordinate the human mind to the needs of the State and to deny the right to private property. It necessarily follows that it must regiment the mind and deny the existence of the soul. Education, Science, Art, Literature, all branches of human activity must play second fiddle to the State. The Communists openly say that this has to be done with a view to end the monopolies of Capitalism. If Communism aims at enslaving the body and the mind, Capitalism in its extreme form as represented by American Free Enterprise is busy evolving a system in which there is no place for man at all. Standardisation, rationalisation and now automation have led to the setting up of 20 million dollar factories manned by only 20 men. In the result, man who is in search of more comfort and less work, will be completely replaced by robot machines. It is well known that U.S.A. has two weekly holidays but most of the workers and others do not know how to spend leisure profitably. Free Enterprise has led to abuse of liberty in U.S.A. while regimentation and State control from the cradle to the grave has made freedom extinct under Communism. Absolute freedom has given rise to unprecedented growth of vice and social unrest in the U.S.A. while total control has made men in Communist states wooden. This explains why there are many defections in Communist embassies in different parts of the world.

To say this is not to say that there are no good points in Communism. But even those

good points are not new to us. For instance, Vedanta is as vehemently opposed to stock-piling of gold as Communism, but our approach is different. It is not based on violence but rests on the realisation of the solid and unimpeachable truth :

All this world has been created by God and all things therein are His; we should be content with what we get and should not try to deprive others of their wealth.

At the same time, man is told that

'three things can happen to money : Charity ; enjoyment or destruction. He who neither gives in charity nor enjoys, his wealth will meet the third fate.'

Buried treasures in all parts of India point to the truism of this dictum. Vedanta, if I may say so, aims at establishing a synthesis between unbridled use of wealth and absolute denial of property instinct. The latter is inherent in every human being. In a recent drama staged in the Bolshie Theatre, one actor was strongly snubbed for saying 'This is my factory'. Vedanta not only establishes a synthesis between Vyaktiwad and Samashtiwad, individualism and collectivism, but in emphasising charity, enunciates the principle of universal brotherhood. Macaulay has made this very point when talking of Rome he said :

The Rich Man loved the Poor ; and the Poor Man loved the Great.

The other important principles of Vedanta are : Truth, Non-Violence, Non-Stealing ; Forbearance and Peace. We have the example of Harishchandra giving away his kingdom to Vishwamitra for he recognised the truth that even in his dream, it was he who made the promise. We have Panini who was devoured by a Tiger, as he tried to define it by saying :

That beast which has the most powerful and sensitive nostrils is a tiger.

We are told by Megastheniz, the Greek Tourist who visited Bharat at the time of Chandra Gupta that in Pataliputra nobody used locks for their houses. We have the ex-

ample of Narada turning Valya into Valmiki by his courage and peace and we have also the example of Ekanath who did not utter even one word, though a hireling spat at him 100 times in one day and each time he went to have a fresh bath. Lakshmi, the deity of Wealth chose Vishnu as her husband because he was resting peacefully on a big cobra.

There are many who doubt the theory of evolution of the soul through the cycle of births and deaths. It is fortunate that nobody denies the existence of the soul which manifests itself through the mind which is capable of rising to dizzy heights. We see all round us, the cycle of births and deaths going on in the case of other forms of creation. With every monsoon season, millions of earth-worms spring up to be destroyed as soon as the rains are over. Millions of mosquitoes are destroyed with the approach of the summer. Countless of men are born and die in the same way, the only difference being that as the span of life in human beings is longer, they seem to die off slowly. War, Epidemics or Famine, Quakes and Volcanic Eruptions, Floods, etc., however cause destruction of men on a mass scale. Man is thus subject to those laws of Nature which govern other beings. We are prone to disbelieve the theory of cycle of births and deaths because we do not carry memory of one life into the next one. Western scientists have, however, made tremendous research in recent years in the psychic region and there are numerous instances where people have told of the events in their previous life. The latest example is furnished by an American woman who has told of her life in an Irish village 150 years ago and all the details furnished by her have been found to be correct. In India too there are numerous instances of this kind. There was one at Mathura and the other at Narsimhapur in Madhya Pradesh. As regards evolution of the soul, if this was not true, Dnyaneshwar could not have written the

Dnyaneshwari at the age of 16 and Shan-karacharya could not have produced all his commentaries on Upanishads, travelled all over India, re-established Vedic religion and completed his life mission at the age of 32. We have in Jabbalpur a Sanskrit prodigy at the age of 11. There is thus enough inferential evidence to prove the basic Vedantic theory. Just as Peace is the interregnum between two wars, life is the interregnum between two deaths. It is also an opportunity to witness the eternal play of the forces of time and space.

Once we recognise that our present life is but a halt in transit, we must regard all beings as creatures of God, in no way different from us and deserving of compassion. Omar Khayam has said :

Look in this battered caravansarai
Whose door-ways are alternate Nights and days
How Sultan after Sultan abide his hour or two
And then went his way.

And again :

That inverted bowl which we call the Sky
Under whose canopy mortals crawl and die
Lift not your hand to it for help
For it moves as impotently as you and I.

That is why a true Vedantin looks upon 'A learned Brahmin, Cow, Elephant, Dog and persons engaged in bad jobs, with the same eye of equality'. He also does not hesitate to sacrifice himself for the benefit of others. Dadhichi offered his own bones for endowing Indra with the thunderbolt (Vajra). Rama sacrificed the pleasures of a kingdom in order to uphold the honour of his father. Panna Dai sacrificed her own son in order to save the scion of the Kings of Udaipur from the assassin's sword. Tyaga (sacrifice, abandonment of wishes and self-abnegation) and Bhutadayā (piety) have thus a definite place in the scheme of Vedantic philosophy. There is no room for ill-gotten gains or the abuse of wealth. Human nature being what it is, even in the

past, people have tried to suppress Truth with money. That is why in one of the Upanishads we are told :

The face of Truth has been covered by a pot of gold ; O Lord Sun, please uncover the lid, so that the light of true religion may spread in all directions.

In this way, Vedantic philosophy tries to subdue the baser instincts of man. Not only there is no room for physical violence but even the inflicting of mental injury is prohibited. It is a sign of the times that as the devastating effect of modern scientific inventions becomes apparent, the essential tenets of Aryan philosophy are being appreciated more and more in Western countries. It is true that those who appreciate the grandeur, nobility and efficacy of Aryan philosophy in the West are in a minority, but as we all know it is only a minority which has a future.

Vedanta does not force anybody to do a thing against his will. Nobody has been lynched or liquidated for refusing to accept the Vedantic philosophy. It only asks adherence to ethical conduct in the interests of the soul. The Vedantic philosophers are all serious when they say 'The entire universe is Brahman', for the Vedas salute the Leader of the Gang of thieves, robbers, hunters and the evil-doers, as they too are recognised as 'Brahman'. The Vedantic philosophy aims at the well-being not only of man, but also of the Agni-devata (Fire), the birds and beasts and lastly of the traveller. You may say that Vaishwadeva (fire-worship) is meaningless ; but we must remember that the Great Fire of London lasted for six months and even today the Australian bush-fires which spring from nowhere, cause damage worth millions of pounds and present a baffling problem. Sudden disastrous fires are a common feature of our life, in spite of the numerous fire brigades. The traveller or the uninvited guest is called Atithi-deva and the Grihasta is enjoined to wait for 24 minutes for him after giving oblations to Fire, Birds and

Beasts, i.e. Vaishwadeva, Kākabali and Gogrāsa. For, Vedanta recognises that

The Lord is the Great Being, split up into different beings and the imperishable Lord himself takes the food, after encompassing the three worlds.

Our seers knew that hunger is the driving force of humanity and hence the settled people — Grihasthāshrami — were enjoined to remove the root cause of social upheavals, by feeding all beings.

Communism does not recognise the existence of God, but that is not a serious point against it. There are some schools of thought in our philosophy also which do not recognise God, but take the elements and atoms as the starting point of the Universe. Communism regards religion as opium but after a bitter internal struggle, the revival of the Church has been permitted. Russian leaders, like Lenin and Shippelov have talked of the 'Devil' which is the anti-thesis of God, and have thus indirectly conceded or acquiesced in the existence of God. We should, however, recognise that Communism itself has assumed the shape of religion, with its heresy-hunt, and with the aid of the machinery of the State, forged ways and means to deal with the deviationists. In Vedanta, however, religion is incorporated as a part of daily life and no person, however great he may be, is above religion, because it holds that

leaving the dead body like a piece of wood or lump of earth, the relatives turn away, but Dharma (religion) alone goes with man.

Jcaga, Urdu poet has also asked 'Rahe Faname Dunya Me Kisne Diya Hai Sath ?'. The beauty of Vedantic philosophy further lies in the fact that of the four purushārthas, Artha (money) and Kāma (sex life) are sandwiched between Dharma and Moksha (religion and deliverance) and money gained by immoral methods, or unethical sex life are taboo. In fact all persons who enter Grihasthāshrama (man and wife) have to take a vow that they will not

resort to unethical conduct in the matter of the first three Purusharthas. Tulsidas has said that the four sons of King Dasharatha were not Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata or Shatrughna but the four Purusharthas. This is a very original and fascinating approach.

The utility of Vedanta lies in the fact that it enables man to face the ups and downs—and more the downs—in life with equanimity and courage. The achievement of a mental equilibrium is a difficult task and man is asked to control his passions in the face of grave provocations. We know that if this is not done, people develop all kinds of ailments and disabilities, such as high blood pressure, paralysis, diabetes, etc. Vedanta tells us that no pain is too great and no misery too depressing. It further tells that

Man goes down and down or up and up by his own acts ; just as the digger of a well goes down and down and the builder of a mansion goes up and up.

It further tells you that lasting and unalloyed happiness can flow only if one's conduct is ethical and he learns to control his passions. Vedanta hates nobody, aims at extermination of none. Its message is one of peace and love for all and it seeks to lift the human soul from the clutches of passions. The rule of Prārabdha is applicable as much to Russians as to any other people. We know that Malenkov got the highest honour which men could have given him, i.e. of being installed as the Prime Minister of Russia but we also know that he was forced to admit his own incompetence and

denounced not once, but twice. We know that if only Beria had acted with speed, he could have succeeded Stalin ; his Prarabhdha led him to the firing squad. Molotov, Malenkov and two others were recently disgraced. Zukov is the latest addition to the list of victims. You will thus see that even if they deny it, the hand of God is at work in Russia.

American Capitalism looks upon Communism as a plague while the Communists regard Americans as the only stumbling block in their way. The Communist Party is banned in the U.S.A. Vedanta does not ban any thought, however revolutionary or atheistic it may be. It only rejects all systems based on violence as negation of humanism. At the same time Vedanta does not seek to make cowards of men. It tells through Lord Krishna 'Hato vā prāpsyasi svargam ; jītvā vā bhokshyase mahim.' Its final advice is 'Whatever you do, offer it to God.' 'Do not develop attachment. Do your duty without expecting any return.'

I now leave it to the readers to decide which of the two, Communism or Vedanta is a superior and ennobling philosophy and whether or not it is worth our while to preserve it and defend it against onslaughts and inroads. With the ancient Seers let us repeat : 'End controversies, learn and teach through Love, have discourses through questions and answers, try to develop Real Knowledge, so that you may become learned and enjoy bliss. You should follow the same path of true religion which was followed by learned and impartial men in the past.'

The motto before you—'Elevation of the masses without injuring the religion.' Can you raise them ? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature ? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts ?

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

to escape unhurt ... But, the house itself

NACHIKETA—THE CHILD OF IMMORTAL BLISS

(A play : continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

SCENE VI.

(Background Music Chanting :

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुः विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥
विज्ञान सारथिस्तु, मनः प्रग्रहवान् नरः ।
सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥
अग्निर्वैश्वेको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥
भयादस्य अग्निस्तपति भयात् तपति सूर्यः ।
भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥
एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढो आत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

Katha U. III. 3, 4 & 9; V. 9; VI. 3; III. 12.

As the last line is being chanted, the curtain rises. Yama and Nachiketa are discovered squatting on a small mound and Yama has started his instruction to Nachiketa about the realisation of the Self. Yama also joins in the chant)

Yama : (to Nachiketa) My dear Child ! Life itself is a great pilgrimage of the soul. For this journey of the soul, the body itself is the chariot, the intellect is the driver, the senses are the horses, the mind is the reins and the world of sense-objects the road to be trodden.

Only if the body-chariot is strong, the sense-horses swift, the intellect-driver keeps them under control through the mind-reins and proceeds in the world of sense-objects, only then is it possible to reach the

goal of the journey—the Supreme Status of Vishnu, the all-pervading Supreme Spirit.

It is this Supreme Spirit, the Param-atman, who is the indweller and the inner controller of all. It is He alone who has assumed the various forms in the universe, even as the one Fire entering the earth has taken different forms.

He is the Controlling Power who makes the Fire (Agni) burn, the Sun (Surya) shine, the Rain (Indra) shower and the Wind (Vayu) blow. He again is the Controller of my power as well.

It is He who is the Atman hidden in all beings, and invisible to mortal eyes. But He is manifest indeed to persons endowed with concentrated mind, and subtle vision.

Nachiketa ! As a result of your 'Satyadhriti', your marvellous steadfastness for Truth, you have this concentrated mind, this keen intellect ; and you can have the Vision. I shall now impart to you the 'Mantra' the Holy Syllable which will lead you to its realisation. Make your mind collected ... I shall also meditate and get ready.

(Both sit in meditation, which is very soon interrupted by a sudden uproar from the wing. Enter Kali in fury.)

Kali : Where is that Nachiketa ? Where are you ?

(Their meditation abruptly disturbed, Yama and Nachiketa open their eyes and get up.)

Kali : (to Nachiketa) Oh ! So you have come here ! Do you think you can get away from me so easily ?

Yama : (Aside) What is this ? For Kali to come here ! And in search of Nachiketa ! What does this mean ?

(To Kali) You are troublesome enough in your own place ! And now, you have started intruding even here ! (sternly) What have you to do with Nachiketa ?

Kali : (defiantly) What have you to do with him ?

Yama : In accordance with his own wishes, I am imparting the Holy Mantra to him. Why do you come and create all this uproar at this time of Upadesha ?

Kali : (laughing derisively) Upadesha ! Ah ! Wonderful is the teacher and wonderful is the disciple ! This liar is indeed the fitting disciple to receive Upadesha from a Guru like you !

Nachiketa : (breaking in) Yamaraja ! Even before meeting you, I became acquainted with Kaliraja. He had gone to earth with the intention of becoming 'good' ... and seems to have returned now after completing his mission.

Yama : What are you saying ! I can't make anything out of it.

Nachiketa : (to Kali) Brother ! You must have succeeded in your mission. I feel happy to see you again.

Kali : Shut up, you fool ! Happy ! All your happiness will fly to the winds now. ... Tell me—Did you not say that by helping the poor, they can be won over ?

Nachiketa : Yes, indeed, I did. Did you act accordingly ?

Kali : You liar ! Following your advice, I was only deceived. Instead of becoming good I only became a fool. ... That is why I have come now to finish you off !

Nachiketa : (in distress) Tell me, Brother !—what happened.

Kali : What happened ! ... I went to earth, and that to your own town. Selecting the poorest of the people and the worst of slums, I cleaned up the whole place and using my magical powers, built a magnificent palace—with wonderfully furnished

rooms for each one of them. Royal dishes for all ... Marble ponds and bathing houses ... Finest silks for wearing and the sweetest perfumes for their body ... And for their entertainment charming pleasure gardens with celestial music and dances !

Yama : (aside) What is this transformation of Kali ! Am I in a dream—or, is it all the work of this divine boy ?

Nachiketa : Brother ! What a blessed soul you are ! How happy they must all be feeling, ... and how grateful !

Kali : Eh, you ! Stop your prattle and listen to what I say. Happiness ! Gratitude ! Bah ! Only grumbling and quarrels !

Nachiketa : Why so, Brother ?

Kali : They said bathing was awfully tiresome ; they refused to bathe and assaulted the bathroom attendants. The finest royal dishes were not relishing to them ; not sour and pungent enough, and not sufficiently stale ! So, they threw away the food. The cots and feather beds in the rooms were very irksome ! They didn't have freedom to roll about as they wished. So the furniture and fittings were smashed. As for the flowers and perfumes, they were simply unbearable ; they could not get sleep in that intolerable stink ! All the facilities and luxuries provided became to them exceedingly boring !

Nachiketa : Why ?

Kali : Because they had all that is covetable and so they had no more scope for stealing and quarrelling !

(Yama laughs for the first time. Nachiketa also smiles)

Nachiketa : (with concern) What foolish people !

Kali : (angrily) And, that is why I grew wild with them and razing the whole thing to the ground, came away. ... Not only that ... I got so furious with you also—you who deceived me—that on my way back I went to your home and set fire to it. ... Unfortunately, all the inmates managed to escape unhurt ... But, the house itself

and every bit of a thing in it were completely reduced to ashes ... That much satisfaction I could have! ... And now, I have come to kill you ...!

Nachiketa: (suddenly gripping his head in his hands) O Brother! What have you done! Alas, what have you done! Burning down our house!

Yama: What is this, my boy! For you, the paragon of renunciation, to speak like this, grieving for a paltry thing as the house!

Nachiketa: Not for a paltry thing, Deva. It is not for the sake of the house that I am grieving; it is for the sake of my dear father.

Yama: But your father is alive and safe!

Nachiketa: It is not that, Deva! It was only for the sake of my father that I obtained from you the boon of returning to earth. But now, my body there would have been reduced to ashes, and I can no more resume my old form. And, what a blow would that be to father! Oh! How he would pine away without me! If I think of it, I have no more desire to live at all. ... It is really as good as I am dead ... Brother! What more can you kill me! ... Alas! What have you done! ... (Buries his face in his hands in intense grief).

Kali: (taken aback and in obvious pain) Ahha! How could I ever know that it would affect you like this? ... I just got furious and did it ... (gruffly) But, tell me what is to be done now. Of course, I wanted to smash you up but I had no intention of making you suffer like this. (hoarsely) My boy! I did all that unknowingly. How shall I make amends now? Tell me. I would do anything for you.

(Background musical chant:

सर्वेजना सुखिनो भवन्तु सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः । सर्वे
भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग भवेत् ॥

(May all be happy. May all be rid of ills.
May all behold the auspicious. May sorrow

come to none.) (Enter Narada singing the last line. Both Yama and Kali at once brighten up.)

Kali: (pointing Narada to Nachiketa) There, my child! There comes the Great One—the only one who loves me!

(First Kali bows down, and then Yama. Narada blesses them, and softly chants 'Harih Om, Harih Om!'. As Yama rises, he speaks) Yamaraja! It was suddenly revealed to me that the fulfilment of your supreme wish was near at hand. I have come to witness that blessed event. (By this time, at Yama's indication, Nachiketa is bowing down to Narada. Narada points to him and says in a whisper to Yama) This is the Blessed One of whom I spoke to you. (to Kali) Kaliraja! What is this! I see you here, and in a strange mood!

Kali: Sir, in a fit of rage, I burnt down to ashes the earthly body of this dear boy. Not being able to return to earth, he is now in great sorrow. (Choking with emotion) What shall I do to assuage his grief? You please tell me, Sir, what is to be done. I am prepared to sacrifice myself if necessary. (Breaks down in tears).

Narada: What is this strange phenomenon of Kali Yuga! For Kali to start weeping!

Kali: In the whole of the universe only you two have not spurned me. For the sake of you both, I would do anything.

Narada: (after a little reflection and glancing at Yama meaningfully) (to Kali) Kaliraja! Suppose we ask you to quit this place and not to be seen any more near this Naraka Loka ... would you do it?

Kali: (wringing his hands) If I quit, then this fellow Yama would be mightily happy! Can that be allowed to happen? ... Still ... I agree.

Narada: Supposing we ask you also not to visit earth any more, not to make your appearance there any more, would you agree to that also?

Kali: (gnashing his teeth) Ah! All these 'virtuous' rascals would heave a sigh of relief. If I come away, who would take care of them! Well ... Let them go their way; I too have grown tired of teasing them. ... Besides, what further interest have I in going back to earth? Sir, you are not there, and Nachiketa also cannot return there. So, I too would just come away to your abode.

Narada: Kaliraja! Where the Lord abides—that itself is our abode. And, you too belong to it.

Kali: (excited) What! I too—who have been shunned by every one as the embodiment of sin, as Evil itself? Would I ever be admitted into the presence of the Lord? Would He ever receive me, accept me?

Narada: Good and evil, virtue and vice—all these prevail only in creation. The Lord is beyond all these. He is the Same-sighted, to whom all are equal. He is the ultimate refuge of all. Take refuge in Him with all your heart, and you too shall be accepted.

(Background chant: यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः
Katha U. II. 23.

—To those who seek Him, does He reveal Himself)

Kali: Then, Nachiketa! Are you agreeable to keep me in your company?

Nachiketa: By all means, Brother! With pleasure! ... But then, something is to be done to assuage the sorrow of my father.

Narada: My child! Kali has now solved the problem automatically.

Nachiketa & Kali: How is that, Sir?

Narada: Since he is coming away from earth, it means that Kali Yuga has come to an end, and that is the dawning of Satya Yuga—the Age of Truth. The minds of people would become naturally pure; and they would be able to see your effulgent being even without your gross body. You shall be specially manifest in the heart of

your father who is yearning for you. ... Now, as a preliminary to that, let the light of the Supreme Spirit descend into you. So, first be initiated by your Guru. (To Yama) Yamaraja! Your supreme moment has also arrived.

Nachiketa: It is all the grace of Kaliraja. (To Kali) Brother! What a tremendous sacrifice you have done for my sake! (Embraces him).

Kali: What is this commotion which I am experiencing in the innermost depths of my being? I feel as though my very nature is being changed. Does it mean the dissolution of my personality? Is it the very destruction of Kali?

Narada: It is not destruction, Kaliraja! It is the sign of the melting away of Kali into the Ocean of Love.

Yamaraja: (with folded hands) Kaliraja! Forgive me. I had so far not understood your true nature. But now it is revealed to me that all of us have our being in the Supreme Lord Himself. I salute the Lord who is in you also. ...

(To Nachiketa) Kumara! All this experience I owe to you, to your steadfastness for Truth. (Chants along with background music: सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं।

Mundaka U. III 2. 6.—Truth alone triumphs and not untruth.)

Narada: But what triumphs is not mere worldly or relative truth, not mere verbal truth. Don't you know how one can hurt, even kill others, with 'truth'? ... Ask Kali. ... It is Universal Love, Infinite Love alone that is Truth. That alone is Truth which promotes the real good, the real welfare of all beings.

(Background music:

सत्यं भूतहितं प्रोक्तं न यथार्थमिमाषणम् । यद्वृत्तहित-
मत्यन्तं तत् सत्यम् । *Mahabharata*)

It is that Truth, the Infinite Love, of this boy that has been at the root of all these wonderful happenings we are witnessing. ...

And now Yamaraja! Why delay any more? Initiate your disciple with the Holy Mantra.

Yama: Certainly Bhagavan! It would be a privilege for me to perform this holy task in your gracious presence itself.

(To Nachiketa) Come, my dear child, come! (Starts leading him by the hand.)

Kali: (suddenly darting forward) Nachiketa! Are you going away alone, without me? Won't you take me also?

Nachiketa: (caught unawares) No, brother? I shall not go away. (Standing undecided for a moment, reflecting a little and suddenly brightening up) (to Yamaraja) Deva, could I ask for the fourth boon which you have kindly granted?

Yama: Certainly my boy!

Nachiketa: Kindly bless Kaliraja also with initiation into the Holy Mantra! This is my earnest prayer.

Yama: (aside) Ah! Astounding is this boy's selfless love! Intent only on promoting the good of others—and to the very last.

(To Kali and Nachiketa) So be it. Come, both of you.

(All the three squat on the mound, Nachiketa in the centre, Kali to his right and both of them facing Yama, who is to the left of Nachiketa. Narada stands behind benignly witnessing and blessing the whole procedure. All the other lights fade off. Only the light from the top streams down on the mound. Yama begins the Upadesha by chanting the following verse, and the same is repeated simultaneously by the background music.

सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीमि—
ॐ इत्येतत् ॥—Katha U. II. 15.)

Yama: The goal which all the Vedas proclaim, for the attainment of which all the austerities are prescribed, and desiring which aspirants lead the life of Brahma-charya—that I tell you in brief—It is Om.

Now concentrate your mind and repeat this Holy Syllable.

(Nachiketa and Kali go on sonorously chanting, OM! OM! OM!)

Yama: This is not different from the Supreme Spirit who is the Effulgent Being beyond all darkness. "There the sun does not shine, nor the moon and the stars—not even the lightnings; what to speak of ordinary fire. He shining, everything else shines after Him. All this is lighted by His effulgence alone."

(Yama and Background: Musical Chant—
न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति
कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव भान्तम् अनुभाति सर्वं तस्य
भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥—Katha U. V. 15.)

(Suddenly a brilliant light bursts in from behind)

Nachiketa: (in ecstasy) Oh! The Divine Effulgence! Light, Light, Jyoti, everywhere! ... Waves upon waves on the ocean of effulgence! ... Bliss! Unspeakable Bliss! ... Harih Om Harih Om! (Rises)

Kali: Oh! I am drowning, drowning in the ocean of Light ... Hold me Nachiketa! Supreme happiness, Bliss everywhere! But Nachiketa, don't leave me alone! ... I am melting away, melting! Oh Narada! You save me at least. ... Harih Om, Harih Om! (Rises)

Yama: (rising) Ah! What an ineffable Light and Bliss, never experienced before! ... The spring of Divine Love is rushing out from my heart. Life's Supreme Goal has at last been attained!

Nachiketa: (in semi-ecstasy) Through Death himself, Immortality has been indeed attained. (Background: मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय।) Salutations to the revered Guru! (Salutes Yama, standing, with folded hands.)

Yama: (alighting from the mound—and followed by the other two also) (to Nachiketa) You came as the disciple, but now you have become the Guru. You are indeed the

Supreme Teacher who has conferred immortality even on Death!

(Bows down to Nachiketa, kneeling)

(Background musical chanting goes on just as at the opening of the play.

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि

तस्युः । वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसः

परस्तात् । तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था
विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥

उत्तिष्ठत ! जाग्रत !! प्राप्य वरान् निशोधत !!!

As the last line begins, the curtain falls)

Om Tat Sat.

(The End.)

THE KESHIN (MAN OF LONG LOCKS) OR MUNI

Rigveda X. 136.

Metre: Anushtup

ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE

The Keshin bears fire, he bears water,
the Keshin upholds earth and heaven,
the Keshin sees all visions of lustre,
the Keshin is called the Light. (1)

Munis with the wind for their girdle
wear the soiled yellow robe;
they go along the course of the wind
where the Devas have gone before. (2)

"In the ecstasy of Munihood
we have ascended on the wind
and only these bodies of ours
are what you mortals ever see." (3)

The Muni through the mid-air flies
while he looks at varied forms,
and he is of every Deva
a comrade in doing good. (4)

The steed of Vāta, Vāyu's friend,
the Muni, divinely impelled,
finds his home in both the oceans,
in the eastern and the western. (5)

Treading the path of Apsarases,
of Gandharvas and of wild beasts,
the long-locked man, who knows the heart,
comes, a sweet friend, most gladdening. (6)

The wind was churning by his side
and pounding what was hard to bend,
when Keshin from the poison cup
drank in Rudra's company.

(7)

NOTE: The Keshin is the man with long locks of hair, the Brahmacharin (whom the Atharva Veda describes as 'a man with a long beard'—XI. 5. 6) who having finished his education has not entered the house-hold life (so he still wears his hair long) but continues in his life dedicated to spiritual pursuits. In the language that became popular in later times we may say that he proceeds from Brahmacharya straight to Pravrajya, the career of the wandering monk. The Veda calls him Muni, a term corresponding to the later 'Yogi', especially in respect of the possession of occult powers. We may also describe him as the Vedic Sannyasin. His was not a mere renunciation of the world: he was the Brahmacharin of whom the A. V. says: 'He quickly goes from the eastern to the northern ocean and, grasping the worlds (lokān samgrhya) frequently brings them near' (XI. 6). He is a Yogi engaged in 'lokasamgraha', as the *Bhagavad-Gita* says, using the same language as A. V. He crosses virgin forests to help men living in remote places and brings joy to their hearts (st. 6). (In the foot-steps of this Vedic missionary the Buddhist missionary, who also was credited with occult powers, followed in after-ages). The Vedic Muni makes the supreme sacrifice not only by courting death in the service of the world but also by taking the world's sufferings on himself—'drinking from the poison cup in Rudra's company' (st. 7).

St. 1. The exaltation of the Brahmacharin is typical of the Veda. cf. A. V.: 'He upholds the earth and heaven' (XI. 5. 1).
St. 2. Munis did not need the Brahmacharin's girdle any more. The yellow colour of the ascetic's garb in Vedic times was retained by Buddhist monks. 'Soiled' indicates the active life of the Pravrajak.
Sts. 3-4. The references to occult powers may be compared with Patanjali's *Yogasutra*, III. e.g. '...becoming light as cotton ... the yogi goes through the skies' (43). The Muni utilises his occult powers for the good of the world.
St. 5. Vāta, Vāyu — the ultimate Being symbolised by wind and air.
St. 6. 'Knows the heart'—Patanjali speaks of 'knowledge of hearts' as a yogic power (Y. S. III. 35). The expression 'sweet friend' 'svādu sakha' is found in Shakespeare too (*Julius Caesar*). Is it a survival from the language of remote ancestors?
St. 7. The cosmic fury accompanying the tragic self-immolation of the Muni in the company of the God of Death and of supreme Good, has been interpreted in later literature and in sculpture in terms of Shiva's 'tāṇḍava' dance. The Purana speaks of Shiva's becoming 'blue-throated' (nilakanṭha) by quaffing the poison that threatened to destroy the worlds. It is as a symbol of supreme heroism that Rudra or Shiva is the Patron Deity of the Kshatriya as well as the Sannyasin.

YAJNA

(Sacrifice)

T. S. VENKATARAMAN

According to the Hindu Dharma Sastras, the Vedas are the supreme authority. They constitute the source of all right knowledge and dharma, dealing practically with the whole life of man in his relations to his fellow-men, to God, and to the lower animals and including his duties to others, ancestors and all living beings, the aim and object being the welfare of all beings in all the worlds. The Vedas are four in number—(1) the Rg Veda, mostly concerned with hymns to gods like Agni, Indra, etc. (2) the Yajur Veda, dealing with sacrificial ritual, (3) the Sama Veda, being a collection

of texts intended for singing at sacrifices, and (4) the Atharva Veda, dealing with rites and rituals. The Srutis have been handed down to us by immemorial tradition. They are divine revelations, eternal and infallible and are without a beginning (*anadi*) and not man-made (*apauruṣeya*). Hinduism does not owe its origin to any historical person like Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam. It is the only revealed religion for it alone reveals the Ultimate Truth of the One-ness of the Individual Soul (*jiva*) and the Universal Soul (*brahman*) in the Absolute Self (*atman*).

The word yajna (sacrifice—Latin. sacer-holy and facere-to make) means puja or worship. According to the Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini, the primary object of the Vedas is to perform karma and yaga or sacrifice is the only dharma, which is *alaukika sreya sadhana* i.e. attaining welfare or happiness through *adrsta* that cannot be known except through the Sruti containing injunctions, positive and negative (*vidhi-nishedha*). Thus yajna is the offering to the gods (*devas*) things like milk, curds, clarified butter, soma juice, grains, animals etc., which are called (*dravya*), for the purpose of obtaining the highest good both for the performer and of the nation of which he is a unit.

The yajnas are classified into (1) the Paka yajnas—where cooked offerings are made—e.g., Aupasana, Sraddha, Vaiswadeva, (2) the Havir yajna—where uncooked articles like milk, curds, clarified butter are offered—e.g., Agnihotra and (3) Soma yajnas—where the juice of the Soma plant is offered as in Agnishtoma, Vajapeya etc. Since very early Vedic times, five daily observances called Maha yajnas were prescribed. They are (1) Deva yajnas (for gods) (2) Pitṛ yajnas (to fathers) (3) Manushya yajnas (to men) (4) Bhuta yajnas (to beings) and (5) Brahma yajnas (to the Vedas). These are let out in Manu (III. 69 and 70) and are different from the solemn Srauta sacrifices.

A Brahmana is directed to perform the Agnihotra every morning and evening, the Darsa Purnamasa Ishti on the new moon and full moon days, the Agrayana Ishti after the harvest, the Pasu bandha once in six months, and the Soma yaga at the end of the year (Manu IV. 25 and 26). That these are mandatory is clear from the Rna Sruti in the Yajur Veda that a man is born with three debts or obligations and that his debt to the devas could be discharged only by performing the yajnas. These yajnas come under the category of Nitya yajnas which

should be performed according to one's ability, unlike Kamya yajnas where no infractions or omissions will be allowed (Manu. IV. 24). Further the Smrtis of Manu and Yajnavalkya clearly emphasise that non-performance of these Nitya karmas will result in sin and the principle of *akarane pratyavaya* will operate. The slokas in the Gita (XVII. 11 and XVIII. 5 & 6) that performance of sacrifice is a duty and that sacrifice, gifts and penance purify the wise and should not be given up—leave no doubt that yajnas should be performed as Nitya karma.

The object or motive underlying the performance of sacrifices is the propitiation of the divinity to obtain some benefits by offerings and prayers for attaining wealth, fame, strength, expiation of sins etc. Sacrifice is essentially a social institution and was not intended merely for the sake of the selfish gain of the performer. That sacrifices have a divine origin is clear from the hymns of the Purusha Sukta in the Rg Veda describing cosmogony as a sacrifice done by the gods (*yajnena yajnam ayajanta devah*). The words in the Gita (III. 10 & 11)—'saha yajna praja srstva', and 'parasparam bhavayantah'—show the origin of sacrifices along with the creation of men and the interdependence of men and the gods in the sacrifices. That the fundamental conception of sacrifice goes back to Indo-European antiquity is clear from the similarity of certain words like atharva, barhis, soma, savana, hotr, etc. in the Rg Veda and the Zend Avesta of the Parsis.

As in every yajna, the offerings are to be made in fire, all sacrifices centre round the Devata, Agni, who is said to have been established by the gods as the carrier of the oblations and as the priest of the gods. After the usual declaration of vow called Sankalpa, the sacrificer (*yajamana*) takes the vow of initiation (*diksha*), along with his wife to perform the sacrifice. Then the first among the Havir yajnas (viz. Agnya-

dheya) is performed. It means the placing of burning coals for the generation of the Garhapatya and other fires. The spark for the fire is produced by the friction of two pieces of wood (*arani*). To the east of the Garhapatya fire is the Ahavaniya fire and the Dakshinagni is located in the south-east. Only Vedic rites are to be performed in the above three fires. Regarding the preparation of the altar, its dimensions, and shape, the Sulva Sastras involving a considerable knowledge of geometry give all the working rules for arranging the bricks in the form of a Garuda, Syena (vulture) etc. as required in the sacrifice.

Regarding the persons who are to participate in any sacrifice, the Yajamana is the person who performs the yajna. The priests engaged by him are (1) the Hotr who belongs to the Rg Veda and who should recite the mantras to invoke the gods and offer the oblations to the fire (2) the Adhvaryu, belonging to the Yajur Veda who should direct the sacrifice and prepare the soma juice (3) the Utgatr, belonging to Sama Veda whose duty it is to chant the Samans at the Soma yaga and (4) the Brahma belonging to the Atharva Veda, who is to watch over the right conduct of the sacrifice. There are also other priests to assist the four main priests aforesaid.

As regards the vessels and utensils used in any sacrifice, viz. ladle (*juhu*), cups (*camasa*), potsherds (*kalasa*) for handling and keeping the dravya like milk, flour, ghrta, and soma juice reference may be made to the prayers in Camaka (T. S. IV 7) where they are set out. The yupa is the sacrificial post to which the animals are tied. As regards the oblations, the earliest offerings were clarified butter, milk and curds, and soma juice. In the Rg Veda, ghrta and soma juice alone are mentioned. The sacrifice of animals is a later introduction.

It may be useful and proper in this context and at this stage to examine the doctrine of ahimsa and its application to animal

sacrifice. The general rule that 'Animals should not be killed' is qualified by the exception that 'In agnishomiya yajna, an animal should be immolated'. Having regard to the well-recognised maxim of interpretation from the days of Jaimini, that every rule (*utsarga*) is subject to the exception (*apavada*), and both are Sruti texts, the immolation of an animal at Vedic sacrifices will not be adharma or offend the rule of ahimsa, as in matters of decision about dharma or adharma, our authority (*pramanam*) are the Shastras only, according to the Gita (XVI. 24). Further, according to Manu (V. 39-42), the animals were created for sacrifice, yajna is intended for the welfare of all the worlds, the immolation of animals for sacrifice will not amount to (*vadha*) and the animals themselves reach the highest state (*uttamam gatim*). There are also verses in the Mahabharata that the animals themselves desired to be born as pasu for their being used in sacrifices so that they may reach the highest state. The famous '*adhrigu praisa mantra*' uttered just before the actual immolation of the animal, invoking that the animal should be brought to the sacrificial place and wishing that the parents, relations and friends of the victim should consent to its death and wishing that its several organs will be merged in the various divinities like the sun etc., indicate that the animal reaches the highest state.

The sutra 3.1.25 in the Brahma sutra of Vyasa, refutes the argument of the Sankhya that it is *asuddha* because of the himsa on the ground that it is based on Sruti (*abda*). The three commentators, Acharyas Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa, have expressed their concurrent opinion that immolation of animals as prescribed by the Shastras for sacrifice will not be himsa as commonly understood. Again, it is common knowledge that thousands of animals are slaughtered for human consumption; birds and beasts are shot for pleasure; and other animals are

killed for scientific research. These cannot be reconciled with the strict doctrine of ahimsa or under any exception to the law of prevention of cruelty to animals. Perhaps they may be justified on the theory of survival of the fittest or a supposed law of nature that the big fish can eat up the small fish. Thus the argument that animal sacrifice as enjoined by the Vedas is *per se* himsa is based upon fallacy and cannot be seriously maintained.

Amongst the Paka yajnas mentioned above, the Vaisvadeva requires special mention. After offering the cooked food daily to the gods, the food is offered in all directions to various deities and then given to the dogs, outcastes, candalas, crows, and insects as '*balis*'. This reveals the noble sentiment of universal kindness and charity and the idea that One Supreme Spirit pervades the entire universe including the meanest of creatures.

Amongst the Havir yajnas, Agnihotra comes second after the Agnyadheya described before. It should be performed by all Grihasthas every morning and evening, with milk, curds and clarified butter etc. till death (*yavat jivam*). This shows that cows are indispensable to every Grihastha. The sage Vasistha's reply to Viswamitra refusing to part with his Kamadhenu saying that all the sacrifices owe their very existence to her (Ramayana, Balakanda, 53) is full of significance in this context.

The Niruddha Pasu Banda is the type amongst the animal sacrifices (Soma yagas). The soma creeper is said to be available only in Swarga. So a substitute (*pratika*) or Attan Kodi (in Tamil) is now used for extraction of the juice. Three pressings (*savana*) in the morning, midday and evening are done with elaborate ritual and mantras. The 9th Mandala of the Rg Veda deals elaborately with the extraction of soma juice and its offerings to gods like Indra, Agni, Aswins and others.

The Vajapeya yajna, one of the seven Soma yagas, is very elaborate in its procedure and rituals. The word means 'food or drink'. It is performed by one desiring a position of uncontrolled dominion (*swarajya*). The number 17 is predominant in this sacrifice. 17 animals are sacrificed on a single day to Prajapati. It is done for 17 days with 17 cups, and 17 pieces of cloth tied round the yupa. Only a Brahmana or Kshatriya could perform this sacrifice. In these Soma yagas the immolation is carried out by strangulation of the animals by a member of the potter class and the omentum (*vapa*) is removed from the animal. The omentum and portions of other organs are offered as oblations to the fire.

The Rajasuya and Aswamedha sacrifices involve very complex ceremonies to be performed only by kings. In the Aswamedha, a white horse is sacrificed. It is described at length in the Aswamedha Parva of the Mahabharata and in the Ramayana (Balakanda, 12, 13 & 14). Dasaratha and Rama are said to have performed the sacrifice as purificatory ceremonies. Archeological inscriptions of 757 A.D. referring to one Calukya emperor Pulicasi and the recent excavations at the foot of the Himalaya referring to one Silavarman and near the Nagarjuna Konda indicate that the sacrifice was in vogue in ancient times.

The giving of the remuneration (*dakshina*) to the priests and their assistants forms an important item in every sacrifice. Cows, bullocks, ram, ewe, rice, gold, valuable cloths and lands were given as *dakshina*. Dasaratha is described as having given lands (in the four directions) to the four main priests and as they said that the lands were of no use to them, they were given gold etc. as substitute. In the Raghu-vamsa (V. 1.) Kalidasa refers to Raghu having performed Viswajit yaga where all his wealth (*sarva swa*) was given as *dakshina*.

With the Avabhrta, the ritual connected with the final sacrificial bath, wherein the offerings are made in the water of a river, the final purificatory bath is taken by the yajamana and his wife and then by all the other persons. The bath is said to be more efficacious and purifying than the bath in the Ganges and many afflicted with diseases or maladies for which medical science has failed to give help are said to have been cured by this bath.

That sacrifice is essentially a social institution and that by the mutual helpfulness of the human beings and the gods, a spirit of mutual co-operation is intended to be created has already been indicated above. The interconnection between the gods and the production of rain by performance of Vedic sacrifices requires special mention in this modern age of rationalism and science. It is well known that modern science has not been able to tackle the problem of producing artificial rain by chemical and engineering experiments carried out at very heavy cost. There are Sruti texts that the words "O sra vaya-astu srau shat-yaja-ye yajumahe-vowshat—(17 letters) uttered in every sacrifice produce rain. Manu (III-76) says that the homa performed in every sacrifice reaches the sun who causes rain and food. Reference may also be made to the sloka in the Gita (III-24) that rains result from yajna and Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa (1-61) that Vasishtha's performing yajnas as per Sastras was the cause of the rains, food and prosperity. Rains are indispensable for the water in the rivers and without adequate rains the dams will be of no use for irrigation or power. Power cuts and rationing of river water have become an annual feature in every state. Recently in 1946, water scarcity due to paucity of rains and draught had reached a climax and

water in the Mettur Dam had touched the bottom. Seven Soma yagas were performed in Tanjore District and the heavy down-pour that followed kept the dam full till 1948 and a crisis and famine were averted. Was it a chance merely? It is common experience that on the Avabhrta day, the last day of the sacrifice, all people who go to the river for the sacred bath with the yajamana or sacrificer return home completely drenched by sudden and unexpected rains immediately after the sacrificial rites are finished. Thus the performance of the sacrifice has a socio-economic aspect even in this modern world of Sputniks and Atom bombs. A philosophical aspect of a sacrifice is indicated in the Narayaniya Upanishad representing desire as clarified butter, anger as the animal, heart as yupa, speech as Hota, eyes as Adhwaryu, vital breath as Utgata, and mind as Brahma.

It is a sad truth and irony that this ancient cult of performing sacrifices, as enjoined in the Vedas which is the only authority for all Dharma, is fast dying out. Formerly kings, rich and liberal patrons helped the growth of sacrifice as they also stood to gain thereby. That it has been developed as a science and has its foundations in the most ancient civilisation and culture of the world does not admit of any doubt. There are now only a limited number of people well versed in the ritual and details of this ancient cult in the South or in the North. That they deserve all encouragement from the liberal minded and philanthropic public to preserve this ancient cult which is facing extinction not only for want of encouragement but by positive acts tending to destroy the same is a matter worthy of serious consideration by persons who are interested in the preservation and protection of our ancient dharma.

चरेवेति

THE VITAL ROLE OF SPEECH

An unused limb gradually becomes atrophied. On the other hand proper use helps full development and the manifestation of all latent capacities. This general principle has to be applied to all aspects of our personality, — physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual. But what constitutes rightful use? Let us recall a familiar scene from Vālmiki's Rāmāyana. We know how Lakṣmaṇa became indignant and threatened to slay everyone who opposed Rāma's installation as the heir apparent. Said he: 'Look at these big round arms of mine. They are not meant to enhance my beauty,—to be left idly hanging, smeared with sandal paste or decorated with ornaments. This bow of mine too is not a decoration either. Nor are my sword and arrows mere items to be tagged on somewhere as objects of show. These four are meant in all seriousness to be employed for protecting virtue,—in this special context, for putting down the enemies who hinder your installation.' The lesson we have to learn is that we must put forth our manliness and use every possible limb to safeguard truth and justice. Lakṣmaṇa, however, did not look at the situation from the wider perspective normal to his brother at all times. He was angry and shedding tears at the same time. Rāma gently wiped the tears from Lakṣmaṇa's face and pacified him by showing how his going into exile was the only right solution consistent with the high ideals for which the family of Rāghu ever stood.¹

The basic need, then, is to cultivate the habit of looking at each situation from the widest perspective possible. But along with that there is also the need to make our decisions express themselves at the physical level, through the appropriate limbs, be they hands or legs, and particularly speech. It is the glory of speech that it can convert enemies into friends, when wisely used. We know that scripture is revealed Word. When rightly accepted, understood and applied, it can carry us from Darkness to Light, from Sin to Virtue, from Ignorance to Wisdom, from narrow Individuality to the Cosmic Plane,—or as religions would put it, from Death to Immortality. Such is the range of Vāk, Word, or Speech. No wonder expressions like Vāgmī, Vāgvidām-varaḥ, meaning 'adept in the use of Speech', are employed to describe persons who are spiritually advanced,—persons who are established in Truth and therefore able to awaken the dormant spirituality of others by talks or even a mere word.

Disputes are inevitable when interests clash in day to day activities. Law courts, as we all know, form part of the machinery to estimate the validity of rival claims. It is expected that honest people, conversant with the facts of each case, will do their best to help the judge to arrive at a correct decision. Relevant knowledge should never be withheld. Though in actual practice a witness may manage to invent stories to lead the judge astray, the procedure is so laid down that there will be a limit to the lies that can be uttered. The vow to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, if sincerely taken, can rouse up the divine element in the witness from the very start. He may attempt to ignore it,

¹ न शोभार्थमिदं बाहू न धनुर्भूषणाय मे ।
नासिर्बन्धनार्थं न शरस्तम्भहेतवः ॥
अभिज्ञदमनार्थं मे सर्वमेतच्चतुष्टयम् ।
अभिषेचनविघ्नस्य कर्तृणां ते निवारणे ॥

but still it would be there, doing its little bit from within, while persistent cross-examination from outside exposes fallacies in the positions maliciously taken up earlier. This principle of speaking out the truth whenever justice is at stake plays a vital role in the deliberations of councils of all sorts. Our Epics contain descriptions of assemblies in which questions of war or peace were discussed. Free talk was permitted, that being recognized as the most direct way of finding out not only what people felt but also what ought to be sacrificed or upheld for the welfare, secular and spiritual, of everyone concerned.

One extreme example that may be cited is connected with Draupadī. Her heroic husbands had lost their freedom in the game of dice, and they had to look on helplessly when she, their 'anointed queen' was dragged into the court and treated more shamefully than a slave could ever be. The queen, however, rose to the occasion and asked the wise men present to open their mouths and fearlessly say where justice lay. There was no straightforward answer from Bhīṣma or any other elder. Vidura then made a significant pronouncement. 'When an afflicted person comes to an assembly, seeking redress, it is the duty of the members to remove his inward burning by taking adequate steps based on truth and justice. He who knows Dharma but fails to speak unequivocally gets half the consequences of uttering falsehood. It goes without saying that he who knowingly presents facts in a different way reaps fully the results of telling lies. Let Draupadī's question be, therefore, properly considered by you all in the way it ought to be.'²

² सभां प्रपद्यते ह्यार्तः प्रज्वलन्निव हव्यवाद् ।
ते वै सत्येन धर्मेण सभ्याः प्रशमयन्त्युत ॥...
यथाप्रदत्तं तु कृष्णायाः मन्यध्वं तन्न किं परम् ? ।
विदुरस्य वचः श्रुत्वा नोद्युः किञ्चन पार्थिवः ॥
Sabhā, LXVIII.

The idea is that there are contexts when diplomatic silence becomes a crime and no virtuous man can escape by saying to himself or to others: 'I did not speak an untruth.' If by our failure to speak, we consciously permit falsehood to dominate the field, we surely stand in the category of liars and sinners. Where facts are present in the mind and the tongue is not incapacitated through disease, it is incumbent on us to speak out,—of course politely and sweetly, but clearly and firmly. It is sheer cowardice, if nothing more, to keep the mouth shut when we are in possession of ideas on whose immediate expression the life and fortunes of others depend. Let us, therefore, pay due respect to the level where our tongue can play the saviour's part.

Often we imagine that a spiritually eminent person can read the thought movements of others at a glance. There are no doubt stories in which we find mention of such powers of extra-sensorial perception. Indeed concentration of mind can awaken unusual faculties. But why should anyone resort to extraordinary devices when the ordinary processes of knowing are freely open to him? Thus there are also stories containing descriptions of sages who could wield strange powers but preferred to understand the thoughts and feelings of others by direct questioning. Vyāsa, for instance, did so when Arjuna went up to him in utter misery after his failure to protect Vṛṣṇī ladies after Kṛṣṇa's passing away. Why was it that Arjuna's face had lost all glow? Had anything impure happened to him, or anyone defeated him in battle,—a thing that had no precedent? If it was something that could be revealed, Vyāsa would like to know. Arjuna naturally gave out the whole story, beginning with a remarkably short word picture of Kṛṣṇa,

particularly mentioning his colour and his large, expressive and fascinating eyes.³

³ नखकेशदशाकुंभवारिणा किं समुक्षितः ।...
युद्धे पराजितो वासि ? गतश्रीरिव लक्ष्यसे ॥
श्रोतव्यं चेन्मया वार्थ ! शिप्रमाख्यातुमर्हसि ।
यः स मेघवपुः श्रीमान् बृहत्पंकजलोचनः ।
स कृष्णः सह रामेण त्यक्त्वा देहं दिवं गतः ॥

Mausala, VIII, 6 etc.

The idea is that where the ear of the one and the tongue of the other were functioning properly, the correct course was to ask and get a reply. The tongue and every other limb is surely blessed when used for the ascertainment and fulfilment of Dharma, at the very physical level which is set apart for them. Nay, reverend use of them constitutes worship of an enjoyable kind.

भगवतैवेति ।

SUBANDHU

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Positive thinking is very necessary in our life today. It can be imbibed if we soak our mind with appropriate thoughtful passages of the Scripture. The Bhagavad Gita contains many uplifting, energizing thoughts. A few of them have been noted in the Editorial.

Sri S. N. Rao of Ootacamund is a retired Deputy Collector.

In his two articles Srīmat Purāṇa Parampanthi gives the summary of the ten volumes of Toynbee's Study of History as outlined by D. C. Somervell. Earlier, we published another article on Toynbee in

January, 1958 by Dr Kewal Motwani who gave his study of the first six volumes.

Sri G. D. Karkare is Assistant Editor, *Hitavada*, Nagpur.

Dr A. C. Bose is Principal, Lahiri College, Madhya Pradesh and the well-known author of 'The call of the Vedas'.

Sri T. S. Venkataraman, Advocate, has intimate knowledge of the Vedic sacrifices from his boyhood, for his father late T. L. Subbier of Tirukkarugavur, Tanjore, was well known for his philanthropy and encouragement of the performance of Vedic sacrifices.

SOCIAL SERVICE — PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

After independence social service institutions, as well as different welfare institutions of the Government, are multiplying. There was a national awareness even earlier; but now it has acquired a tempo which deserves genuine commendation. Service in India was more or less decentralized. Down the ages people served the poor and the sick in an individual way. Every householder was expected daily to offer food to the needy. It was considered to be one of his five main duties. As a result, as Swami Vivekananda once remarked, there was

rarely any death due to starvation during normal times. But times have changed. The Indian society is changing its character. The purely agricultural society is fast being replaced and urban civilization is having its impact on society. Because of the aftermath of War and inflation private charity of almost every householder is coming to an end. With the rise of standard of living in one section and utter lack of it in the other the gulf between people has widened. So in modern times as one section finds it more and more difficult to help others, the other

finds itself more and more stranded. With the break up of the joint family system and increase of taxes more people are now open to uncertainties of life. The agricultural reforms have given succour to some people, but it has created problems for others. That is the nature of the modern complex society. Because of all this, private charity is lessening day by day. The problems are often so vast that they require planned and co-ordinated effort. Many institutions are coming up for the purpose and they are very useful. On the necessity of united effort Swami Vivekananda once said:

Give up jealousy and conceit. Learn to work unitedly for others. This is the great need of our country. Have patience and be faithful unto death. Do not fight among yourselves. Be perfectly pure in money dealings. So long as you have faith and honesty and devotion everything will prosper. So long as there is no feeling of disunion amongst you, through the grace of the Lord, I assure, there is no danger for you.

But no effort is free from defects. The danger of institutionalizing charities is always there. It may dry up the springs of voluntary charity and leave the workers entirely dependent on the Government which collects money through taxation, direct or indirect. About the danger of impersonalisation of service Sri K. M. Munshi recently sounded a note of warning. While speaking at the annual meeting of the Guild of Service, Madras, he said about larger and social organizations that 'they should guard against service becoming impersonal in these social welfare institutions'. It is an important point to be taken notice of. A tie of love is natural when a man gives something directly to a sufferer out of sympathy. In institutionalized services he misses the spiritual joy of giving and at the same time seeing the effect of his gift immediately or in course of time. This is from the giver's side. The middle man, the social worker through whom the money is given, may not always feel uplifted, for the candidates may

be too many and the receivers often 'demand' things as their right. These are enough to damp the enthusiasm and sympathy of the worker. The sight of abject poverty and suffering day in and day out along with the darker side of human nature might make him cold to suffering itself. Institutionalization requires definite rules to prevent misuse. But too much of it may kill the initiative and zeal. The desire to do spectacular things also may crop up, which will drain away much of the resources.

When all these factors are taken into consideration the note of warning Mr. Munshi sounded will acquire some meaning. The remedy, however, lies in awareness and more sympathy built up on the philosophical attitude supplied by Vedanta that God dwells in every being and by serving others we are ourselves benefited.

In the course of his talk he pointed out another problem which is acquiring an urgency.

Emphasising the need for depending on institutional social service, Mr. Munshi said the whole fabric of society which persisted in this country a few centuries ago was breaking up. At one time, it was found that the joint family system was an insurance against poverty and against women and children being rendered helpless. That could not exist under the present conditions. Various factors, including the Income-tax, were working against that system. Automatically the people or the families were divided and the result was that in the various parts of the country they saw many helpless members of such families struggling. They were driven to reorient their whole social services concept, particularly in view of the fact that large industrial cities were springing up. Naturally, therefore, they must go to institutional service to give succour to the poor people either with the help of the Government or with the assistance of philanthropists.—(*The Hindu*, November 9, 1958.)

As the speaker points out many old and infirm people are being left to their fates. Some attention must be given to such people. Of course, the problem is acquiring

vast proportions and may be difficult for voluntary charity to tackle it, and so the Government must come forward. Recently a welcome measure was introduced by the U.P. Government in giving pension to needy people above 70. It should be followed by other States too. It is time that some institutions come up to give shelter to old people, not only to those who have been reduced to beggars but also to people who have some means of living but nobody to look after them. It has been done in some of the advanced countries. We are aware that some Vanaprastha Ashramas have been organised for well-to-do people. If produc-

tive work according to the physical capacity of the people concerned, is organized, many other people also can be given security. Happily, there are some societies working for children. But till now no organized effort has been made for the old people excepting the beggar homes. It is an urgent necessity, specially the women section of it. It probably cannot be done by poor old people themselves. But it can surely be organized by some well-to-do people who are retired and healthy and might be commanding the necessary drive, skill and prestige. We hope some unselfish elders will come forward to shoulder this responsibility.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the passing away of Swami Nirvedanandaji, one of the Trustees of the Belur Math, Member, Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission and the founder President of the Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home at 5-58 p.m. on Saturday, the 15th November. For last 10 years or more the Swami was suffering off and on from hypertension and diabetes. All along he was under expert medical treatment. As a matter of fact his high blood pressure set in before 1936 and he was attacked with diabetes in 1937. Though these ailments were kept under control by treatment, he was never completely cured. In spite of this he maintained his activities all through and put in substantial work of outstanding merit.

His last illness was of very short duration. He was attacked with cerebral haemorrhage at about 6 a.m. and passed away within 12 hours the same day.

Sri Surendra Nath Mukherjee by name, the Swami belonged to a well-known family of the district of Barisal, East Bengal. He was, however, born and brought up in Calcutta. Born in the year 1893, he passed his Entrance Examination in 1909 from the Hare School and graduated in Science from the Presidency College in 1913. He then passed B.A. in 1914 and got his M.A. degree in English in 1916.

About this time he came in contact with the senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order, parti-

cularly Srimat Swami Premanandaji Maharaj and Srimat Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, two of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. This acquaintance soon developed into deep admiration and complete acceptance of the ideas and ideals of the Ramakrishna Order. He formally joined the Order in 1919 when he was initiated to Brahmacharya by his Guru, Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj. He was ordained into Sannyasa in 1923 by Srimat Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

In 1916 he founded the Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, the only such institution at that time in Northern India and nourished it from a very small beginning in a rented house in Calcutta up to its present position. This institution harmonised the modern educational system with the old Gurukula one. He was a joint founder of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidya-pitha, Deoghar, and was very closely associated with it during first 10 years of its career. He was a member of the Managing Committee of the Ramakrishna Mission Sishu Mangal Pratisthan for a long time since its inception. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture owes much to him. The idea of starting such an institution was his and he was one of its active members for the first few years of its life. He was the President of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidya Mandira at Belur from its inception. Besides these, various other centres of the Mission received his valued advice and active guidance.

He was an erudite scholar and a deep thinker.

His works like *Sri Ramakrishna and Spiritual Renaissance*, *Hinduism at a Glance*, *Religion and Modern Doubts*, *Our Education*, *The Holy Mother*, etc., are eloquent testimonies of his high intellectual and spiritual attainments.

It is also noteworthy that so far about 30 ex-

students of his Students' Home, trained and educated under his magnetic personality, renounced the world and joined the Ramakrishna Order.

His passing away has created a void in the Ramakrishna Order which will be difficult to fill up.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

TALKS ON THE GITA by Acharya Vinoba Bhavé: 1958. (Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh—Pp. 283 plus iv; Price Rs. 2. Library Edition Rs. 3. Stockists in Madras: Sarvodaya Book Centre, No. 242, N. S. C. Bose Road, Madras-1.)

Acharya Vinoba Bhavé's talks on the Bhagavad Gita were given to his fellow prisoners in 1932 in Dhulia Jail, Bombay State. Delivered in Marathi, the discourses were first recorded and published in that language. They have since been translated into eleven other Indian languages. The present translation in English was originally published in instalments in the *Sunday Standard*, Madras, during 1956-57. The rendering is faithful and it has been observed by competent judges that this is how Vinobaji himself would have spoken, had he chosen to speak in English. The eighteen chapters of the Gita have been elucidated fully in eighteen talks with homely similes, apt quotations and telling illustrations from modern life. Vinoba Bhavé often leaves the beaten track and gives new interpretations which are bold and original as for example when he states 'Karma plus Vikarma is equal to Akarma'. He defines Karma as the concrete outward action performed as Swadharma and Vikarma as the special inward action of the mind and heart which varies with the needs of each individual. If the outward action is not moistened by the heart's affection, then the performance of Swadharma would remain barren; it would not bear the flower and fruit of desirelessness. When the inner feeling goes with the action, it is transformed into something unique. It becomes Akarma. One aspect of this state of Akarma is that though the man acts, he does not act. The other aspect is that, though he does not act at all, he moves the whole world to action. This is the paradox of Akarma; it is filled with a power that is capable of infinite action.

Vinoba Bhavé points out that many people mistakenly imagine that the spiritual life and

books like Gita are intended only for ascetics. He whole-heartedly endorses the view of Lokamanya Tilak that the Gita is a scripture intended for ordinary men, living their daily lives in this world. He says: 'My heart and mind have received more nourishment from the Gita than my body from my mother's milk.'

The Gita is the Upanishad of Upanishads because Sri Krishna has drawn the milk of all the Upanishads and given it in the form of the Gita to the whole world. Almost every idea necessary for the flowering of a full life occurs in the pages of the Gita. For men and women of today, there can be no better introduction to the study of the Gita than a book like "The Talks on the Gita" by Vinoba Bhavé. ANNA

PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY IN THE ABHIDHARMA by H. V. Guenther. Distributors: Mahabodhi Book Agency, 4-A, Bankim Chatterji Street, Calcutta-12. Pages 404. Price not stated.

It is but apt that among the several publications marking the recent revival of general interest in the Teachings of Buddha, there should be a work by Dr. Guenther who is well known for his researches in the field of Buddhist Thought. The present work, in the words of the author, 'attempts to deal with philosophy as the perennial quest for meaning and with psychology as the abstract understanding by which man is engaged in comprehending himself, as presented in the vast literature of the Abhidharma.'

The Abhidharma is an offshoot of the Sautrantika School holding the *sarvastivada* (All exists). According to it, objects exist, not the subject. The excellences of Abhidharma, say its protagonists, are four: it stands face to face with the highest Goal (*abhimukha*), it teaches the discipline to reach the goal and presents it from several view points (*abhisna*), it rises above the conflicting views about the nature of Reality and gives a definite direction (*abhibhava*) and goes

straight to the core of Message of the Enlightened One (*abhigati*).

Dr. Guenther takes up significant topics: Mind and its states, Meditation and its several forms, the Meaning of this World, the Path to Nirvana and discusses them from the viewpoints of the Theravada, the Vaibhasika and the Vijnanavada. Throughout the discussion he keeps his eye fixed on the immediate demands of life and brings to the fore what light the Abhidharma Scriptures have to shed on them. The treatment is scholarly and presupposes a certain familiarity with Buddhist terminology on the part of the reader. M. P. PANDIT

ACHARYA SHANKARA: By Hemanta Kumar Sen. Published by Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar, 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Pages 151 + xxvi. Price Rs. 2-8-0.

The life and teachings of Sri Shankara, the well-known propounder of Advaita, are embodied in the book under review. Although the book is based on the Bengali book on Acharya Shankara and Acharya Ramanuja by Swami Chidghanananda of Sri Ramakrishna Order, the contents bear a stamp of originality, clarity of expression and subtlety of thought, which adds value to it. The presentation of the material under sub-titles is a very good idea and it interests at first sight. Out of the four appendices, the last one which briefly explains the theories of the world from the advaitic and visishtadvaitic standpoints is a useful addition. T. S. RAGHAVAN

VIEWS WAYS VISIONS: Compiled by Sree Swami Svarasyam. Edited by Smt. Sudhadevi M. Patel. Published by Syt. Mangalbhairu P. Patel, B.A., Prabhu Nivas, Nanapur, Nadiad. Pages 112. Price 66 nP.

The book under review forms a very interesting study as, in the words of the publisher, it is a 'very nice collection of pithy sayings, witty and weighty words and happy, healthy expressions so profusely used and so profoundly enjoyed in its embryonic stage by the audiences at various school and college auditoriums and public platforms. They are culled and collated from Swamiji's discourses and writings as well'. To quote a few: 'A man is worth just as much as he has suffered', 'Little deeds of kindness, Little words of Love, Make this earth an Eden, Like the heaven above', 'First deserve, then desire', 'Making patent of the latent is education' etc. T. S. RAGHAVAN

PILGRIM'S TRAVEL GUIDE—Part I (South India): By Sri V. R. Ragam. Published by Sri Sita Rama Nama Sankirtana Sangham, Agraharam, Guntur. Pages 344. Price Rs. 5.

The book under review is a Travel guide to all Hindu pilgrims and it is beautifully got up. Translated from the Original Telugu, it furnishes useful information about the several places in South India, which are noted pilgrim centres. The author is to be congratulated on this commendable work. T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SANSKRIT

KANAADA'S VAISHESHIKA DARSHANA with Rasaayanam commentary by Sri Uttamur T. Vira Raghavacharya — published by Prof. V. S. Venkata Raghavacharya (Head of the Sanskrit Department, Vivekananda College) 5, Vasani Street, Madras-17—Pp. 32+309. Price Rs. 7.

Our ancestors refused to countenance airy speculations about the universe around us and brought everything under the bar of reason; the relative validity of anything had to be satisfactorily accounted for particularly in the crude and realistic Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems. This latter philosophical system was virtually a blend of physics and metaphysics with a proper background of logic. These twin darshanas, again, like the other philosophical systems, addressed themselves to the common goal viz., Moksha which every seeker after truth was promised if only he could secure a correct knowledge of worldly categories and Pramaanas or validity tests. Philosophy was thus correlated with every aspect of life, Saankhya dealing with evolution of the world from Prakriti or Primeval matter while yoga complemented this by tuning these methods of disciplining the self only to attain moksha.

As regards the interrelation of Nyaya and Vaisheshika opinions vary; Nyaya is regarded as the older by Max Muller while Keith and Randle regard this 'Atomic Pluralism' of the latter as the basic structure. The Brahma sutras controverting other philosophical systems refute the Vaisheshika standpoint also. But all agree that Kanaada was the very first in India who formulated the idea of atoms producing effects when heat was applied to them, finely anticipating what modern Physics postulates about protons and electrons, reducing atoms to electrical emanations. An analytical survey of the objects round us as coming into the ken of our experi-

ence was thus attempted by the doctrine of *Madāarthas*. Inference based on experience alone, is absolute truth here. The primal activities of the atoms and souls were traced to *Adrishta* only in the beginning; but the unsatisfying nature of this explanation was soon after exposed by *Bādāraayana*; God had to be introduced in answer to such critics almost through the back-door. Particularity or *Vishesha* is an independent reality residing in eternal substances like atoms. Insisting on the timeless and non-causal character of the categories of generality, particularity and inherence, this system teaches us not to attribute existence in space and time to abstraction. Its physical theory is in connection with the five elements. This produces in metaphysical and external form a certain amount of unity and adapts philosophy to meet the cravings of popular theology.

Though such a metaphysical and realistic system was hailed as *Sarva Shaastropakaarakam* or helpful to all systems as a basic and elementary mental sharpener, and though its study was given the pride of place even as late as *Mallinātha*, the famous commentator of the *Raghuvamsha*, latterly it seems to have fallen into disfavour to such an extent that the correct interpretations of *Prashastapaada* (about 500 A.D.) were lost sight of by the standard commentary *Upaskaara*. The author of this learned com-

mentary has more than 40 years of experience of teaching this darshana to the *Shiromani* Students in *Tiruvadi* and *Tirupati*: Topics like *Paramaanu Kaarana* (Atoms being ultimate cause; IV chapter) *Samavaaya*, *Vishesha* (inherence) are clearly explained. The treatment of *Abhaava* as a separate entity in the 9th Chapter is brilliant. The sutra *Tadvachanaat aamnaanyasya pramaanyam* is repeated twice, once on P. 8 and again on P. 306, but clearly distinguished from each other. Some of the views of the *upaskaara* are shown as being unsustainable in the light of *Prashastapaada's* gloss. About 25 sutras, a few of them newly discovered and others modified are presented here (printed with asterisk) being traced from various commentaries. They bear evidence of the author's indefatigable research and ripe scholarship. The chapter associating *Atma* with *Chetanagunas* and introducing a discussion on its *pratyakshatva* or otherwise is also another notable departure from the *upaskaara* and is excellently done. Every chapter ends with a beautiful *anushtub* sloka summarising the topics discussed. The dovetailing of the *yogasutra* in the VI Chapter is quite pertinent.

The printing and the get-up is very neat and satisfactory. We sincerely trust that this commentary will, true to its name, tone up the study of this Darshana.

U. VENKATAKRISHNA RAO

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A Correction: In the article 'Sri Krishna the pet of devotees' (published in the September issue), please read 'Balacharita' in place of 'Pancharatram' (P. 211, Column 1).

The birthday anniversary of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi falls on January 1, 1959.

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